

Melvin Joseph Book, 94

Feb. 26, 1923 - July 6, 2017

PORTSMOUTH – Melvin “Mel” Joseph Book was born on a farm outside of Westphalia, on February 26, 1923, the son of Joseph and Josephine Klein Book. He attended school in Westphalia and graduated from St. Boniface High School in 1941. The death of his parents when he was eighteen years old forced Mel to help raise the family. As a result, he did not serve in the military like so many of his peers.

Mel married Margaret Heese on January 23, 1946, in Earling.

To this union, the couple was blessed with nine children. Mel and Margaret raised the family on a farm north of Portsmouth. His children remember him as a strict but fair father who taught each of them the value of hard work.

Seven years following Margaret’s death Mel again found love and married Bernice Stessman Gaul on April 15, 1997 in Portsmouth. The family grew as Bernice’s seven children were added.

Mel was a man who wanted to please everyone all the time. He was a fun loving guy who never met a stranger. Mel enjoyed big band dancing, playing cards, anything related to baseball, especially the Chicago Cubs, and traveling. He especially enjoyed trips to Cooperstown, NY, to the Baseball Hall of Fame. Mel was a member of Knights of Columbus and served on the parish council. An accomplishment Mel was proud of, was playing semi-pro baseball for several years with the Chicago Cubs Organization.

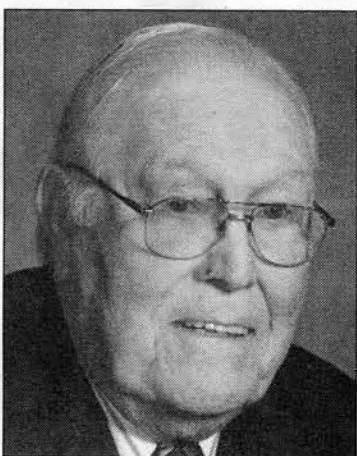
Mel died suddenly on Thursday, July 6, 2017, at Myrtue Medical Center in Harlan, having attained the age of 94 years, four months and 10 days. He was preceded in death by his first wife, Margaret; siblings Urban Book, Gail Book, Richard Book, Russell Book, Ronald Book; and son-in-law Michael Remington.

Mel is survived by his wife, Bernice, of Earling; children Gary Book and his wife Jane of Manson; Terry Book and his wife Joyce of Plattsmouth, NE; Denny Book and his wife Dianne of Walnut; Joe Book and his wife Cheryl of Woodbine; Bob Book and his partner Sharon Stessman of Portsmouth; Randy Book of Omaha, NE; Jim Book and his wife Colleen of Battle Mountain, NV; Mary Jo and her husband Mark Schraeder of Olathe, KS; Becky Remington of Lincoln, NE; Gloria and her husband Jack Kenkel of Earling; Tom Gaul and his wife Carol of McCausland; Alice and her husband David Snell of Blandinsville, IL; Rick Gaul and his wife Marietta of Earling; Jeff Gaul and his wife Mary of Council Bluffs; Janet and her husband Phil Blum of Earling; and Diane and her husband Dave Weis of Omaha; 44 grandchildren; 45 great grandchildren; siblings Eileen Bohon of Roswell, NM; Donald Book and his wife Nel of Spokane, WA; Duane Book and his wife Lois of Fort Lupton, CO; and Walter Book of Phoenix, AZ; many other family members and friends.

Mel now waits in eternity for the next Chicago Cubs World Championship. Go! Cubs! Go!

A 10:30 AM Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Rev. David Smith, S.J., on Monday, July 10, 2017, at St. Mary Our Lady of Fatima in Portsmouth. Serving as casket bearers was Jason Book, Brian Book, Ben Schraeder, Tim Book, Adam Gross, Evan Book, Brett Book, and Alex Book. Honorary casket bearers were Mel’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Burial Rites of Interment were held at St. Mary’s Cemetery in Portsmouth.

Pauley Jones Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.



Pauley Jones
FUNERAL HOME & CREMATION

(712) 755-3135 • (800) 831-6805

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Baldwin at 9th, Harlan, IA

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