

rural Powhattan , KS

Melvin Leroy Kesler peacefully passed to his heavenly home, November 4, 2014, at his rural Powhattan home. The third child born to Reverend Dennis Riley and Ilah Evalena (Garber) Kesler, November 9, 1925, at McPherson, Ks. Melvin began life during the Great Depression and devastating dust storms that rolled unchecked across the dry Kansas prairie. Although millions of Americans were experiencing abject poverty, his close family of nine were wealthy in love and steadfast in their faith in God.

Growing up in the country, Melvin loved being outside. He and his cousins trapped and hunted, selling the furs. Melvin was a diligent student particularly in math, also enjoying singing and sports, participating in football, basketball, and track.

Following graduation, Melvin enlisted on August 26, 1944 as the United States rallied to push toward ending World War II. The U.S. Naval Training Center in Great Lakes, IL was his first stop where he completed training in basic engineering school. While there, Melvin was a member of the Great Lake Naval Choir. Completing basic training on January 25, 1945, he was then sent to Florida to be a mechanic on a ship specifically used to transport Higgins Boats LCVP Amphibious Assault Landing Craft. On June 18, 1946, Melvin received his discharge papers and headed home to Kansas.

Returning home, he enrolled at McPherson College. It was there, Melvin met the love of his life, Theda Caroline Flory and the rest was history. The couple was married on a sweltering June 28, 1947 at the Lone Star Church of the Brethren southwest of Lawrence, Kansas.

Returning to northeastern Kansas, Melvin milked cows and was a farm laborer during the day. The young couple welcomed their only son, Dana into their family March 5, 1951. Melvin began working for the Kansas State Cornbelt Experiment Field in 1953. On February 15, 1978, Melvin was the runner up for KSU Classified Employee of the Year. Melvin retired in 1994.

Melvin was a member of the United Methodist Church in Powhattan, Kansas, where he was a Sunday School Superintendent and had held various offices over the years. He was also a member of Wenger Post #373, Powhattan American Legion. Melvin enjoyed hunting, fishing, farming, carpentry, water skiing, camping, square dancing, playing cards, telling jokes, being with his friends and church family. His greatest achievement, however, was being a loving and God fearing father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He was a friend to all and would help his fellow man whenever he could. His smile was infectious, his laugh endearing, his love unfailing, and his faith in God unshakable. Melvin was preceded in death by his parents Dennis and Ilah Kesler, a brother Harold Kesler, three sisters Esther Orr, Velma Harris, Edith Harris; and his beloved wife Theda. Two sisters survive: Helen (Maurice) Pautz of Agate, CO, Lois (Steve) Bersuch of McPherson, KS. Going on before us, he leaves behind a dearly loved son Dana (Joyce) Kesler of Fairview; two cherished grandchildren Zach (Jennifer) Kesler of Stockton, KS, Kristin (Dan) Longfellow of Broken Bow, NE; three dear to his heart great-grandchildren: Aubrey and Jace Kesler, and Drew Longfellow; as well as, many cousins, nieces, nephews and friends.

A Celebration of Melvin's life is planned for 11 a.m. Saturday, November 8, at the Powhattan United Methodist Church. Reverend Priscilla Davies will officiate. Internment with military honors will follow at Powhattan Cemetery.

Friends may call at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home in Hiawatha after 10 a.m. Friday, where the family will meet from 6 until 8 that evening.

Memorial contributions are suggested to the Church Memorial Fund; Heifer Project International; or Powhattan American Legion and may be sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., 66434.

A special message may be sent to www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com