

Edgar L. McFerren, 95



MR - Dec 20, 2006

Edgar Lee McFerren, 95, formerly of Fond du Lac, Wis., died Saturday, Dec. 16, 2006 at Wesley Willows Health Center and Retirement Community, Rockford, Ill. Buck-Wheeler-Hyland Funeral

Home, Belvidere, Ill. is assisting the family in Rockford, and Mach Funeral Home, in Fond du Lac, Wis.

His memorial service will be held Wednesday, Dec. 20, at 1 p.m. at Wesley Willows' Johns Chapel, Rockford, Ill. with the Rev. Brian Kenney, Chaplain, officiating. His funeral service will be held at Covenant United Methodist Church, Fond du Lac, Wis., at 11 a.m., on Saturday, Dec. 23, with the Rev. Paul Armstrong officiating. Entombment will be at Ledgeview Memorial Park Mausoleum, Fond du Lac. Visitation will be at the church from 10 a.m. Saturday until the time of the service.

Edgar was born April 11, 1911, in Montezuma, son of Ralph and Margaret (Henry) McFerren. He married Irene Wheeler of Montezuma on Sept. 25, 1937. She died Nov. 10, 2001.

Edgar was raised on the family farm just north of Montezuma, attended a one-room country grade school and graduated valedictorian from the high school in town. He had an inquisitive, inventive mind from the beginning and was a voracious reader all his life. The skills he developed to keep the machinery on the farm and the complex home electrical system working (the family had one of the first rural electrified homes in the state using a windmill, DC generator and batteries) led to his enter-

ing the Engineering College at Iowa State University, Ames, graduating Phi Kappa Phi, Tau Beta Pi and Valedictorian with a Mechanical Engineering degree in 1936. After a brief stint working at The Crane Company in Chicago, he was recruited for an engineering position with Giddings and Lewis Machine Tool Company in Fond du Lac, Wis. During WWII, he and G & L were involved in the war effort, making complex machines for all types of aircraft, tanks and large field guns. After the war as vice president of engineering, he led the first privately-funded research effort to develop numerically-controlled machine tools in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. While at G & L, he rose through the ranks, became an executive in charge of several areas, including engineering, manufacturing, and sales, and eventually managed divisions of the company in Fond du Lac, Scotland, Germany and Madison as well as serving on the board of directors. Edgar was a member of the Society of Professional Engineers. Engineering seemed to be in the blood, as his father, brother, son and three grandsons have been involved in the profession.

Edgar and Irene spent most of their married lives in Fond du Lac, with the exception of brief periods in Arbroath, Scotland, and Madison, Wis. Leisure time was spent reading, pheasant hunting in Iowa and on a preserve he developed for G & L. He greatly enjoyed the outdoors and hosting many fishing trips to Canada. The family spent many happy days onboard the MerriMacs cruising Lake Winnebago and extended cruising in Lake Michigan and the North Channel. Edgar was truly a man with many skills including making furniture, building small boats, sewing sails, growing apples and rebuilding

a 1952 MG convertible with hand-sewn leather seats. He enjoyed maintaining the family summer home in Minocqua, Wis. which continues to provide many happy memories for family and friends. With an intense interest in history and the biographies of great leaders he was a fan of Churchill, Thatcher, Reagan and Vince Lombardi and the Green Bay Packers. He was an active member of Rotary while in Fond du Lac, served on the boards of Marion College and the Vocational School, served on fundraising committees for the various Methodist churches they attended, and was county chairman of the Fond du Lac Republican Party for several years. He was a member of Covenant United Methodist Church, South Hills Country Club and the Elks Club. He and his wife hosted many foreign exchange students sponsored by Rotary. He had a fantastic memory and could recall many events and people he had met along the way. He led the first industrial trade mission into the U.S.S.R. in 1959 and during his travels, he met many well-known leaders including Winston Churchill, Alexey Kosygin, Barry Goldwater, Richard Nixon and Dick Cheney.

He is survived by their two children, Patricia (Michael) Davis of Rockford, and Michael J. (Elizabeth) McFerren of Millersville, Maryland; former daughter-in-law, Sally Montgomery McFerren, Beloit, Wis., six grandchildren, Geoffrey (Karla) Davis, Deerfield, Ill., John (Laura) Davis, Novi, Mich., Emily (Rich) Waage, Vero Beach, Fla., Greg (Lori) McFerren, Ladera Ranch, Calif., David (Angela) McFerren, Windsor, Calif., Brent (Jolynn) McFerren, Sagamore Hills, Ohio; three step-grandchildren; 15 great-grandchildren, 9 step-great-grandchildren; a sister, Lenore Barnes, Bettendorf; brother-in-law, Frank (Dorothy) Wheeler of Montezuma; sister-in-law Pauline Wheeler Des Moines, sister-in-law Mickey Shank, Bella Vista, Ariz., and many nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Irene; one brother, Ernest McFerren; sisters-in-law Edna Womeldorff, Alice Keen, Bernice Alexander, Eleanor Mason; brothers-in-law Edward Barnes, Allen Wheeler, and Glenn Wheeler.

Memorials may be directed to Marion College Library Fund, Fond du Lac, or Fond du Lac Rotary Scholarship Program.