

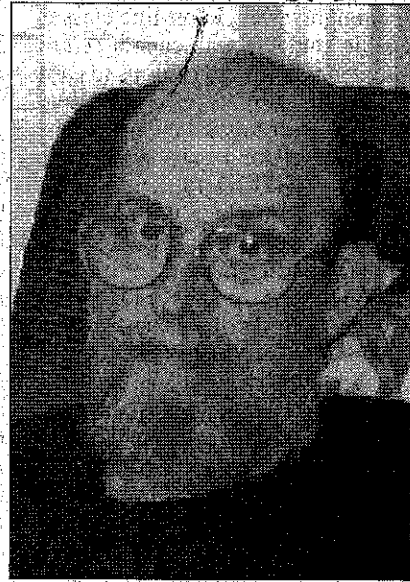
L. Edward Purcell

64-R
6-22-2020

L. Edward Purcell died after a short illness on Saturday, June 20, 2020, at UnityPoint Grinnell Regional Medical Center.

A private family graveside service will be held on Thursday, June 25, 2020, at Highland Memory Gardens in Des Moines with the Rev. Wendy Abrahamson, pastor of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Grinnell, officiating. A public memorial service will be held at a later date.

Memories and condolences may be shared with the Purcell family on the Smith Funeral Home website at www.smithfh.com.



Leon Edward Purcell was born the son of Lemuel and Mary Jo (Maxwell) Purcell on June 4, 1944, in Maryville, Missouri, and raised in Bedford, Iowa, where his family lived in his grandmother's house across the street from the Taylor County courthouse. Ed graduated from Bedford High School in 1962, and received a B.A. in History from Simpson College, where he was student body president, in 1966. He also received an M.A. in history at the University of Iowa.

Ed married Mary Purcell on August 8, 1965, and they were close through 54 years of marriage, living in Iowa and Kentucky. He worked as an editor and publications director at the State Historical Society of Iowa, Transylvania University, and the Council of State Governments, before going out on his own in the 1980s as a free-lance editor and writer, vocations he pursued until he retired in 2015. He was the author or editor of more than 20 books on extremely diverse topics ranging from history to wild horses. Ed taught courses at Transylvania University, Drake University, and Grandview University. He was a voracious reader for his whole life (detective novels, history, and science fiction), and he loved classical music, tennis, cooking, and (in recent years) competitive target shooting.

Ed is survived by his wife, Mary Purcell of Grinnell; their only daughter and her husband, Sarah J. Purcell and Hugh Sheridan, of Oakland Acres, Iowa; step-granddaughter and son-in-law, Frances and Brian Beavers; and two step-great grandchildren, Avery Beavers and Evelyn Beavers, of Waukee, Iowa; and his brother, William T. Purcell, a resident of the Iowa Veterans Home in Marshalltown, Iowa, and his wife, Anita Dittmer-Purcell, who lives in Des Moines. Ed was preceded

in death by his parents, Mary Jo and Lemuel Purcell.