



## Lester John Morris

June 21, 1921 - October 28, 2011

Lester Morris passed from this life on October 28, 2011. He was born to Lud and Virginia Morris in 1921, on a farm just off the Kentville road southwest of Tiskilwa. He was the sixth of seven children. When Lester was a bit under two years old, Virginia and Lud moved their family to the nearby Bachman farm. He graduated from Tiskilwa High School in 1939. Shortly after, he met Annabelle Decker at a dance. Two years later they married with, as he was fond of telling us, "\$50.00 to our name and most of that borrowed from my dad." In 1943 Lester took over running the Bachman farm. It was here that he and Annabelle raised four children, Dick (Diana), Carol (Bob), Laurel (Bill), and me, Therese (Bill), instilling in us a belief in hard work, a good time, the bond of your word, and whatever else you do, keep your debt low and pay it off quickly.

Dad's life revolved around family, work, friends, and community. He was a lifelong member of St. Mary's parish in Tiskilwa where he was baptized, received his first Communion, was Confirmed, and married. As a child, he was an altar boy and as an adult served on various church committees. He was also a member of the Knights of Columbus. His strong religious beliefs anchored our participation in both work and family life. Dad believed in the power of prayer. Often as children, we were sent to daily mass to pray the rain would come, or that it would stop, or that the blight would at least drive up the price of corn. He also believed in the merit of effort and investment over

consumption. Mom and Dad pulled together towards a common goal, owning their own farm. Besides farming, he sold advertising novelties, seed corn, and calendars to local businesses. Besides her work as a farmwife, she sold eggs and Avon products, made custom drapes, and worked at the A&P store in Princeton. Through their thrift and hard work, they were able to buy their own farm outside of Buda in 1965. They were a great team.

Dad was also mischievous and fun to be around. He loved to tease, dance, play the button-box accordion, and tell a good story. These attributes brought him the warm affection of many friends and extended family.

While we have many precious memories, we each would like to share something about Dad that we hold particularly dear. Dick feels blessed by their interactions during the past three years. Together they spent countless hours in Dick's truck retracing the literal landscape of Dad's life—the farms, Grandpa & Grandma Morris's homestead by the canal outside of Tiskilwa, the spot in Marseilles where Grandpa & Grandma Decker's house stood when Mom and Dad started dating.

Carol, his nearly daily companion after Mom passed, remembers the grace with which he faced both loneliness and a failing body. It taught her that genuine human growth is spread over a lifetime and gives her hope that she can do the same.

For me it is his stories I never tired of hearing. They have been a thread through time, peopled with faces from our community--Ogie Steimle, Fathers Dunn and Henkel, high school buddies Bill Perry, Harmon Ring, Myron Gustafson, and so many others. Even decades after leaving Illinois, these stories moor me to my childhood community and home.

Laurel's memory evokes the father of our childhood. It was one of those

shimmering moments of perfect rightness. He was teaching her to disc. As they stood by the tractor in the field, she looked up at him so strong and tall, eyes a shocking blue against his farmer tan and thought, "There's nothing he can't do." That's the way we all felt as children, completely sheltered because he could hold up the world. His expectations were often heavy, and we didn't always live up to them. But we have always been loved, and we will miss him.

In the last weeks of his life, Dad was blessed by the loving care of Theresa Hansen, Sandy Ingram, Katelyn Arnold, and the staff at Courtyard Estates. We are deeply grateful for their love, compassion, and understanding.

The memorial service will be held at 11:00, November 12, 2011, at St. Mary's Church in Tiskilwa.

Norberg Memorial Home is caring for the family.