



Chester 'Chet' Swanson

October 27, 2011

TRAVERSE CITY — Chester Lyle "Chet" Swanson passed away peacefully on Oct. 27, 2011, with his family at his side. Chet had driven to Sault Ste Marie in hopes of finding one more classic wooden boat to add to his collection when he became ill. Chet was born in Flint on Aug. 28, 1925, but spent most of his youth, and graduated from high school, in Newberry. Big dreams and a job at the retail automotive store operated by the Buick division of General Motors brought Chet to Flint. Soon after, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and Chet joined many of his contemporaries in the Armed Forces to fight World War II. When asked why he joined the Navy, Chet always said it was the one branch of the service where you were most likely to get a hot meal and a dry bed. But creature comforts aside, the Navy was the beginning of a love affair with water and boats. Upon his return to Flint and the Buick retail store, he met his wife of 60 years, Elizabeth Hughes Swanson, who preceded him in death in May 2011. After becoming new car sales manager for the Buick-owned store, Chet decided his future was not with the corporation but as the Oldsmobile Cadillac Jeep dealer in Traverse City. Of course, Traverse City was the perfect place to live if you loved boats, and he did, owning many, often named "Wicked Witch", a name he claimed was inspired by his live-in mother-in-law, Margaret. However, nothing was more important than his family, which includes his daughters, Janice Swanson Carda and Denice Swanson; their husbands, Michael Carda and James Ryan; and his most special girl, granddaughter, Caitlin Carda Woods, who learned from her grandpa that shrimp was the perfect food because it had its own handle. A strong believer in service to his community, he was active in many organizations, including Knights Templar, The Presbyterian Church, Traverse City Golf and Country Club, Traverse City Yacht Club, Elks, Rotary and The Power Squadron. Chet was the president of the Michigan Automobile Dealers Association, a board member of the National Automobile Dealers Association and a recipient of the Time Magazine "Quality Dealer of the Year" award. A private funeral service with military honors was held on Saturday, assisted by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations to the Chet and Betty Swanson Fund, 807 Garfield Ave. #254, Traverse City, MI 49686, which provides assistance to patients and their families in times of medical need. Chet's zest for life was contagious and flowed through all that he did and everyone he met. He saw adversity as a

bump in the road to a greater opportunity and believed in the basic goodness of his fellow men and women. Although advertising can exaggerate, Chet's many friends, customers and acquaintances seem to agree, he really was a "great, great guy." Please share thoughts and memories with the family at <http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com>.