



William Forrest Hawkins

April 12, 1927 - April 13, 2015

In the early morning of April 13th, Dr. William Forrest Hawkins, known to almost everyone as “Bill,” died peacefully in the presence of his family. He had just turned 88 years old, and in that span had touched more lives and amassed more accomplishments than could ever be recorded in this brief narrative. Bill, the younger son of James Hawkins and Barbara (Burrow) Hawkins, was born in Bristol, Tennessee on April 12, 1927. He could be best described as the consummate scholar, athlete, and gentleman. Bill attended St. Christopher’s School in Richmond, Virginia on a football scholarship, receiving his high school diploma in 1945. He continued to excel academically and athletically at the United States Naval Academy, where he earned varsity letters in football, baseball, and basketball, and was honored as the “Best Graduating Athlete” of the Academy in 1950. After graduating, Bill was commissioned in the United States Marine Corps, where he served his country honorably during the Korean War and rose to the rank of Captain. His athletic prowess also continued to earn him acclaim during his time in the Corp; he was named to the All Marine Football Team, and he managed the baseball team that won the East Division in the All Marine Baseball Championship of 1954. Upon returning to civilian life, Bill pursued further studies, earning his doctoral degree in psychology from the George Peabody College for Teachers (now merged with Vanderbilt University) and accepting a teaching position at Central Michigan University in 1963. He advanced quickly in the University, and by 1968 he was a full-time professor of psychology and the chair of that department, a position he held until 1979. In total, Bill spent over 23 years teaching at Central, finally retiring in 1984. Bill was not solely defined by his personal accomplishments, though. A gregarious yet modest man, Bill devoted his life to his family, friends, and community, and through this devotion demonstrated the true depth and strength of his character. His wife Doris can most strongly attest to his quality. Bill swept that beautiful girl off her feet, asking her to marry him after only a single date. She agreed, and the following 59 years confirmed the wisdom of her choice. Bill and Doris raised three children together; Marilyn (Sweeney), Forrest, and Barbara (Palmer), who married and had children of their own; Patrick Sweeney, William Hawkins II, Jacob Hawkins, Renay Palmer, and Corey Palmer. All will confirm, along with their own spouses (James Sweeney, Nancy Hawkins, Ray Palmer, and Katherine Sweeney), that the family could not

have asked for a better patriarch.

Bill always managed to stay busy, even during retirement. Throughout his life, he was an avid golfer and sports fan. Bill followed the Detroit Tigers almost religiously, never missed the Army/Navy football game, and was named the CMU Baseball Honorary Fan of the Year in 1984. However, he was always most supportive of the teams on which his children and grandchildren played, and could be found in the stands watching just about every game that he was able to attend. Bill was a fixture in the Mount Pleasant community as well. He was a longtime member of the Mount Pleasant Rotary Club, worked extensively with the Special Olympics, and volunteered his time to the Isabella County Commission on Aging's "Food with Friends" program for over 25 years. A frequent complaint among Bill's family and friends was that one could not accompany him anywhere without Bill running into an old friend or acquaintance and spending at least 10 minutes "catching up."

Bill was many things to many people, but to everyone he was an example of a life well-lived. He is survived by his wife Doris, his children and grandchildren, and his older brother James. Bill was one of the "good guys" in every sense of the term, and he is sorely missed.

Visitation will take place from 4:00-8:00 pm on Thursday, April 16 at Charles R. Lux Family Funeral Home, and there will be a memorial service at 2:00 pm on Friday, April 17 at the same location with Deacon Jim Damitio officiating.

Those planning an expression of sympathy may wish to consider Food with Friends at the Commission on Aging or Wounded War Fund. Envelopes are available at the funeral home.