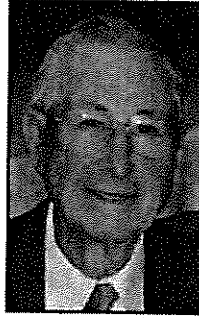


Frank Edward Wheeler, 95

A kind, caring, and humble gentleman passed away peacefully at his home comforted by his children on Wednesday, June 25, 2014.



Frank Edward Wheeler, 95, the seventh of nine children, was born on the family farm north of Montezuma in 1918 on the 17th of November to Sid and Blanche (Weber) Wheeler where he learned the importance of family and work. He was a 1936 graduate of Montezuma High School, then enlisted in the U.S. Navy, attaining the rank of Chief Petty Officer during WW II while stationed in the Aleutian Islands off Alaska.

While still sporting his Navy swagger, Frank returned home and began working for Charlie Zerbel, a master carpenter himself, before starting Wheeler Construction in 1946. Frank taught many young men the work of the trade and was privileged to have had two of the best, Adrian Sams and Larry Doonan, working beside him for the majority of those years. Son, Harold, partnered with his dad in 1983 building memories. Drive around Montezuma, and you'll see plenty of their handiwork.

After WW II, Frank married a Brooklyn girl, Dorothy Hall, on May 25, 1946, at which time his soon-to-be sister-in-law, Mildred, quipped, "He's going to 'Hall' her in and 'Wheeler' out!" Frank and Dorothy lived their entire 63 years of marriage in Montezuma raising their four children. Those Wheeler kids also learned the value of hard work beside their dad by cleaning concrete forms, shingling, laying hardwood floors, filling nail holes, and sweeping up sawdust.

Frank always had "15 cents" in his pocket to treat the four hungry mouths in the pickup to an ice cream cone on the way to or from Des Moines to pick up building supplies. At the Wheeler home, it was pancakes on Sunday mornings and popcorn Sunday nights with watermelon in between. Hilbert Beebe, who managed the United Foods grocery store in town years ago, would save the biggest watermelon off the truck and write "FRANK WHEELER" on it for the next time Dorothy stopped in to get groceries.

Dedicated to Montezuma, Frank was willing to help anyone anytime. He was a lifelong member of the Montezuma Methodist Church where the second pew was occupied by the Wheelers every Sunday. Frank was also a 75+ year member of the Knights of Pythias, serving as State Grand Chancellor, State Grand Secretary, and received the distinguished Golden Spur Award. No Pythian pancake breakfast was complete without Frank stirring up the batter. He was also an active Lion's member and recipient of the Melvin Jones Fellow Award as well as the Warren Coleman Honorary Award. Frank served on the Montezuma Municipal Light Plant Board for many years and was a charter member of the Care Review Committee for the Montezuma Nursing Home. Leading the parade for Montezuma's 2010 July 4th celebration was Frank as Grand Marshal, and he was one of the hundreds of WW II vets who boarded an Honor Flight to tour Washington, D.C. that same summer.

Frank and Dorothy loved to dance and hosted several community dances. You might have even heard Frank call a few do-si-dos during a square dance or two. Frank continued to attend the Sunday night dances in Malcom until just a few weeks before he died, saying, "There's always plenty of women to dance with, and it's not their first time around the dance floor, I'll tell you."

The card table was always up at the Wheeler house in case someone stopped by to play a game of 500 or cribbage on one of the many cribbage boards Frank made, the first two while in the Navy. Or you could see Frank sitting out on his driveway watching the five-gallon electric ice cream freezer churn one of the hundreds of batches made for family and friends. Frank was once an uninvited guest at Dorothy's ladies club disguised as a woman, undetected by his own wife.

Frank was spotlighted by Kyle Munson of The Des Moines Register last fall for being the oldest paperboy in Iowa, delivering The Register every morning around town with son Harold and Patricia.

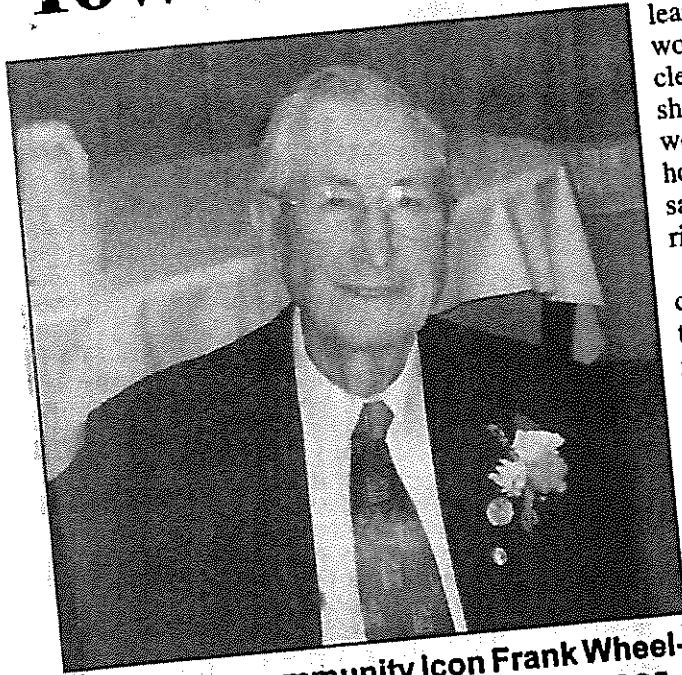
Frank is survived by his four children: Jane (Terry) Johnson, New Hampton, Harold (Patricia), Montezuma, Joyce (Denis) Crotty, Ames, and Janice (Brian) Appelgate, Marshalltown; 11 grandchildren: Allen (Tanya), Aaron (Amanda), Ann (Jesse Stock), Audrey, Nathan, Natalie, Allison, Mariah, Leah, Emily, and Luke (Brittney Hurley); and four great-grandchildren: Olivia, Reed, Julia and Owen.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife, Dorothy in 2009; and siblings: Edna Womeldorff, Lester (in infancy), Alice Keen, Irene McFerren, Bernice Alexander, Allen, Glenn, and Eleanor Mason.

A celebration of Frank's life was held on Monday, June 30, at 10:30 a.m., at the Montezuma Methodist Church.

Memorials may be directed to the Knights of Pythias Aztec Lodge 238 or Poweshiek County Historical Society.

'Iowa's Oldest Paperboy'



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