



Clarence Vogel

August 11, 2011

Vogel, Clarence (Shorty) experienced the 20th century's revolution in aviation up close. Born January 28, 1914, on a farm in Clarksdale, MO, Shorty went to a one-room schoolhouse and rode a horse to school. As a child, he shared his father's interest in airplanes and watched returning WWI pilots barnstorm. After graduating with an electrical engineer degree from Kansas University, he worked as a Honeywell technical representative in WWII, fixing damaged bombers in the South Pacific war zone, using parts from wrecks. When the humidity caused electronics to fail, he invented a box lined with electric bulbs to keep the components dry and solve the problem. This was the beginning of a career of designing and building aviation equipment. After the War, he returned to Honeywell and worked on autopilots, including design for the first jet, a B47. A rudimentary computer was built to test the autopilot prior to flight. Shorty went on to the testing of autopilot components, specializing in vibration and environmental techniques. He co-held a patent for automatic hovering of helicopters. Asked to don a parachute for a helicopter test ride, he refused until the design of the rotor blades was changed, saying he didn't want to get wrapped around the propeller! Towards the end of his career, his equipment was used for testing the gyroscopes of satellites, gyroscopes that kept the satellite level and straight. Shorty also enjoyed time with his family and neighbors. A 60-year-old potluck group still meets, and a neighborhood Memorial Day brunch in the backyard has been going as long. The neighborhood men came over to Shorty's garage to work on their cars,

washing machines, or do woodworking. Active in the PTA's annual school carnival, Shorty even donned a tutu one year for a humorous male ballet skit. A few years ago, he received the Kenny Neighborhood Treasure award. He and his wife Agnes spent many weekends volunteering for Camp Fire Boys and Girls, building a new day camp. When he took early retirement, Shorty had more time for his hobbies-travel, photography and gardening (passionate about his tomatoes). He liked woodworking, specializing in black walnut furniture and boxes, which he gave away as gifts. His daughters benefited from his help, fixing their cars and remodeling four of their homes. And he took care of his grandson, Mike, after school. A 50-year member of Hennepin Avenue United Methodist Church, Shorty ushered for years. Later, he joined the Recyclers and worked on various projects around the church. Four years ago, he started his last legacy, the Moses Project. With the help of a committee, he commissioned a sculpture of the Ten Commandments, which represents a grassroots effort of peace among different faith communities. A prominent rabbi, imam, and Hennepin's senior minister dedicated the sculpture. Underneath the sculpture are three plaques with the Ten Commandments in English, Hebrew, and Arabic. Shorty's idea is to appreciate our common roots, history, and similarities. His dream is for other congregations, temples, and mosques to take this idea and expand it. A DVD of the process is available through www.haumc.org. The celebration of Shorty's life is at Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church Saturday, August 13. Reviewal at 10 A.M., service at 11 A.M., followed by lunch in the church's Art Room and burial at Lakewood Cemetery. Clarence (Shorty) Vogel is survived by his beloved wife of 65 years, Agnes; his sister Luella Harr of St. Joseph, MO, his sister-in-law Esther Horsted of Waunakee, WI; his daughters Chris Spencer and Eileen Sytsma, his son-in-laws Donald Sytsma and the late Archibald Spencer, his grandson Michael Merritt, all of Minneapolis; his grandsons Tyler Sytsma, Phoenix, AZ, James Spencer, Whitinsville, MA, Frederic Spencer, Poulsbo, WA; his granddaughters Elizabeth Fling, Bainbridge Island, WA, Eleanor Dwight of San Sebastopol, CA, and Laura

Brown of New York City; four nieces, and eight great- grandchildren. The family wishes to thank Bradley Leibovich, M.D., of Mayo Clinic, Martha McCusker, M.D., of HCMC, Hospice of the Twin Cities, and the team of Jacqueline Skubal, Andrea Stearns, John Ryan, and Michael Merritt for their excellent care. Memorials may be sent to Camp Fire USA Minnesota Council designated for the Agnes Vogel Scholarship Fund, 3100 West Lake Street Suite 100, Minneapolis, MN 55416 or Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church, 511 Groveland Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55403. Washburn-McReavy Davies Chapel 612-377-2203