



Eugene William Vatter

December 19, 1931 - July 30, 2012

Eugene W. Vatter, 80, of Oskaloosa died Monday evening, July 30, 2012, at Iowa Methodist Medical Center in Des Moines. Memorial services will be held at 7 p.m., Monday evening, August 6, at the First Presbyterian Church in Oskaloosa with Reverend Dr. Dennis Morey officiating. Military honors will be provided by the Oskaloosa Honor Guard. His family will greet visitors from 6:30 to service time at the church. As was his wish, his body has been cremated and burial of his ashes will be at a later time in Forest Cemetery. Arrangements are entrusted to Garland-Van Arkel-Langkamp Funeral Chapel.

Memorial Contributions may be made to the First Presbyterian Church.

Eugene William Vatter Jr., was born December 19, 1931 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania to Eugene W. and Erma Westman Vatter. He went through school there, graduating from Lancaster Catholic High School in 1949. After briefly enrolling in college, the Korean War started. He enlisted in January 1951 and was taken into the Marine Corps. He was first at Quantico, VA and then shipped out to Korea.

When the war was over in 1953, it was discovered that he was a singer and he was put into special services to go to Hawaii to become soloist in a show put together to entertain troops throughout Japan, Korea and some of the islands. At the end of 1954, he signed up for a second four year tour and was returned to Camp Pendleton, CA. In addition to his other duties, he was soloist with the West Coast Marine Corps Band and did regular radio programs with them. He was also on loan to appear in some musicals being done in the area. During this period as part of his regular duties he was part of the Marine Corps unit which was at ground zero at Frenchman's Flat, NV for the test explosion of an atomic bomb. This was before the government was aware of possible problems from being in close proximity to such an event and they continued to monitor him and members of this group for various problems throughout their lives.

Gene left the Marine Corps in 1959 and went into sales. He met his wife, Twink in 1960. He had continued to sing in clubs on a limited basis in the L.A. area and she happened to be there one evening. They were married in 1961 and returned to Iowa the next year because of the death of her much younger sister and to be near her parents. He liked Iowa because he could do one thing he loved, go hunting. This was also the first time in his life that he hadn't lived in a large city. However there was no shortage of demand for his singing. As well as singing in church, he was part of the Storm Lake Arts Council production of Show Boat, singing the role of Joe. This production was taken to Des Moines in 1964 for a performance for the governor and other organizations. He also soloed with the Karl King Band in Ft. Dodge, as well as the Storm Lake Municipal Band.

After moving to Oskaloosa in 1965, he continued in sales until deciding to return to school. He received a degree in Business from Central College in 1972 and an MBA from the University of Iowa in 1973. He started his own business, Gene Vatter & Assoc. and became one of the first Circuit-Riding-City-Managers in the nation. He helped several small cities with grants and financial management as well as overseeing their projects. This caused him to be on the NBC Today Show in 1976 and gain a spot in Who's Who in Business in the Midwest in 1980. He continued with this until ill health required him to retire in 2002.

He was clerk of Session, Sunday school teacher, long time member of the Choir, soloist and promoter of several major mission projects in the Presbyterian Church. He and many fellow members helped the church earn recognition from the governor, for missions locally and internationally.

He was a long-time trustee for People-to-People International and helped start the "Meet the Americans" project and was responsible for bringing several diplomats from Washington, D.C. to Mahaska County and the surrounding area to experience the MidWest.

He traveled extensively in the United States and abroad. Traveling was a major hobby along with hunting and singing.

Gene's family includes his wife, Twink of Oskaloosa; a daughter, Melissa Anne Vatter-Miller, of Mitchell, SD. She is a professor of communications and drama and a specialist dealing with autistic children; a son-in-law, Dan Miller, also a professor at Dakota Wesleyan University; two grandchildren, Madison and A.J., students at Dakota Wesleyan University; and a great-grandson, Jude Miller.

In addition to his parents, Gene was preceded in death by four sisters: Marjorie Espensen, Mary Ellen O'Donnell, Rose Marie Vatter and Melanie Strine; his mother and father-in-law, Dr. Will B. and Adeline Green and his sister-in-law, Patricia Ann Green.

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Tribute Wall



“ *Eugene William Vatter*

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