



Keith Williams

July 18, 2011

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Keith Ackerman Williams died suddenly July 18, 2011, in Traverse City. He was 91. Born May 9, 1920, in Ludington, Keith was one of seven children born to Allan MacKenzie Williams and Esther Ackerman Williams.

He grew up in Ionia, graduating from Ionia High School in 1938. He attended Michigan State College for two years before being drafted into the military. He served in Gen. George S. Patton's field artillery observation battalion under the 15th Corps of the Third Army. The day the war ended in Europe, Keith was located at Obersalzberg, Austria, home of the "Eagle's Nest," Hitler's alpine retreat.

Keith and his four brothers, Richard, Ben, Colin and Robin, all served their country during the war, and afterward, they all returned home.

In 1948, Keith moved to Traverse City as representative of Telford and Doolen Equipment Co. of Lansing. He often joked that he sold the very first street sweeper to the City of Traverse City. Later, he worked for the Dow Chemical Co. On Aug. 28, 1954, he married Mary Helen Shaffer at First Christian Church in Lansing. Together, they were owners of Grand Traverse Motel for nearly 30 years.

Keith served on the boards of the Northwestern Michigan Symphony (now TSO) and the Salvation Army and was a member of the Traverse City Kiwanis Club. He was fond of classical organ music and was influential in bringing the magnificent Casavant Frères pipe organ to the First Congregational Church.

Indefatigably social, Keith participated in numerous coffee gatherings on a daily basis and pedaled a bicycle around his neighborhood as recently as last week.

He had a remarkable memory for people, places and events, and for bringing vivid, detailed recollections of the past into the present. His wit was quick and quirky. He was a 13th-generation American and a member of the genealogical organization, "David Ackerman Descendants 1662." Keith was a Packard and Edsel auto enthusiast.

He is survived by his wife, Mary Helen; his sons, John Robert Williams (Terrie Taylor) and David G. Williams (Edward Galindo); grandsons, Evan Baxter Williams and Colin Baxter Williams; his sister, Honor Lofstrom; brother, Robin Williams, all of Traverse City; and his brothers, Ben Williams, of Rapid City, and Colin (Eleanor) Williams, of Saranac; and

numerous nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one brother, Richard; and one sister, Kathleen.

A gathering for family and friends will be held from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 3, 2011, at the Taylor/Williams home.

Memorials can be directed to the Dendrinos Memorial Chapel at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, PO Box 199, Interlochen, MI 49643, or to the Organ Fund at the First Congregational Church, 6105 Center Road, Traverse City, MI 49686.

The family is being served by Reynolds-Jonkhoff Funeral Home.

Tribute Wall

PJ

“ Coming to this late while writing some memoirs of my own.
I met Keith at the Congregational church around 1962, and he invited me to dinner with his family. We remained friends until his death and I would visit with him and his wife every time I was back in Traverse city--usually about once a year when I lived in Michigan, and sometimes when I lived in Illinois, but was in Michigan to see family. We would usually go to the Burger King near the Motel he owned and have coffee together and he would tell me much of the history of the area, although our family had lived there when dad was minister at the 1st Baptist Church downtown...and we had a cottage on Long Lake started building in 1938-39.
When Keith died, I traveled to attend his memorial service taking place at the Presbyterian church. While there I discovered and reconnected with life long friends and members of the Shaw family; Bill Shaw Jr. and Bill Shaw, SR. were known to our family back around the time I was 6 years old, and in Ypsilanti with my family.
Several times I have stayed at the Grand Traverse Motel, when our cottage was not available (too many visitors were already there.) ;-)

Paul T. Jackson - August 28, 2021 at 02:39 PM