

Longtime Harlan merchant Leo Farner dead at age 83

He was "Mr. Harlan," said his wife Dorothy.

Leo P. Farner, afflicted by a blood disease, died at age 83 on Wednesday, Jan. 11. The longtime owner of Farner's Store died of a possible hemorrhage or stroke, said his wife.



Leo Farner

"He just loved this town so much and he did so much for it," Dorothy said. "He was Mr. Harlan. I think everyone would like to know he went peacefully."

Leo Farner came to Harlan in 1927 as a traveling salesman from Stuart, Neb. He stayed to open Farner's in 1930.

The department store blossomed and became a centerpiece of downtown Harlan in 1932 when it was moved to its final location on the north side of the square. In 1951, the store experienced its greatest expansion by growing into a double store front.

The doors closed for the last time on Farner's Store this summer although no official explanation was released by the store owner. No longer could you "always find what you wanted at Farner's at a fair price."

Farner was a "great booster" for the Shelby County Health Foundation, Dorothy said, as well as a fourth-degree Mason, a member of Odd Fellows and he attended a Methodist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 16 years, Dorothy; daughter Sandy Kolb of Harlan; 15 grandchildren; and 14 great-grandchildren. It was the second marriage for both Dorothy and Leo.

Dorothy also has a daughter living in Green Bay, Wis., Kay (Mrs. William) Tyrrell; and three grandchildren, Kari, Kristin and Eric.

Services are set for Saturday, Jan. 14, beginning at 2 p.m. in Pauley Funeral Home. Burial will follow in Harlan Cemetery.