

Walter Davitt, 93

May 13, 1913 - May 3, 2007

AUDUBON— Walter Michael Davitt, son of Michael and Barbara Smith Davitt, was born May 13, 1913, in Churchville. He was baptized at Assumption Catholic Church in Churchville and was confirmed at St. John's Catholic Church in Des Moines. He attended St. John's Elementary school in Des Moines, then graduated from Dowling Catholic High School in Des Moines with the Class of 1931.

May 26, 1935, Walt married Margaret Mihalovich at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Des Moines. Four children, Patrick, Rosemary, Robert, and Colleen, were born to this union. Margaret died Aug. 17, 1960.

March 4, 1962 Walt married Martha Wickland at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Audubon. Martha died March 28, 1999. Walter opened his first grocery store in Des Moines in 1936 and sold it in 1944. The family moved to Audubon in 1948 where he managed the Super Valu grocery store and later purchased it in 1953. In subsequent years he purchased Super Valu stores in Exira, Harlan, and Denison. Later he opened Walt's Other Place hardware store in Audubon which later became the T-Bone Club. He continued to operate his businesses until his retirement in 1999. He was an active member of St. Patrick's Catholic Church. He was a member of the Audubon Lions Club for over 55 years. He was an active member of the Audubon community, serving as president of the Audubon Chamber of Commerce and a board member of Audubon Economic Development. He received several community and church awards, among them the Audubon Community Service Award, Dowling Distinguished Alumni Award and was named a Melvin Jones Fellow by the International Lions Club. Philanthropic gifts include Dowling Catholic High School, Catholic Charities, Audubon County Endowment Fund, the Larry Breheny Endowment Fund and St. Patrick's Catholic Church and Parish Center in Audubon. He died May 3, 2007 at the Audubon County Memorial Hospital at age 93 years, 11 months and 20 days.

Preceding Walt in death in addition to his wives were his brothers: Henry Davitt and Lester Davitt; his sisters: Rose Hanrahan and Florence Gregory, a great-granddaughter Madison Rose Williamson and a step-granddaughter Sara Garavaglia. Survivors include his sister: Philomena King of Adel; his children: Rev. Mr. Patrick (Janet) Davitt of Harlan; Rosemary (Gary) Williamson of Audubon; Robert (Constance) Davitt of Des Moines; and Colleen (David) Dankenbring of Olathe, KS; his grandchildren: Kimberly (John) Schmitz of Iowa City; Lisa (Todd) Shaw of Ankeny; Rachele (Jeff) Goeser of Davenport; Theresa (Dr. James) Kranz of Philadelphia, PA; Julie (Scott) Hansen and Todd (Darcy) Williamson, all of Audubon; Joel Williamson of Johnston; Stephen Williamson of Ankeny; Christopher Davitt (Trina Farmer) of Marietta, GA; Jane Anne (Adam) Hewey of Seattle, WA; Stephanie Perry of Redwood Falls, MN; Elizabeth (Ed) Deboo of Bellingham, WA; Meghan (Ty) Davis of White Bear Lake, MN; Holly Dankenbring of Olathe, KS; Curtis Dankenbring of Roeland Park, KS; 22 great-grandchildren; his step-daughters Norma (Jim) Heiny of Mason City; Wilma (Ray) Western of Lake Forest, IL; 6 step-grandchildren; nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated by Father Wayne Gubbels May 7, 2007 at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Audubon. Burial was in the St. Patrick's Catholic Cemetery in Audubon. Casket bearers were Julie Hansen, Todd Williamson, Joel Williamson, Stephen Williamson, Kim Schmitz, Lisa Shaw, Rachele Goeser, Theresa Kranz, Christopher Davitt, Jane Anne Hewey, Stephanie Perry, Elizabeth Deboo, Meghan Davis, Holly Dankenbring and Curtis Dankenbring. Kessler Funeral Home in Audubon in charge of arrangements.

