

# OBITUARIES



**Orville William Bloethe**  
May 3, 1919 - Dec. 3, 2016

Record 13-13-2016

Orville William Bloethe was born in his parent's farmhouse in rural Victor in 1919. His father, William, died when Orville was 3, leaving his mother, Lena, to raise 3 young boys on her own during the Depression. Orville and his brothers learned at an early age to milk cows, plant corn with a horse-drawn plow, and harvest crops by hand. The family nearly lost the farm to "The Equitable Man," but Lena chased him off. Orville proudly celebrated the 102nd year of having this Century Farm in the family at the Iowa State Fair in August.

Orville worked his way through the University of Iowa doing every odd job the employment office could find for him. He joined ROTC, and graduated with a degree in accounting. Within weeks of graduation, he was called to active duty in the Army in June 1941. He served from before Pearl Harbor until after the Japanese surrender, discharged as a Major after commanding a unit of 350 and earning 3 bronze stars. When he finally made it back to Iowa, he never seemed to miss sleeping in a slit trench while listening for the bombs, whistling on their way down. He was a proud member of the American Legion, marching with the veterans for over 70 years.

En route home and still in uniform, he convinced the registrar to let him enter the fall class of the Iowa College of Law although classes had started a month earlier. He evidently caught up, graduating in August, 1947 with High Honors.

The summer before his law school graduation, Orville's classmate, Carl Schnoor, went with him to the state fair. Carl took Orville home afterwards. It was in the kitchen of that farmhouse that Orville first saw the love of his life, Loanna. They corresponded faithfully, visited six times over the winter and were married on their seventh date: April 4, 1947. After graduation, the couple moved to Victor, where Orville began practicing law.

For the next 67 years, Orville absolutely loved practicing law in his home town. He

often said, "my clients are my best friends"—and he truly meant it. Raised on a farm himself, he particularly enjoyed working with farmers and their unique concerns. During the Farm Credit Crisis when many family farms had to be sold to pay estate taxes, Orville and a handful of others helped develop the idea of "special use valuation"—valuing farm land at production value instead of fair market value. He testified before Congress, which adopted "special use valuation." This legislation saved countless family farms from being lost to pay estate taxes and continues to shelter these family farms today. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than "saving the family farm."

He "rode circuit," lecturing lawyers, accountants and farmers about 2032A (the IRS section for special use valuation) for years. Orville served the legal community as faithfully as his hometown clients. For decades, he worked tirelessly to annually publish the Iowa Tax Manual, the 4-inch thick "handbook" used by attorneys and accountants to prepare taxes. The Iowa State Bar Association named its annual tax school for him and awarded him its very first Award of Merit.

Orville loved his hometown of Victor. He was the city attorney for half a century and secretary of the school board for almost seven decades. He believed the school was the foundation of a community and supported HLV with both his time and treasure. Orville and Loanna were the largest ticket purchasers at Hancher for years when they took the entire HLV high school to an annual performance. Whether it is the library, the health center, the park or most any other public place in town, Orville found a way to support each one.

The North Star of Orville's life was unwaveringly his wife Loanna. Theirs truly was a marriage made in heaven and cherished on earth. Orville has two sons, Chris and Craig Bloethe; and two daughters and their husbands, Tamia and Dennis O'Rourke and Cheryl Bloethe Linder and Douglas Linder. Orville also has seven grandchildren: Jamie O'Rourke, Kelly Grabendike, Darcy Huismann, Codie Hansen, Chase Bloethe and Ann and Kari Bloethe Linder and three great-grandchildren: Cordelia Grabendike, Hannah Huismann and Karsen Hansen. Orville has two sisters, Esther Miceli and Thelma Goetsch. He was predeceased in death by his wife of nearly 62 years, Loanna, on March 14, 2009; his parents, William Bloethe and Lena Bloethe Farnum, his brothers William and Leonard Bloethe and half-brother Wayne Farnum.

The family would like to extend a special thanks to Shantel Lindsey and her tireless team of caregivers that made it possible for Dad to stay in his hilltop home surrounded by friends and family in the town that he dearly loved.

Orville would not want anyone to miss out on a charitable tax deduction so he would have requested no flowers but instead suggested donations to Iowa Public Television, 6450 Corporate Drive, PO Box 6450, Johnston, Iowa 50131, which kept his 97 year-old mind young or the charity of your choice.

Services were Friday, Dec. 9, in Victor.

# Orville William Bloethe, 97

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A celebration of life service was held Friday, Dec. 9, 2016, at the Victor United Methodist Church with Pastor Jim Davis and Pastor Lloyd Brockmeyer officiating. Fred Stiefel was the organist and Maggie Zehr was the soloist. Military honors were provided by the Victor American Legion. Memories and condolences may be shared with his family on the Smith Funeral Home website at [www.smithfh.com](http://www.smithfh.com).