



Walter Richard Eckert, Jr.

January 16, 1926 - May 16, 2016

Walter Richard Eckert, Jr., known to his family and friends as Richard, Dick, or Rich, died at his Town of Fond du Lac home on Monday, May 16, 2016, at the age of 90. Richard was born January 16, 1926, in Fond du Lac, to Walter R. Eckert, Sr. and Bernice Irene (Retzleff) Eckert. Richard grew up on the “west side” of town and attended Fond du Lac schools. He was set to graduate with the Fond du Lac High School, class of 1944, however, after enlisting with the Army Air Corp in January, received orders and shipped out in April, often saying, “he fought the war behind a desk in Texas.” After the war, Richard returned to Fond du Lac, and found employment with Blakely Auto Parts. On June 7, 1947, Dick married Muriel Fuszard at First Baptist Church. Although they later divorced, they remained friends and worked together for the good of their two children. In the early 1960’s, Rich started his own engine rebuilding business, Rich’s Engine Service. His bookkeeper and encourager was Mary Lea (Traxler) Stoddart and on February 28, 1970, they were married in Clinton, Iowa. She preceded him in death on December 6, 2011. Rich loved the outdoors, saying it was where he best communed with God. After a day at work, he would return home and work on the “farm,” be it beekeeping, lawn mowing, firewood gathering, or tree planting. In 1987, he set aside 25 acres in the Wisconsin Managed Forest Law program and proudly posted his Tree Farm sign, having planted over 16,000 trees, most of them by hand. He told many people that by planting trees, he was green before being green was popular. Mary Lea and Dick loved spending time with their families and friends.

They also enjoyed traveling and went to many engine rebuilder trade shows throughout the United States. Later in life, spontaneous weekend getaways to various casinos in Wisconsin brought them enjoyment. Grateful for having shared his life are his children: Sonia (Wayne) Johnston of Ripon, and Lynne (Roger) Belling of Fond du Lac; along with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren: Melissa (Tyler) Parra and sons, Kyle and Keegan; Evan (Becca) Kottke and son, Jackson; Vanessa (Miguel) Hernandez and daughter, Naomi and son, Angel; and Brayden (fiancée Coral Koch) Kottke. In addition, he leaves behind a sister, Nancy (Albert) Green; a special nephew, David (Christine) Miller; nieces: Crystal (Jeff) Marks and Kerry (Dwight) Hoekstra; his four step-daughters and their families: Lynda Bacon Lawlis (friend, Gary Anderson), Marcia (James) Pflum, Suzanne Stoddart, and Karen (William) Rangel; and his former son-in-law, Steve (Liz) Kottke. A celebration of his life will be held at First Baptist Church, 721 E Scott St, Fond du Lac, on Sunday, May 22, 2016, at 4:00 p.m., with Rev. Gary Zacharias officiating. Family will greet friends from 1:00 pm until the time of service. Inurnment will follow at Estabrooks Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider placing a birdfeeder in your back yard or even better, planting a tree in his memory. Many thanks to those who helped care for Dad: to his step-daughter, Karen, who with her help allowed us to grant Dad his wish to remain in his home; to Denny Luther, who when Mary Lea died, remained true to his word and called weekly to check in on Dad's welfare; to Dr. Russell Fredrickson and Mary, Dr. James Wright and Judi, Dr. Bret Pasiuk and Lisa; to Dad's "girlfriends" at Agnesian's Dialysis Center for their wonderful care; to Agnesian Hospice for their deep compassion; and to his granddaughter, Vanessa, for coming from Texas when the going got rough, to help walk her Grandpa home. Last but not least, to everyone who has ever donated blood, thank you for the true gift of life!

Tribute Wall

DS

“ I wish I had a way to attach a photo of the two of us together when we were 2 or 3 years old. Richard was my closest and most faithful friend since we were both born in 1926 - 90 years! I loved him like a brother. When we were kids we lived right across the street from each other - There were only our 2 homes on that block of Arlington Ave, and there were no other kids to play with. Richard and I spent many happy hours together picking violets. There were so many that we could never get all of them, but we tried! Violets have always been special to both of us because of these happy memories. When I last spoke with him on the phone about 10 days ago he said "I'll see you in heaven." I am looking forward to seeing him and Mary Lea again. Thank you Sonia for keeping me informed and for being such a devoted daughter to him. Your Dad was a wonderful man.

Dolores Sampson - May 21, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MC

“ Sue, My thoughts are with you and your family. I can see from the quotes that your stepfather had a deep impact on your world view and your sense of humor. I will be planting that tree. Moreen

Moreen Carvan - May 20, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MU

“ Papa, please tap me on the head so I know you made it home okay. Love you forever.

Mug - May 19, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JK

“ *Sonia thanks for remembering me ,loved the special time with your Dad ,he always had a gift for me his smile even when he didn't feel the best .he will be missed ,Judi*

Judi Karschney - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SW

“ *So sorry for the loss of your Grandpa Vanessa. May you feel the strength of Jesus' loving arms around you and your family during this sad time. Remember all of the good memories you have of him and may his legacy live on through you and your children.Susie*

Susie Wilbanks - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SZ

“ *Dearest Sue and family,Our deepest sympathy for your lose. Know that we are holding you all in a circle of love and prayers.Susan and John*

Susan Zacherl - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ *Sonia & Wayne, My sympathy goes to both of you at this time. Your dad is gone, but will not be forgotten. You will be in my prayers at this difficult time. J. Beaudreau*

May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ *Sue...you and your family are in my thoughts and prayers. May your wonderful memories help carry you through this difficult time. I will be with you in heart on Sunday but unfortunately the rest of me has to be in Chicago for my niece's wedding shower that my sister and I are having in her honor. I will be thinking of you...Sheryl*

May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ Sue, please know that my thoughts and prayers are with you and your entire family at this difficult time. Janet McCord

Janet McCord - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BS

“ God be with you all at this time. You all will continue to be in our prayers. Love you, Bill and Priscilla Stoddart

Bill and Priscilla Stoddart - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KR

“ We will miss your sense of humor and all your silly sayings. So happy you are now out of pain and with your special lady.

Karen Rangel - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Richard - I met you through my Mom, your oldest friend in the world. I grew to love you and thought of you as my uncle. It is a comfort to know that you are now with your beloved Mary Lea. We will miss you.

Diane Sampson - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SS

“ Love and hugs sent with you to mom in heaven. We will miss you but know you are in peace. Thank you for always keeping all of our cars running, all the goofy songs you sang to us and most of all - just for being you.

Sue Stoddart - May 18, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MP

“ Goodbye Rich! Thank you for sharing your life with Jim & I, Matt & Marilea and all of the Reynolds great-grandchildren. We will see you again in heaven.

Marcia Pflum - May 17, 2016 at 12:00 AM