

PCCR 12-12-2018

Gerald "Jerry" McCurry

KNOXVILLE - Gerald Wayne "Jerry" McCurry was born September 24, 1934 in Grinnell, Iowa. He was the youngest of four children of Emma May (Lincoln) and Fred Hayes McCurry. From the age of 5, when his parents divorced, he was raised by his mother with help from his older brothers and sister.

He attended Davis Elementary School and lived next door to the school grounds. He claims to have been able to sleep until hearing the first bell then bolting to school in time to make it before the final bell five minutes later! He was an ace marble player and recalls having his sock collection of winning marbles thrown on top of the school building by a disgruntled older opponent!



Although young for his class, Jerry matured into a fine athlete with speed and power and played on the Grinnell High School football team as a line-man, blocking for his buddy Fred Johnson. He and Fred had some exciting adventures driving around in Jerry's old cars and getting into a race or two with willing travelers along their way to nearby towns. He graduated from Grinnell High School in 1951.

Jerry's football ability landed him in Fairfield, Iowa, where he played nose-guard on defense for legendary football coach, O.B. Nelson, at Parson's College. He excelled on the gridiron and joined a fraternity but decided college wasn't for him. He returned to Grinnell and worked odd jobs before getting married.

Jerry met the love of his life, Amanda (Vivian) Bowie, and they eloped during the spring of her senior year at Newton High School. Vivian graduated that June and Jerry went to work at Maytag Company in Newton. The newlyweds made Grinnell their home.

Jerry and Vivian raised three boys (Steven, Randy, Michael) and a girl (Kimberly) in Grinnell. Jerry raced stock cars briefly but retired after a serious crash. He and Vivian focused on raising their children and supporting them in their athletic endeavors. Jerry loved watching his kids play sports and was an active participant at the games. He had a big voice and was easily heard! He and Vivian wore-out many cars driving to their kids' games. Once, Jerry and Vivian drove to three football games in a day...son Michael's freshman game in the morning, nephew Dave's Iowa State game in the afternoon and oldest son Steve's Ellsworth game in the evening! Dedication!

Jerry was dedicated and passionate about his family and friends. He loved his mother dearly and his older brothers, Gene and Duke, and his sister Evelyn. When they all got together the stories were fast and furious! They loved to laugh and have a good time. Sunday nights were usually spent playing cards, "500", at home or at Gene's. The Fourth of July was a time for the McCurrys to eat watermelon at Gene and Joan's home on Hobart Street.

Jerry loved taking his family to Vivian's parents' home in rural Newton. There, his kids learned the value of good farm work...baling hay for Grandpa Bowie! And, it provided an opportunity for his kids to play ball in the orchard or the hay loft with Vivian's outstanding athletic brothers. The "uncles" schooled the boys quite well! Jerry spent countless hours pitching batting practice to his son's and throwing football passes and providing opportunities for them to excel by creating a basketball court, shot put ring and high jump pit in the back yard. He even coached little league baseball, the White Sox, and intentionally walked a good hitter on the other team, his son, during a game! Vivian was not happy with him!

Jerry retired in 1983 from Maytag where he worked daily for 30 years! He and Vivian remained in Grinnell until Vivian retired and then moved to an acreage in rural Knoxville in 1993. They loved it there as they were closer to their grandchildren, Samantha and Hayes, and the famous Knoxville Raceway. Jerry and Vivian faithfully attended the races and cheered on their favorite racer, Danny Lasoski! The races annually brought the McCurry family together, even the Missouri McCurrys, during the Knoxville Nationals.

Vivian died suddenly in 2004 and Jerry struggled without her but eventually found his way and continued to help and support his family and friends. He was very active in Riverside Church and worked part time at Knoxville Raceway for many years.

Jerry's compassion for others was most evident to the very end. Although in great pain and knowing the end was near, he made the nurses caring for him laugh out-loud when they had to reposition him. Jerry died peacefully on Friday, November 30, 2018...but, we all know he LIVES!

Jerry was preceded in death by his father, mother, step-father Walter Warner, sister Evelyn, his wife Vivian in 2004, his brothers Gene and Duke, and his son, Steven in 2017.

Bybee & Davis Funeral Home of Knoxville handled arrangements and online condolences may be left at www.BertrandFuneralHomes.com.