

# Lyle L. Lapham 1932-2007

CALEDONIA, Minn. — Lyle L. Lapham, 75, of Caledonia died Saturday, Oct. 13, 2007, at his home.

Lyle was born in Caledonia to Grant and Mabel (Albee) Lapham in 1932, and was raised on their Portland Prairie family farm. Following one year of Agricultural School at the University of Minnesota, Lyle returned to Portland Prairie to farm with his dad.

In 1954, Lyle married Mary Ellen Billhorn of Manchester, Iowa; they continued farming after two years in the U.S. Army. In the 1960s, they became a licensed foster home.

Lyle grew interested in world hunger issues, and in 1976 was invited to the World Food Conference. That same year, Lyle toured the People's Republic of China, representing American agriculture with 20 other farmers.

After Lyle and Mary Ellen moved to Caledonia in 1983, Lyle became an EMT for the Caledonia Ambulance Service and worked for Hiawatha Valley Mental Health as a case worker until retirement.

Lyle loved to travel and took advantage of many teaching opportunities abroad. From 1987-1989, through VOCA and USAID, he taught corn production in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, and dairy production in Tunisia. From 1998-2001, Lyle and Mary Ellen taught English in Wenzhou, China, and in 2002 taught in Hanzhou, China.

Lyle spent several years on the Land O'Lakes Board of Directors, and served as well on various local boards. He was a member of the Caledonia Masonic Lodge; a Shriner, Osman Temple, St. Paul; and a member of the Caledonia United Methodist Church. Lyle was an avid gardener and belonged to the Master Gardener program.

Lyle is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen; his sister, Eileen (Gilbert) Felton of Northfield, Minn.; his brother, Kent (Lois) Lapham of Russell, Kan.; his children, Joe (Jane) Hayes, Deborah (Charles) Wray, Loren (Carol) Lapham, Wesley (Carrie) Lapham and Steven (Lisa) Lapham, all of Caledonia, and Coleen (John) Pinkowski of Kirksville, Mo.; daughter-in-law, Sharen Lapham of Caledonia; 14 grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. today, Oct. 16, at McCormick Funeral Home in Caledonia, with a Masonic Service at 7 p.m. The funeral service will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Oct. 17, at Caledonia United Methodist Church. Pastor Mark Bengtson will officiate and burial will be in Portland Prairie Cemetery. Friends may also call one hour prior to the service at the church on Wednesday. Memorials are preferred.

The family would like to express their gratitude to the Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center staff, including Dr. Cole, the Cancer Center team, 4 Center staff, Palliative Care and Hospice for their compassionate care given to Lyle during his illness.