



Gene Miller

Godfrey | Monday, January 8 2018

Gene Kenneth Miller, 87, passed from this world on Saturday January 8, 2018. He died peacefully, at home, in his sleep, exactly as he would have wished. Born at home on February 21, 1931 his parents were Charles and Agnes Miller. They preceded him in death. His wife, Johanna Kathryn Miller (Norman), died in March of 2009. He had a brother and sister, Ennis Miller & Donna Young. Ennis preceded him in death, Donna survives. Gene was born and raised on over 40 acres of farm and woodland in the Youngblood Hollow area of Godfrey Township. His family was largely self-sufficient and made most of their living growing asparagus for export to the Chicago area. He spent his childhood in the northwestern region of Godfrey including areas known as Clifton Terrace, Mehlville and Summerfield. He attended Summerfield grade school and graduated from Alton High School. Gene joined the U.S. Army and served in the Korean War. He earned the rank of Sergeant First Class – Tech. Having a particular gift with mathematics he carried the responsibility for calculating the trajectory of heavy ordinance. After the war Gene worked nearly 40 years at Norman Brothers Inc. – a family-owned towboat company. In his retirement he worked another 10 years for St. Peters Hardware where he again enjoyed the family-owned atmosphere, regular customers and familiar faces. Gene married Johanna Kathryn Norman on January 26, 1951. They built a modest home less than half a mile from Gene's family farm. When he returned from Korea they built a larger home and started a family. Their two daughters survive. Susan "Sue" & Edward "Ed" Hamberg and Jean "Jeanie" & Rand Burlemann. Six grandchildren, their spouses and partners and five great-grandchildren also survive. Anthony "Tony" Hamberg & Kate Zimmerman (Iris), Angela Hamberg and Bill Combs, Benjamin Hamberg and Celena Zimmerman, David and Sunghee Hinnens (Eileen and John), Douglas Hinnens and Courtney Gray (Nolan) and Ellen and Jorge Vega (Alejandro). Gene had a great love of the outdoors including woodsmanship and gardening. He and his wife surrounded their home with dogwood & redbud trees and wildflowers they took from the family farm. He knew every inch of Youngblood Hollow and could name every tree and wildflower there. If Smokey the Bear could smell a fire before it started Gene could smell a morel mushroom before it had broken through the leaves. If you were lucky he would show you *juuuuust* how to pick out the perfect mushroom stick. If he truly favored

you he might even show you a secret little valley you had hiked past dozens of times and never even noticed. You never came home empty-handed mushroom hunting with grandpa. He loved fishing, most any kind. But he especially loved fishing for catfish and trout as they allowed him to sit, relax and talk with friends and family. He really loved to spin a yarn. Gene and his wife Jody made yearly trips to Florida where he always fished from the beach and occasionally took small charter trips. Their favorite activity together was walking the beach long before sunrise to pick up seashells and sharks' teeth. Gene loved watching sports on TV. He rarely missed a Cardinals game and always watched football on Sundays. But, truth be told, his favorite was college football. He always believed the competitive spirit and sportsmanship outweighed the money of pro ball. Many years ago he volunteered as an assistant coach with the Godfrey Little Giants football club. He went a bit further than most coaches, investing extra time to provide rides for less-fortunate kids who otherwise wouldn't have been able to make it to practices. In his younger years he was a regular participant on the Norman Brothers bowling team and he golfed as often as he could. Gene loved his family more than anything else in the world. He would stop anything then NOT stop at anything to help any member of his family. He especially cherished his grandkids and great grandchildren. He was a quiet, gentle, soft-spoken man. But if you dared cross his family you could not imagine what was coming your way. Visitation will be from 4:00-7:00 p. m. Friday, January 12, 2018 at Gent Funeral Home in Alton where funeral services will be at 11:00 a.m. Saturday, January 13, 2018. Burial will be at Valhalla Memorial Park in Godfrey. Memorials may be made to the Land of Lincoln Honor Flight or the Godfrey Firefighters L1692. Online guestbook and information may be found at www.gentfuneralhome.com