



D R. Hudson

East Alton | Tuesday, November 4 2014

Dr. Harold R. Hudson, DDS, 92, passed away on Tuesday, November 4, 2014, at Alton Memorial Hospital.

Harold Raymond Hudson was born June 7, 1922, in Wood River, IL, son of Elmer and Ethel (Walker) Hudson. Growing up in Wood River, he longed for the day when he could become an Oiler and, indeed, his years at Wood River High School generated some of his fondest memories. He was president of his class, captain of the football team his senior year (four years after his brother Bernie held the same position), and lettered in two varsity sports. Highlights included playing for Coach Chick Summers in a State Championship Basketball Tournament that finished third in the state, and being named second team All-State center in football. After graduating in 1940, Hud went to Northwestern University on a football scholarship, where he served as president of his fraternity and again played center, snapping the ball to future All-American and NFL Hall of Famer Otto Graham. Despite receiving post-graduation offers from two professional football teams, Harold chose to serve his country and put his science degree to use by attending dental school on a US Navy scholarship.

While in dental school at Northwestern, Harold met a young nurse, Edna Mae Harbeck, who would soon become the love of his life. Upon their marriage in 1948, she joined him at his Navy duty station in San Diego. In addition to his work as a Navy dentist, he coached the base football team until he was deployed on the USS Dixie and traveled to China. After his two years with the Navy, he returned to Wood River where he began his dental practice at 300 South Central Avenue and he and Edna Mae started their family.

Dr. Hudson was known for his generous use of his professional skills to help others. He provided volunteer dental care to underprivileged children through the Wood River

Township Hospital. He loved his patients and was well regarded as a gentle doctor, combining dental skill with positive, caring conversation. Kids loved his toy chest where they got a treat after each visit. “Doc” retired from his 40 year practice in 1989.

Harold was a member of the East Alton Wood River High School Board for nine years. An avid supporter of Wood River High throughout his lifetime, Harold helped organize several class reunions and special celebrations for his coaches and could be spotted in the stands at football and basketball games well into his 80’s. Hud was inducted into the East Alton Wood River High School Hall of Fame in October of 2013, where he and his four sons led the gathering in a rousing rendition of the Wood River High School Fight Song, a special memory that will be cherished by his family for many years to come.

Harold loved sports and was a lifelong St. Louis Cardinals fan, beginning with his membership in the Knothole Gang in the late 1920’s. He was an avid ping pong and bumper pool player at home and a regular at the YWCA, swimming over a mile well into his 80’s. Active in the community, he was a Rotarian, a deacon at the Wood River Christian Church, and a lifetime dues-paying member of the American Legion. “Uncle Hud” had a nurturing bond with his extended family, and his own boys knew they could always count on their dad for a game of catch in the backyard – and so much more. Memorable family journeys in the station wagon became the foundation for intergenerational family reunions decades later. Harold was enthusiastic in his support of his boys and all of their activities, and he and Edna Mae traveled thousands of miles to show that same support to their grandchildren.

Harold is survived by sons Paul (Jan) of Peachtree City, Ga., Tom (Janna) of Deerfield, Ill., Steven (Becky) of East Alton, and Mark (Donna) of Charleston, Ill., as well as six grandchildren: Jeffrey Hudson, Becky (George) Clark, Andy, Dan, Brianna, and Ryan Hudson.

In addition to his parents, Harold was preceded in death by his brother Bernard, and Edna Mae, his wife of more than 65 years who passed away in December 2013. A memorial service celebrating Harold’s life will be held at Marks Mortuary on Monday, November 24, at 2:30 p.m., with visitation beginning at 1pm. Memorials can be made to his beloved High School thru the EAWR Foundation, 777 N. Wood River Avenue, Wood River, IL.