

Samuel K. Byers, 83



Samuel Keith Byers, 83, of Galena, Ill., died peacefully at home, surrounded by his family, on Monday, April 30, 2007.

Private family graveside services were held on Friday at Evergreen Cem-

etry, Hanover, where a flag presentation was accorded by members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2665, of Galena.

Sam, as he was lovingly known, was born on Nov. 13, 1923, at New London, son of Homer and Gertrude Byers. He grew up in Montezuma. When Francine Richards joined his class in eighth grade, he made it known that she was "the one" for him. On May 22, 1943, they were married at Philadelphia. Two days later, Sam left to go overseas for three years to proudly serve his country in the Army. After returning from the service, "Keith" attended watch-making school and opened Keith's Jewelry Store in Montezuma.

On Nov. 13, 1948, Sam's 25th birthday, he and Fran were blessed by the arrival of their one and only child, beautiful Pamela Ruth.

After leaving Montezuma, Sam and Fran embarked on a newspaper career which would take them to Decorah, Sauk City, Wis., Maquoketa, and then Galena as resident publisher of the Galena Gazette from 1962 to 1985. As resident publisher, Sam authored "Main Street's My Beat, by Sam." Following their retirement, Sam and Fran enjoyed Galena from their apartment overlooking Main Street during the summer and they wintered in Florida.

Together they could be found dining at the Log Cabin every Sunday and Tuesday evenings and out with their dear friends, Bob and Betty, on Friday nights. Sam enjoyed a standing tee time at the Galena Golf Course and every day at 1:30 p.m., Sam met his buddies for coffee, even though he never drank the stuff. At coffee, Sam and his friends liked to discuss

all types of topics, staying up-to-date with politics and current events.

Sam and Fran were proud and active grandparents to their grandsons, Jeff and Jake. One could find them cheering on the Galena Pirates in every sport that Jeff and Jake played. Sam and Fran followed their grandsons' sporting careers by becoming their dedicated fans at most Coe College and Loras College football games. Sam enjoyed watching and talking about all sports, but he was partial to the Chicago Cubs, Chicago Bears and the Wisconsin Badgers, of which he was a 35-year football season-ticket-holder.

Sam was a member of BPOE Lodge 882, of Galena, Galena Eagles Club, Miners Masonic Lodge 273 AF and AM, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2665 and Fickbohm-Hissem American Legion Post 0193. He was a charter member of the Community Development Group.

Most recently, Sam spent his time at home reading to his great-grandchildren, admiring their artwork and proudly awaiting the arrival of his third great-grandchild, who entered this world shortly after Sam's departure and who is named after this wonderful man.

One could always count on Sam for a friendly handshake, smile and good solid advice. His family said that he was a genuine man who held his family in the highest regard and he made such a difference in each of their lives and that they are better for it. They said that each memory of him will make them smile and they will miss his presence each and every day.

Sam is lovingly survived by his wife of nearly 64 years, Fran; a son-in-law, Terry Miller, of Galena; grandsons Jeff (Jodi) Zeal of Lena and Jake (Michelle) Zeal, of Dubuque; great-grandchildren Jenna Elizabeth Zeal, Jacob Andrew Zeal and Alexia Sam Zeal; two brothers, Duane (Nancy) Lowe, of Wheaton and Norval (friend Donna) Lowe of Chariton; and many nieces and nephews.

Sam was preceded in death by his daughter, Pam, his brother, Wayne, and his very special Aunt Phyl.

MR - May 16, 2007