



Kenneth Leverne McFate

February 5, 1924 - August 6, 2019

Kenneth Leverne McFate passed peacefully from life at midnight on August 6, 2019 at 95 years old, with his two daughters and three grandchildren at his bedside. The third of four sons of Samuel Albert and Margaret Spear McFate, Ken was born at home on the family farm in Eastern Iowa in the middle of a blizzard on February 5, 1924. An inquisitive and hardworking child, he was a good student, had an early interest in acting, ran track, and was Vice President of the 1941 graduating class of LeClaire High School.

With the onset of WWII, Ken enlisted in the Army Air Corp officer training program in 1944 and became a Second Lieutenant Navigator in August 1945, just as the war was ending. After service, with help from the GI bill, he worked his way through Iowa State College, receiving a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering.

Several months after taking a job with a utility company in Aledo, Illinois in 1950, he met his future wife Imogene Grace McFate at a church-sponsored softball game. On January 27, 1951, they were wed and spent 65 wonderful years together.

Ken's career shifted in 1951, when the ISC Ag Engineering Department recruited Ken to join their faculty. During their time at ISC, the young couple had the first two of their three children; Ken helped form the Gilbert Iowa Lions Club and participated in the Iowa Pioneer Settler Descendants Association, beginning a life-long interest in genealogy and local history that culminated in a book, "The McFates of Eastern Iowa" published in 2003.

In January 1956, the University of Missouri invited Ken to join their faculty, where he earned his Masters Degree and became a Professor. Having been raised on an Iowa farm with no electricity or plumbing during the Great Depression, Ken dedicated his career to improving the quality of life for farm families by applying new energy technologies to food production and processing in the U.S. and globally. His early work through the UMC extension service helped farmers in Missouri and the Midwest adopt new labor saving energy technologies; he produced numerous technical guides and research reports while doing hands-on outreach with Missouri farmers. He was a contributing author to Electricity

on the Farm for 20 years.

His work also led to consultations with international experts; he edited an International Handbook on Electrical Energy in World Agriculture. In 1983, Ken was invited to lead one of the earliest People-to-People delegations to China, at a time when China was just opening its economy to markets and Western technologies. The three week mission he led fostered a dialogue between Chinese and American agricultural experts about how to expand Chinese food supplies with more efficient energy use; he considered this work a highlight of his university career.

After 30 years at UMC, Ken became the President of the National Food and Energy Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing together university researchers, farmers, and power companies to improve energy efficiency in food production. At NFEC, Ken managed 10 special energy research programs at 12 different universities, demonstrating his management skills and bridging abilities by raising funds from both Rural Electric Coops and private investor owned utilities to fund this important work.

Ken was a family man, devoted husband, and an incurable DIY guy, who loved to work with his hands and make things – buildings, gardens, cars. He finished the basement of the family's first house on Bettina Drive, making it a kid's play haven, and filled and leveled the yard for coquet, baseball, neighborhood barbeques, beds, and vegetable gardens. He loved old cars, completely rebuilding a 1939 Chevy. He was an incorrigible collector of old things, especially farm instruments and items from a disappearing rural lifestyle. He rebuilt an old farmhouse outside of Columbia where he and Imogene lived for almost two decades before moving back in to town, allowing them to garden and grow corn and other crops, and to introduce their grandchildren to farm life.

Ken and Imogene were people of faith and active members of the First Presbyterian Church in Columbia Missouri for 53 years, where he served as a Deacon and both served as Elders for many years. They reluctantly left their church community in 2009; when Imogene was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, they moved to Olathe KS to be closer to their youngest daughter. When Imogene needed full-time care, Ken visited her every day, rain or shine, for five years. A faithful and devoted husband, he kept his commitments. Ken was much loved and will be sorely missed by his family.

Kenneth was preceded in death by his parents, three brothers, beloved son Daniel Elliott McFate and treasured wife of 65 years, Imogene Grace Kness McFate. He is survived by daughters Kathryn Margaret McFate and Sharon Ann McFate, 16108 West 125th Street, Olathe KS 66062; grandchildren Christopher Kenneth of San Diego CA; Kelly and great-

grandson Cruz of Ft. Collins, CO; Dylan of Olathe Kansas; and daughter-in-law Diane McFate of Hollister, Missouri.

Friends will be received from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Thursday, August 8, 2019 at the Parker-Millard Funeral Home, 12 E. Ash Street Columbia, Missouri.

A committal service will be held at Memorial Park Cemetery, Columbia, Missouri at 10 am on August 9th, followed by a memorial service and lunch at the First Presbyterian Church, 16 Hitt Street, Columbia Missouri 65201 at 11 am.

In lieu of flowers, please send memorials to the University of Missouri-Columbia Kenneth L. McFate NFEC Electrification Scholarship (asm.missouri.edu/undergrad-degrees/scholarships); the First Presbyterian Church Education Endowment Fund (fpccolumbia.org), or the Alzheimer's Association (Alz.org).

Arrangements are under the direction of Parker-Millard Funeral Service and Crematory; 12 East Ash Street, Columbia, Missouri, 65203; (573) 449-4153. Condolences may be left online for the family at www.ParkerMillard.com

Cemetery

Events

Memorial Park

Columbia, MO,

AUG Visitation 05:00PM - 06:00PM

8

Parker-Millard Funeral Service and Crematory
12 East Ash Street, Columbia, MO, US, 65203

AUG Funeral Service 11:00AM

9

First Presbyterian Church
Columbia, MO, US

Comments



“ Girls,

You may not remember me, John Hoehne. Your dad was my boss when I was a student. He was also one of my mentors and the professionally my good friend. We came to your house for the Super Bowl in 1970.

Your dad and I had a good visit about two and one-half yers ago here in Columbia shortly after your mom passed. Itreasure that visit.

A donation in his memory will be made to the scholarship at the University of Missouri. Please know that your dad was my good friend and I miss him.

John Hoehne

hoehnej@missouri.edu

John Hoehne - August 14 at 06:01 PM



“ My family lived on Bettina Drive in Parkade Subdivision from when I was on kindergarten till 5 or 6 years old. The McFates were our neighbors up the street. We are sorry for your loss. Our thoughts and prayers to the family.



Michael Strong - August 08 at 09:55 PM



“ My mother, Marion Ahlgren Henderkott, graduated with Kenneth from LeClaire High School in 1941. She asked me to write and express her condolences to your family. Mom enjoyed the family photos and letters from Kenneth. Several months ago, she fell and broke her right elbow, so has been unable to write.

May the Lord comfort you with His love and promise of eternal life through faith in Christ.

Blessings, Jan Henderkott

Jan Henderkott - August 08 at 09:14 PM