

Lester Eugene “Les” Hinkley, 90, of Bella Vista, Ark., formerly of Fort Scott, Kan., died Friday, Jan. 1, 2010, in Springdale, Ark. He was born Nov. 20, 1919, in Neosho County Kan., the son of Charles Sumner and Nina Pearl (Mix) Hinkley. He married Beth Irene Zimmerman June 20, 1942, in Chicago, Ill. She preceded him in death Aug. 26, 2004.

Les attended school in Kansas and college in Kansas City, Mo., before joining the Navy, where he served in the States and through World War II in the Pacific, entering Nagasaki, Japan, right after the bombing. After leaving the Navy he was in business in Clinton, Mo., before moving to Fort Scott, Kan., in 1953 where he was owner and manager of Hinkley Beverages Inc., servicing the four-state region of Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma.

He was active in civic work in Fort Scott, serving as president of the chamber of commerce, Fort Scott Country Club, Bourbon County Cancer Society, the parks board, YMCA and the community center. He was a member and past president of both the Kiwanis Club and the Clinton Rotary Club. He and Mr. Eakle started the United Fund and also Little League Baseball in Fort Scott. He was a lifelong member of the Methodist Church, VFW and American Legion Elks Club of Rogers-Bentonville. He was a member of the Blue Lodge in Fort Scott, Fort Scott Consistory, Mirza Temple and Nomad Shrine Club of Bella Vista. An avid golfer, Les was for many years regional director of the Life Begins at 40 of Harlingen, Texas, with members throughout the United States. Beth and Les moved to Bella Vista, Ark., in the fall of 1985 after retirement.

He is survived by a brother, Dr. Charles “Wendell” Hinkley of Monte Vista, Colo., and his wife Orene; two nephews, Jeff Hinkley and David Hinkley; and a stepsister, Mrs. Roberta Page of Lenexa, Kan. In addition to his wife, Beth, he was preceded in death by his parents and a stepsister, Mrs. Danny Smith.

VFW Chaplain James Stradley will conduct graveside services 1:30 p.m., Friday, Jan. 8, 2010, at the Fort Scott National Cemetery. Military honors will be conducted by the Olson-Frary-Burkhart Post 1165 Veterans of Foreign Wars Memorial Detail.