



Gordon Melford Thureen

October 9, 1928 - July 1, 2022

Thureen, Gordon 93, passed away July 1, at home in Minneapolis. Gordy was born to Oscar and Clara Thureen, October 9, 1928, at the family farm, rural East Grand Forks, where he grew up. Gordy and his siblings attended the 8 grades of elementary school in one-room schoolhouse Sunnyside District 46, a 1 1/2 mile walk across fields. When they got out of school in the afternoon, their crow was always waiting to escort them back to the farm. After completing grade school, Gordy studied in preparation for Confirmation and making his confession of faith. For high school, he enrolled at the Northwest Agricultural College in Crookston, which allowed him to attend classes for six months and work on the farm for the rest of each year. After graduation, he was drafted into the Army to serve during the Korean conflict. Following basic training, Gordy was selected and trained to serve as a Special Agent in the CIC (the Army's Counter Intelligence Corps), living in safe houses and wearing a suit as he trailed spies in and around Frankfurt, Germany a biographical detail he didn't think was interesting enough to disclose to his wife and kids until well into his 80s. After completing his military service, Gordy went back to the farm where he and his brother Orville were bachelor farmers for the next 25 years. In 1973, Gordy took a quick farming break to travel to Europe with brother Al's daughter Patti who was studying French at the University of North Dakota. They visited Thureen relatives in Sweden before coming to France where Patti would study for the summer and Uncle Gordy would fly back to resume his role as Bachelor Farmer. They were

taking a tour of the Louvre when Patti recognized a familiar face from the Red River Valley, her French Professor. "Mademoiselle Dyrud, this is my uncle Gordy." Gordy and Faythe were married at the Harvey & Myrtle Dyrud Farm between Newfolden and Thief River Falls, MN, on June 21, 1975. A year later, daughter Rachel was born and 2 years after that son Paul completed their family. As the children grew, Itasca State Park became a favorite vacation spot. Later their college towns, Northfield, MN and Poughkeepsie, NY became destinations for family activities. When grandson Leo joined the family, Gordy and Faythe often flew to visit New York City. Both before and after marriage, Gordy was involved in community and church activities. For years he was on the Northland Township Board and was on Bethany Church council. Gordy and Faythe were co-delegates to NW MN Synod conferences. They also hosted Thureens and Dyruds at annual Thanksgiving gatherings and Norwegian students at Christmas parties where they learned to make lefse & sing Norwegian carols around the tree. Gordy had an excellent lifetime memory, and enjoyed setting down and sharing his reminiscences, neatly handwritten on yellow, lined tablet paper. "We were four siblings. Orv, the oldest, was a farmer at age 10. Al and I, then Clarice, followed at two year intervals. Clarice was busy with her kittens, while Al and I harnessed the dog to pull us in the wagon. One day when Mom's uncle Thomas Flatten was going home after a visit, Al and I decided to tie our wagon behind his buggy and get a ride. The horse obviously didn't like our squeaky-wheeled wagon. I'm sure it was the fastest he had ever run and the wildest ride we'd ever taken." Also penned into Gordy's yellow tablets: countless jokes, poems, haikus, and tiny plays of his invention: "The Spelling Bee" Moderator: The word is CIRTUPTULOUS. Student: May I have a definition, please. Moderator: The act of being Cirtupt. Student: Use it in a sentence, please. Moderator: Isn't she Cirtuptulous! Special thanks to Methodist Hospital Home Health care nurses; occupational and physical therapists and aides for coming into our home and working so kindly and patiently with Gordy and with those of us who were care givers. Also, many thanks to the Hospice workers who did

everything possible to make the final weeks of Gordy's life comfortable. Gordy was well loved by relatives and friends. Here's a message from nephew Alex, son of Gordy and Faythe's Paris matchmaker. "Uncle Gordy had a deep joy in him, like a well that ran far, far underground. You could see it when you talked with him, that his easy smile and jokes weren't something on the surface, but seemed to originate in his very soul, at the core of his being." Gordy was preceded in death by his parents, brothers Orville and Allen, and sister Clarice. He is survived by his beloved wife Faythe, son Paul (Hanna Cheek), daughter Rachel, grandson Leo Portner, many close relatives, and special friends from Bethany and ECLC church communities, and the Loring Way Condominium. Memorial service, Edina Community Lutheran Church, Thursday, Sept. 1, 2:00 p.m., with visitation one hour prior. Luncheon following service. Graveside service, Bethany Lutheran Church, East Grand Forks, MN. Sat., Sept. 10, 1:00 p.m., followed by luncheon and visitation in church. In place of flowers, memorial gifts are preferred to ECLC or Bethany Lutheran or a charity of donor's choice.