

## OBITUARIES

## MONTEZUMA RESIDENT

## Howard Jesse Lord



A memorial service and celebration of the life of Howard Lord will be held at

the Westfield Community Church on Saturday, June 24 at 2 p.m. Howard grew up in the Westfield community and passed away on March 6. The service will be an informal sharing of memories and music. All who knew and remember Howard and his family are invited to come share with the extended Lord family and friends.

Howard Jesse Lord was born on October 18, 1924, the youngest of three sons born to Jesse Cornelius Lord and Elizabeth Swanson Lincoln, at the family farm south of Grinnell. As a child, Howard rode his pony to country school - often sharing the horse with brothers Charlie and Al. He graduated from Grinnell High School in 1942 and started what he expected to be a life farming and carpentering.

In 1946 Howard became engaged to the love of his life, Wilma Marie Russell - and promptly sailed to East Africa as a "seagoing cowboy" in a UN relief program that grew to be Heifer International. Upon his return from that life-altering trip, Howard and Wilma married themselves in the Quaker tradition at First Friends Church, Grinnell, and, now called to the ministry, he enrolled at William Penn College. He served Methodist congregations in

Chillicothe and Columbia as a student pastor and, upon earning his B.A. in 1954, was accepted at Drew University Seminary in Madison, NJ. He and Wilma headed east with three children - Russell, Robert, and Linda - and \$50 in their pockets. Howard served Wall Methodist Church, completing his Masters of Divinity degree at Drew and being ordained as an elder in 1958. Howard helped grow Wall Church in Spring Lake Heights, NJ from a faltering congregation to a thriving one, complete with a new sanctuary and fellowship hall. He developed numerous ecumenical, interfaith alliances and was very active in civil rights endeavors.

In 1966 he and Wilma returned to Iowa, where Howard served a multi-charge appointment in Milo-Lacona-Green Plain-Liberty Center. While there Howard started Winifred Law Opportunity Center (now Christian Opportunity Center), giving the developmentally disabled the opportunity to contribute positively to the community. After 12 years at Southeast Warren, he moved on to serve the Gladbrook Church for 10 years before retiring from the United Methodist Church in 1988. During Howard and Wilma's service in Gladbrook, Howard organized and led a successful trip to a mountain village in Guatemala to drill wells so the villagers could have clean water instead of the surface run-off on which they had depended.

In retirement Howard

and Wilma lived at Lake Ponderosa in Montezuma, where they welcomed and entertained friends and a growing number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Howard continued his ministry as pulpit supply and pastor of visitation for the Pella and Oskaloosa United Methodist Churches and was an active member of the congregation at the Montezuma UMC. He and Wilma traveled extensively, enjoying visits with widely dispersed friends and relatives, and served on the board of Central Iowa Residential Services. Establishment of the Howard and Wilma Lord Peace Garden at the Heifer ranch in Perryville, AR recognized the untold hours and new participants that Howard and Wilma brought to Heifer International during their ministry. They moved to Wesley Village in Indianola in 2013, where they reconnected with United Methodist clergy colleagues and their own Quaker roots, and made many new friends.

To the end, which came on March 6, 2017, Howard engaged others, sought ways to remain socially and politically active, and never wavered in his lifetime of faith and service to the Lord and to others. Howard was preceded in death by his parents, brothers, and daughter Linda. He is survived by Wilma, his wife of 69 years, children Russell (Denece), Bob (Debra), and Laura (Dennis) Oliver, 15 grandchildren, and 24 great-grandchildren.