

## Gene Russell Mills



GENE RUSSELL MILLS, who turned 85 on March 10, died from complications of congestive heart failure the next day Sunday, March 11, 2007 in Austin, Texas. His wife Jo, children, and extended family had been close by in the last several weeks as his health waned. Mr. Mills was born the son of a dentist in Grinnell, Iowa in 1922. He proved to have inherited intellectual and musical gifts, as well as a fine sense of humor from his parents Ray and Ruth. He transferred from Grinnell College to

The University of Iowa to study engineering, but during WWII enlisted in the Army. During his service, he was sent in the Army Specialized Training Program to Carnegie Tech, where he completed the essentials of electrical engineering. While serving in a Special Engineer Detachment at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, he met his future wife Bertha Josephine Hunt. After the war, they returned to The University of Iowa where he received his final degree. Later, he finished composing an alma mater hymn which the university still performs. Gene's career as an engineer took him and his growing family from a job with Procter & Gamble in Kansas City, Kansas, to Massachusetts to New Jersey to New York to Michigan and finally to Texas. He decided to leave Albert Ramond & Associates and settle down in Houston where he worked for WKM, Union Texas Petroleum, and Daniel Industries. He often sang in the choir at the Gethsemane Methodist Church near the Mills home in Sharpstown, where he and Jo were fortunate to have the same caring neighbors for 45 years. Mr. Mills was especially proud to see all four children enjoy high school band activities as much as he had in his youth, and pleased that several grandchildren took up music as well. Gene's other accomplishments and interests make too long a list for one article, but include the ability to play piano, trumpet, and ukulele; a gift for fixing anything mechanical or electrical; the wit to recite poetry and craft a sonnet; a perfectionist's skill at woodworking and photography; a love for beautiful settings and family camping trips; the patience for bookbinding, quilting, genealogical research, and shortwave radio. By retirement, he was becoming a computer expert, and he could hold his own discussing tech issues with any of the younger members of the Mills family. The man known as "Papa Sam" to his grandchildren and great-grandchildren was perfect in his generosity and good will toward his family. We cannot speak right now about how much we will miss his zeal for life and his faith in us. Gene R. Mills is survived by Josephine his loving wife of 61 years, his brother Kenneth R. Mills of Kansas City, Mo., his 4 children and their spouses Gary and Judy, Judy and Doug, John and Debby, Ken and Brita, his 6 grandchildren Rob and Dylan Russell, Abbie and Rebekah Mills, Kelsey and Alison Mills, spouses Sarah, Skye, and Matt; and great-grandchildren Alex, Ian, and Sophie. Special thanks to Dr. Francisco Maislos of Houston for years of kind care. The family will gather Sunday, March 18 at Cook-Walden Capital Parks in Pflugerville, Texas, where Gene and Jo lately enjoyed a small-town life together, with children nearby. Never could there be a more loving husband and father, a more beloved man and spirit.

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