

Obit Earl Gates Whitlock.16?
05/10/2011

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Grandson of Sarah Spray (Whitlock) Gates file: Whitlock.16

Earl R. Gates (1931 - 2011)



Earl R. Gates, Appleton, died Friday, September 30, 2011, at age 79, one day before his 80th birthday. He was born on October 1, 1931, in Coffeen, Ill., the son of Raymond and Anna (Carlock) Gates.

A graduate of Coffeen High School, Earl received a BS from Blackburn College in Carlinville, Ill., and his MS in psychology from the University of Missouri-Columbia. He served in the U.S. Army from 1953-55 and was stationed in Germany for one year.

In 1956, he married Sherry Lawson, who survives him.

Beginning in the early 1960's, when the field was in its infancy, Earl held management positions in data processing for nearly 30 years, working for companies including McDonnell-Douglas Aircraft, Financial Programs and GTE Data Services and Supply. He retired in 1990 and in 1996, he and Sherry moved to Appleton, having lived in nine other states during their first 40 years together.

In his retirement, Earl pursued a lifelong love of writing, notably as a community columnist for the Appleton Post-Crescent. He was also a frequent contributor to the paper's "Letters" section and was the recipient of numerous Silver Pen awards for his contributions.

Above Earl's well-used keyboard were the words of John F. Kennedy: "Too often we enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought." Earl's columns and letters, while often provocative, were always reflective of a man who thought deeply and honestly about the issues he addressed. And while they were sometimes critical of conventional wisdom, they were never written with rancor, befitting this kind and gentle man.

Earl was also an accomplished memoirist and writer of fiction, earning a Jade Ring award from the Wisconsin Regional Writers' Association. He was a long-time member of the Fox Valley Writers' Club.

Prior to his diagnosis with lymphoma, Earl was a committed blood donor, contributing many gallons throughout his lifetime. He was also an EAA AirVenture volunteer for many years. His interests included genealogy, woodworking, travel (including sailing Puget Sound), reading and spending time with his grandchildren.

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In addition to wife, Sherry Lawson Gates, Earl is survived by his daughters, Julia Frascona (James), Appleton; Shelley Gates (David Kornhauser), Evanston, Ill.; and Alison Gates (John Watters), Appleton; grandchildren, Cassidy Warren (Brenna), Abbey and Emma Kornhauser, and Adam and Michael Frascona; step-grandson, Samuel Watters; great-grandson, Tai Warren; and brother, Carl Gates (Nancy), Sterling, Ill.

A memorial service for Earl will be held at 1 p.m. on Sunday, October 9, 2011, at the Fox Valley Fellowship, 2600 E. Philip Lane, Appleton. The Rev. Roger Bertschauser will be officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society or Autism Treatment Center of America.

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