



NELS OLSEN

September 17, 1924 - May 17, 2017

3RD BH 383

Nels Olsen, age 92, died Wednesday, May 17, 2017, at the Huron Regional Medical Center. His funeral service was held at 11:00 AM, Saturday, May 20th, at the Congregational United Church of Christ. Burial was in the Restlawn Memory Gardens Cemetery, with military rites by the Huron Veterans Council. A Masonic service was held at 7:00 PM, Friday at the Kuhler Funeral Home. Memorials may be directed to the Shriners Hospitals for Children, Huron Regional Medical Center Foundation, Congregational United Church of Christ or charity of choice.

Nels Edward Olsen was born September 17, 1924, in Hitchcock, South Dakota, to Jens and Oda (Mellerrup) Olsen. He graduated in 1942 from Hitchcock High School. Nels had a love for singing and playing in the high school band. He continued to play after high school, becoming a member of the Huron City Band. That is where he met his future wife, Dorothy Schrader. His love of music led to singing in Barbershop groups, and playing in the Shrine Band and Merry Tuba Christmas.

He attended SDSU for one year and joined the Army in March of 1943. He received a Purple Heart and was decorated with the Bronze Star and the Presidential Citation while serving with the 9th Infantry Division on Leyte and Okinawa Islands in the South Pacific during World War II. He returned home in 1946 and he and Dorothy were married May 25, 1947.

They began their life together in Hitchcock where they lived for the next 18 years. Nels was general manager of the family farm equipment and truck sales and service business with Dorothy helping in the business office. In 1965, they moved together with their family to Huron and expanded their business by purchasing the International Harvester Store. He held various positions with farm equipment and automobile dealer associations in South Dakota and adjoining states. Nels retired from the management of Olsen Implement in 1990.

Married for nearly 70 years, they raised four children: Dennis, Karen, Nancy and Sue. During his lifetime, Nels was active in numerous business and community organizations serving on boards and holding offices to support the city of Huron. Some of these include Congregational Church of Christ, American Legion, Boy Scouts, Masons, Shrine and Shrine Circus, Greater Huron Development, Our Home Incorporated and President of the Huron Area Chamber of Commerce. He was also very active in the Huron Rotary Club serving in many capacities including President of the local group and District Governor in South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa.

Nels received recognition several times in business and community activities throughout the years including the Lusk Award in business in 1993 and the Huron Area Chamber of Commerce Distinguished Civic Service Award in 1996. He was instrumental in establishing an agricultural scholarship at SDSU funded by IH dealers.

Nels always worked hard and was devoted to his family, friends and community. His hobbies included music, travel, hunting, dancing, playing cards and socializing.

Grateful for having shared his life are his one son, Dennis (Linda) Olsen of Sioux Falls; three daughters, Karen (Steve) Marcus of Huron, Nancy (Kevin) Kreulen of Boulder Canyon in the Black Hills, and Sue (Mark) Fritz of Gilbert, Arizona; eleven grandchildren, Amy Olsen, Erik Olsen, MaryJane (Dan) Unzelman, David Olsen, Jason (Uria) Marcus, Adam (Chasity) Marcus, Richard (Linda) Marcus, Lee (Janelle) Anderson, Josh Anderson, Jack (Emily) Pochardt and Traci Pochardt; and ten great grandchildren; one brother, Arthur (Annie) Olsen of Hitchcock; and a friend who is more like family, Steve Oetken of Huron.

Nels was preceded in death by his parents, Jens and Oda Olsen; his wife of 69 years, Dorothy; and one brother, James (Darlene) Olsen.