



Donald Eklund

October 31, 1929 - February 21, 2025

Princeton - Donald A. Eklund, 95, of Princeton, IL, passed away peacefully on Friday, February 21, 2025, at Manor Court. He was born on October 31, 1929, in Galesburg, IL, to the late Carl and Oral (McCann) Eklund.

Donald was a proud graduate of Knoxville High School, Class of 1947, where he served as both Valedictorian and Senior Class President. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in 1955 and a Master of Science degree in 1959 from Illinois State University, where he was also President of his Junior Class.

He honorably served in the United States Marine Corps on active duty from 1951 to 1953, followed by service in the Ready Reserves until 1959. On April 6, 1952, he married the love of his life, Gloria Peterzen, with whom he built a beautiful life and family.

Donald dedicated the early years of his career to education as a teacher and coach from 1955 to 1965, working at high schools in Manito, Knoxville, and Princeton, IL. He later transitioned to the publishing industry, where he held leadership positions, including President of McCormick Mathers and American Book Company, as well as Senior Vice President at the Association of American Publishers.

A lifelong learner, Donald had a passion for reading and exploring new ideas. Most of all, he cherished time spent with his ever-growing family.

He is survived by his four children: Michael (Adele) Eklund of Glendale, WI; Julie Schmitt of Irving, TX; David (Jeanine) Eklund of Naples, FL; and Barbara (Vincent) Marella of Virginia Beach, VA. He was a proud grandfather to eleven grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his brothers, Gene Eklund and Rolland (Mary) Eklund, as well as numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Carl and Oral Eklund; his sister, Annabel Peterson, and her husband, Floyd Peterson; his brothers, Ralph "Bud" Eklund and his wife Edith, Phillip Eklund and his wife Francis, and brother Leland Eklund, and sister-in-law Helen Eklund.

Donald was a dedicated member of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church and actively participated in several organizations, including the American Legion, Elks Club, Princeton Chamber of Commerce, Bureau County Historical Society, and Kiwanis, where he served as a board member.

Donald's life was one of service, leadership, and love. His memory will be cherished by all who knew him.

A private memorial service will be held at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to St. Matthew's Lutheran Church or a charity of your choice in Donald's honor.

Online condolences may be directed to www.norbergfh.com

Arrangements by Norberg Memorial Home, Inc. & Monuments.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Mr. Eklund was my American history teacher in 1958. Mr. Eklund was so much more than a teacher, he taught his students about life, and simple human kindness. My wife and I stopped to see he and Gloria every time we came back to Princeton. He certainly had a life well lived and will be gravely missed.* 🙏

Stephen Finn - February 27, 2025 at 03:28 PM

LJ

“ *I remember Mr. Eklund as a great teacher and very nice man. My condolences to his family.*
Judy Stoops Logan
Class of '64

Logan Judith - February 26, 2025 at 08:21 PM

CD

“ *Mr. Eklund was an excellent teacher and role model at Princeton High School. He made a difference.*
Carolyn (Huffstodt) Dailey

Carolyn Dailey - February 26, 2025 at 11:53 AM