



## Gordon R Turnquist

December 20, 1923 - October 4, 2014

Gordon Ragnar Turnquist, 90, of Traverse City, died October 4, 2014 at The Grand Traverse Pavilions. Gordon was born in Detroit on December 20, 1923 to Ragnar and Effie (Freeman) Turnquist. As a young man, he began his working life as a laborer on the Henry Ford farms in Dearborn, MI and would often fondly relate many interesting stories about his interactions with Mr. Ford. He graduated from Cooley High School where he was a highly regarded student athlete. His love for baseball was second only to his love for Ruth Becker, his high school sweetheart. But his hopes for a career in professional baseball were dashed when he chose to serve his country, first as a pilot cadet in the U.S. Naval Reserves and then as a paratrooper in the famed 101st Airborne Division during WWII. Following the war, Gordon returned home to marry Ruth. They moved to Traverse City in 1951. Gordon worked for his father-in-law at the William J. Becker Electrical Wholesale Co. The two enjoyed many years of deer hunting and fishing together. Gordon then started a construction company and built several houses in the Orchard Heights neighborhood. A tribute to his perfection and pride, his homes were known to be perfectly square. His love of the growing Traverse City area, however, led him to become involved in real estate sales and development. He opened the first Real Estate One franchise in northern Michigan, with an office in Traverse City and one in Elk Rapids. During his time in real estate he became president of the Traverse City Board of Realtors.

Due to his experience as a builder, his family very much appreciated his ability as a jack of all trades. Gordon was able to fix any problem that might arise from plumbing and electrical, to construction. He took great pride in being a “fix-it” kind of guy.

Gordon and Ruth raised their family in Traverse City. Life was good for Gordon as his business prospered. However, adversity was no stranger to his life. He and Ruth lost their first born daughter, Karen, following an auto accident, when she was 5 years old. Later, they lost their son, Gary, to cancer when he was 38 years old. Through it all, his faith was tested, but never broken.

Gordon was an active participant in the Traverse City local life. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge and First Congregational Church. He enjoyed decades of being a member of the Traverse City Golf and Country Club, where he and Ruth made many lifelong friendships. His love of sports led him to being involved in local bowling leagues and golf

tournaments. In his retirement, he and Ruth enjoyed spending winters in Florida, first in the West Palm Beach area, and later at their home in The Villages. Golf and tennis occupied much of their time, along with enjoying the company of friends, dining out and playing cards.

The real love of Gordon's life was his family. While he maintained a sometimes stern outward demeanor, he was a true "softie" when it came to his children and grandchildren. He cherished each of them, and enjoyed following their sporting endeavors. He taught by example and imparted his ways of honesty and integrity to them. To Gordon, his word was his bond and a handshake sealed the deal. The true center of his world though, was Ruth. Married for 68 years, they were inseparable and reveled in each other's company.

Gordon spent the last two years at the Pavilions where he received excellent care from a devoted and compassionate staff, for which his family is eternally grateful.

Gordon is survived by his wife, Ruth, his daughter, Gail (George) David, his son, John (Sandra) Turnquist, his daughter-in-law, JoEllen Turnquist, nine grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Private family services are to be held in the Garden of Remembrance at First Congregational Church. The family asks that contributions be directed to the Grand Traverse Pavilions Foundation (1000 Pavilions Circle, Traverse City, MI 49684) or First Congregational Church (6105 Center Road, Traverse City, MI 49686). Please share your memories and thoughts with the Turnquist family by way of Gordon's online tribute page at [www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com](http://www.reynolds-jonkhoff.com). The family is being served by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home and Cremation Services.

# Cemetery

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## **Garden of Remembrance at First Congregational church**

6105 Center Road

Traverse City, MI, 49684

# Comments

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“ Gordon was a good friend and neighbor, he and the rest of the neighbors really made me feel welcome. The pleasant memories of all the neighbors having lunch at Modes together will last a long time.

At times like this I always say, "may your pain pass quickly and the good memories last forever"

We will miss you Gordon

**Todd** - October 08, 2014 at 06:51 PM