

Wayne Roger Hanson



Wayne Roger Hanson, 89, passed away on October 31, 2017 at his home in Kearney, with his wife and children by his side. He was born on July 6, 1928, in Rapid City, South Dakota, to Gaylord and Etta (Pullen) Hanson.

As a native of South Dakota, Wayne graduated from Rapid City High School in 1946. His pursuit of higher education was put on hold for a year while he served in the U. S. Marine Corps, but Wayne later graduated from the University of South Dakota in Vermillion, with a Bachelor's Degree in Marketing. In the year following graduation, he was recalled into the service as a U.S. Army combat infantry officer in Korea. His military honors include the Korean Service Medal with three bronze battle stars, the Presidential Unit Citation, the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the United Nations Service Medal, the National Defense Medal, and the WWII Victory Medal. He completed his military career as a Captain in the Army National Guard in 1963.

During his college years, Wayne also pursued other interests. He was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity and several choral groups. It was during the practice with the Strollers that he met the love of his life, Beverly. They were married December 31, 1950, and later became parents of four children.

Wayne began his career in the insurance industry in 1953 as an Agent and quickly moved up the progression of positions in several insurance companies. In 1967, he accepted a position with Pioneer Mutual Life

Insurance Company where he continued his career, serving on, and chairing several state and national insurance association boards and committees, obtaining various awards and accolades, and attending Presidential White House Briefings regarding the insurance industry. He put all of that aside on August 1, 1988, with a retirement farewell from the company he served for over 20 years.

After his retirement, he and Beverly settled into their northern Minnesota lake home where he acquired his real-estate license and enjoyed canoeing, fishing, hunting, reading, and just being. Once the thermometer stretched to 60 below, they headed for warmer climes in Bella Vista, Ark., in July of 1998. There, he once again became involved in church activities, choir, part-time work at Vacation Rentals and later an "Executive" Wal-Mart greeter as the welcoming person for Wal-Mart employees coming in for corporate training.

Throughout Wayne's life, service to God, his country and his community were very important to him. He participated in church choir, church men's clubs, taught Sunday School, and served on several church committees including presidency of the congregation at Olivet Lutheran Church. He was a member of the VFW and American Legion. He was a 32nd degree Mason, Scottish Rite, and Shriner, with participation in the El Zagal Oriental Band. Wayne also was active in the Lions Club and served as president. Wayne's most humbling accomplishment was the establishment of AA meetings in Bella Vista, Ark. The group began with two others in the basement of a church. Their passion and dedication to the Program evolved into several meeting times with 60 attendees and growing. After moving to Kearney, Wayne continued his passion with the local AA group and prayed for their continued success every day. He lived and believed in "One day at a time." This December, he would have celebrated 34 years of sobriety.

Wayne wore many hats during his life, but the most important was that of husband, father, and follower of Christ. His devotion to God was palpable, and the belief in Grace immeasurable. He believed in the strength of family and loved his wife dearly. He was deeply proud of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, they all brought him so much joy and laughter. His little tidbits of imparted wisdom to them will always resonate: "This too shall pass", "Don't trouble trouble until trouble troubles you", and "when in doubt, back up 5 yards and punt", but none of it without prayer first. And through all he dealt with, especially towards the end, he would reflect at the end of the day that "this has been a good day."

Wayne is preceded in death by his parents; his brother, Don and his wife, Marty; his nephew, Larry; his brother, Clint and his wife, Gladys; and his nephew, Dick.

Wayne is survived by his wife, Beverly, of 66 years; children, Jeff (Barb) Hanson, Sharon (Dave) Drechsler, Kyle (Joan) Hanson, and Karen (Dick) Fisher; grandkids, Christine (Jeff), Melissa (Ryan), Ashley (Paul), Lexi,

Briana (Ben), Ben (Lacole), Katlyn (Robert), and Erika; great-grandkids, Jamison, Dylan, Jentz, Preston, Drexler, Taylor, Hadley, Ilyana, Sella, Brenna, Noah, Devon and Logan.

Memorial Services will be held at 2 p.m. Saturday, November 11, 2017 at First United Methodist Church of Kearney, with Pastor Sherry Oxandale officiating.