



Leon Jacob Urben

August 21, 1926 - August 20, 2020

Leon J. Urben, 93, passed away Thursday, August 20, 2020. Fiercely independent, he lived in his own home in Huntley, IL until only his final days. He was born August 21, 1926, in New Glarus, WI, the son of Jacob S. & Otilie K. (Stuessy) Urben.

Leon was raised in the small swiss town of New Glarus, WI and had three siblings: Evelyn Eckstam, Hazel Urben, and Jeanette Gaffield. He was an Eagle Scout and a starting player on the New Glarus High School basketball team. At age 18, he volunteered for the Navy and spent 20 weeks at the Navy's radio training school on the University of Wisconsin campus. He served nearly two years during WWII where part of this time was spent upon ships in the Pacific theater. Later in life, Leon was celebrated as part of the Honor Flight Program where he was flown to Washington, DC and received by cheering crowds.

Leon attended the University of Wisconsin, Madison earning his engineering degree. He married his lifelong neighbor and classmate, Dorothy M. Engler, just prior to his senior year to whom he credits his much-improved college GPA! Shortly after graduation when Dorothy's father, William Engler Jr., unexpectedly passed, Leon came home to New Glarus to help his mother-in-law, Clara Engler, manage Engler's General Store until its doors ultimately closed three years later. He then returned to his career in engineering and for Dorothy, hers in education. Leon spent the majority of his career at the National Safety Council, as a Manager in the Council's Farm Safety Department.

Leon and Dorothy raised six children together in the town of Wheaton, IL where they developed close friendships with congregation members at St. Matthew's United Church of Christ and in the neighborhood. Favorite times included hosting their annual 4th of July parade party on their front lawn, family vacations on Washington Island, WI and singing in the church choir. Leon always had a project and could design and create anything in his basement workshop. He continued to grow and challenge himself into retirement and beyond. He developed a life on the theatre stage in his 80's and discovered sculpting and chalk drawing, which he pursued into his 90's. Leon was a devoted husband to Dorothy,

together sharing almost 64 years of marriage before she passed away in 2013. To all who knew Leon, he will be remembered as a man of great integrity, sharp mind, steadfast commitment, and loving presence. The family is comforted knowing he joined Dorothy just in time for their wedding anniversary on the 21st. Dorothy would often joke that she purposely chose that date for their wedding because she knew he would never forget their anniversary if it was on his birthday!

Leon is survived by his youngest sister, Jeanette (Tom) Gaffield; his six loving children, Mark (Tracy) Urben, Eric (Brenda) Urben, Bruce (Angie) Urben, Daniel (Leesa) Urben, Lisa Urben, and Stacy (James) Rechtin; 14 cherished grandchildren; five precious great grandchildren; three dear nephews; and two special nieces.

He is preceded in death by his parents; wife, Dorothy on April 23, 2013; and two sisters, Evelyn, and Hazel.

Services and inurnment will be Sunday, September 6 at 11:00 AM in New Glarus Cemetery in New Glarus, WI followed by Naval Military Honors.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions in his name may be directed to Honor Flight Chicago, 9701 W Higgins Road, Suite 310, Rosemont, IL 60018 773-227-8387 honorflightchicago.org.

Cemetery

New Glarus Cemetery

701-735 6th Ave.

New Glarus, WI, 53574

Comments



“ Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Leon Jacob Urben.



September 01 at 08:47 PM



“ Mark is following this tribute.

Mark - August 29 at 03:31 PM



“ Lee's son Eric was my contemporary, and is another tribute to his father's legacy. He shares the same kindness, intellectual curiosity, and twinkle in his eye when he laughs that I often saw in Mr. Urben while we kids were growing up together in church. My condolences go out to the family. You are in my thoughts and prayers.

With deepest sympathy,
Terry Giese

Terry Giese - August 27 at 04:41 PM



“ I was closer to Dorothy (having worked under her at the Marionjoy daycare center in Wheaton back in the day) but I also well remember "Lee" from church choir, council, & also playing dartball with both him and Mark at St. Matthews (for which his lifetime .423 average will hopefully long remain displayed within the church's trophy case). My condolences go out to all the family, but particularly to Lee's son, Mark, who is my age and a contemporary both in St. Matthew's youth group and while attending Wheaton North H.S.

Lee was a good and faithful Christian man who showed his devotion to Dorothy throughout her debilitated ending years, and I truly believe that they're both rejoicing now in Heaven having been rejoined.



Brian Nessel - August 26 at 02:10 PM



“ When I started my first professional job in the early seventies at the National Safety Council, Mr. Urben was a well respected member of the management team - a real legend who knew all there was to know about Farm Safety. I moved to another organization after about three years at the Council and then some 40 years later I was hired by his son, Dan Urben. I learned a couple of things, great qualities run in some families and that Mr. Urben continued to grow in numerous ways throughout his lifetime. I loved to hear Dan's stories about his Dad's projects and approach to life - always the engineer. I also had the opportunity to work with another son, Bruce Urben. And it was a pleasure to know them all.

Mr. Urben leaves quite the legacy and he will be deeply missed. Condolences to his wonderful family.

Nancy Vlasak

Nancy Vlasak - August 26 at 12:43 PM