



Thomas Ramon Engler

July 27, 1925 - November 29, 2020

Thomas Ramon Engler, July 27, 1925-Nov. 29, 2020, was born in Mason City, Iowa, and grew up in Early, Iowa. It was there that he flourished as a high school athlete, played trumpet in the school band, and was a representative of his school as a member of an all-state vocal quartet. He never tired of telling stories about some of those crucial basketball games with his teammates! Tom's parents were Cecil Francis Engler and Etoile Coral Hein Engler. His younger sister Ila was also athletic in school and beyond.

Tom graduated from high school in June 1942 at age 16 and enrolled in Iowa State University that fall. Soon after, he joined the US Navy, serving in the Asian arena during World War Two. Returning as a veteran, he went back to school on the GI bill and completed his degree in general engineering. During that time Tom married his high school sweetheart, Jean Marie DeGarmo. After graduation from ISU, Tom and Jean lived briefly in locations both in Early and in Fort Dodge while he began his career in sales for the Electrical Engineering and Equipment Company. They found living in the Dodger Apartments a great way to make new lifelong friends, eventually buying their first home right across the street from the brand-new Fred N. Cooper School. Tom moved his family to Urbandale, Iowa, 1961-1963, to pursue advancement opportunities within his company. But the family missed their ties to Fort Dodge and being nearer to Early and extended family there. So Tom made a different career move in joining Electrical Materials Company and moving back to Fort Dodge. He was especially proud of studying hard those first years with Electrical Materials to complete his Professional Engineering certification! Eventually Tom was able to assume the presidency of the company, and to expand its size and scope with the acquisition of the Leighton Plumbing Supply. He valued his reputation for honesty, and of being a fair employer. In 1990 Tom retired. He and Jean enjoyed travel with friends and family for several years before Jean's health prevented it.

Activities that Tom enjoyed in his adult life outside of work were: leading Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts; coaching church league basketball; teaching Sunday School to rowdy boys; playing church league softball; serving in different capacities of leadership at First Presbyterian Church, playing bridge and cribbage, and golfing. If there was a sporting event on television, he would watch it! But his favorites were the Iowa Hawkeyes and the St. Louis Cardinals. He was a fan of big band music. He was a loyal friend to many and a

great sender of birthday and anniversary cards to friends and family members.

Tom was preceded in death by his parents, Cecil and Etoile, infant son Ramon, his sister Ila, son Gary and wife of 63 years, Jean. He was married in 2016 to Gloria Coleman Von Bank Magnusson Engler, who survives him. Other survivors are daughter Rona Patterson (Bruce); grandson Craig Patterson (Susie Schroeder) and great-grandson Calan; granddaughter Kara Winger (Russ); stepson Mike Von Bank (Trish); stepdaughter Vicki Simpson (Jim); brother-in-law John DeGarmo (Margaret); and nieces, nephews and their families.

Family interment services will be held at Union Cemetery in Early with the Rev. Dr. Austin Hill officiating. Memorial services will be held at a later date. Arrangements have been entrusted to Gunderson Funeral Home & Cremation Services.

Comments



“ During High School I worked part time at Electrical Material Co. When I started to work Carl Swanson was the owner and Tom Engler Joined the company soon after. Tom was always positive and contributed to the success and growth of the company In later years I visited Tom and Jean and would often see them when they spent time in Okoboji. I had planned to visit Tom this past summer but with the COVID Virus restrictions that wasn't possible.

Mark Andersen
Rochester,Minnesota

Mark Andersen - January 11 at 10:52 PM



“ I was just thinking a few days ago about getting out to Friendship Haven to visit my long-time friend Tom since I had not seen him since the last time I played the violin at a service there. But, sadly, I was too late. I first met Tom and Jean at First Presbyterian. Tom was one of my first Sunday School teachers there in the early 1950's. Just a little after that, Tom was one of my Troop 5 Boy Scout Leaders. Troop 5 (and we Boy Scouts) were blessed and lucky to have so many fine father/leaders like Tom in our Troop of over 100 boys. So many of us got to the higher ranks because of Tom's and others' leadership skills. Tom's pleasant, helpful, but smiley firm low-key style suited us Scouts very well. Tom was a deluxe role model whose style many of us try to copy when we work with, in case, students, kids, and grandkids. Tom was so well thought of in his/our church, work, and community. So was Jean. So, I want to share my condolences with Tom's family. Tom and Jean were such a fine people!

Bill Sergeant

William M. Sergeant (Bill) - December 02, 2020 at 11:15 AM



“ It was with deep regret when I heard of the passing of Tom Engler. I have always felt very fortunate the day Tom hired me as controller of Electrical Materials Co. in 1978. I can assure you it was my pleasure to have worked with him for 22 years. Tom was never a money guy...he wanted to share the profits "with the employees that made the profits". In those 22 years I never remember Tom to raise his voice with me or anyone. He respected his employees/customers and listened to them. It was Tom's interest to sell the company to the employees. He had a number of outside interests to buy the company, but that was not of interest to him. Years prior to his retirement Tom setup and Employee Stock Ownership Plan to begin making contributions which would ultimately buy him out. In 1990 Tom retired with the ESOP buying his stock. After Tom's retirement a number of us former EMC employees would meet at the Sports Page to share where we were at in our lives. I enjoyed these lunches. I feel a debt of gratitude for all that Tom did for me. A very generous man. My deepest sympathy to Gloria, Rona and family

Dennis Berte - December 01, 2020 at 09:49 PM



“ Cousin Gloria and family, so sorry to hear about Tom. Please know our thoughts and prayers are with you all. Love, Luanne Akins, Laurie Akins Arndt and Tim Akins

Luanne Akins - December 01, 2020 at 10:56 AM



“ I came to know Tom initially as a customer of his and then continued with he as a long-time customer of mine. He frequently visited me to share his tremendous pride in his family with me as well as many of his life experiences. His was a long life well lived. Since my own retirement, I have missed our conversations and our time together just sitting in my office or sitting in his car often pairing up his Bluetooth phone again. I appreciate his support of me and hope that I was in some way able to return the favor. A great friend.

Scott Johnston

Scott Johnston - November 30, 2020 at 05:20 PM