

William T. Autry



William T. Autry, 88, of Grinnell died Sunday, June 4, at St. Francis Manor.

Funeral services were conducted Wednesday at the United Church of Christ - Congregational, with the Rev. Bob Molsberry officiating. Organist was Alice Renaud, and pallbearers were Dee Butcher, Dr. John C. DeMeulenaere, Kevin Griffin, LeRoy Meredith, C.J. McCurry and Don Renaud. Burial was in Hazelwood Cemetery, with the Smith Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

The son of Tice and Tela Bass Autry, he was born Sept. 5, 1906, near Weleetka, Okla. He was a 1925 graduate of Broken Arrow (Okla.) High School.

He was married to Vela Laserman May 27, 1933, in Duncan, Okla.

His career with the telephone industry spanned 47 years. He served as district manager for the Iowa Telephone and Telegraph Co. in Dyersville, then returned to Broken Arrow in 1945 as vice president of the Oklahoma Telephone Co. He was appointed vice president and general manager of the Nebraska

Continental Telephone Co. in Columbus in 1950 and became president in 1955. Following a 1956 merger of Nebraska Continental with the GTE companies of Iowa, Missouri and Nebraska, he was elected vice president of operations and moved to the company headquarters in Grinnell. He was a director of all three companies and served as president of the Oklahoma Telephone Association and vice president of the Nebraska Telephone Association.

While in Grinnell, Mr. Autry served as chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, chairman of the Lay Advisory Board of St. Francis Hospital, a member of the board of directors of Grinnell General Hospital and, from 1971 to 1973, chairman of the hospital board.

He also was a member of the boards of Mayflower Home, Grinnell Industrial Development Corporation and Grinnell Federal Savings and Loan Association, serving as Grinnell Federal's board chairman from 1973 to 1978. He was president of the Chamber of Commerce while in Broken Arrow and Columbus. He also was a member of the Grinnell United Church of Christ - Congregational, the Grinnell Kiwanis Club, the Grinnell Elks Lodge and a lifetime member of the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association and the Consistory and Shrine Masonic bodies.

He is survived by his wife; one daughter, Carolyn Elloian of Toledo, Ohio, and one granddaughter. He was preceded in death by his parents; a son in infancy; two sisters, Estelle Faull and Violet Ingle; and one brother, Floyd.

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William T. Autry, 88, of 2005 Spring St. died Sunday, June 4, at St. Francis Manor.

Funeral services will be conducted at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the Grinnell United Church of Christ - Congregational, with the Rev. Bob Molsberry officiating. Burial will be in Hazelwood Cemetery, with the Smith Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

Memorial contributions in Mr. Autry's name may be made to the church.

H-R June 8, 1995

H-R June 5, 1995