



Leon Roger Ekola

April 19, 1935 - December 15, 2022

Lee Ekola passed away in his 88th year on December 15, 2022.

A child of the depression and of Minnesota's Iron Range, Lee started working at the American Linen plant in Hibbing at the age of 11. His early responsibilities included sorting and folding laundry, loading machines, and keeping the plant clean. After earning his Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota in 1958, he was promoted to engineer and later to engineering manager. In 1970 he left American Linen to start Ekola Engineering (later renamed Etech and now Kannegiesser Etech), which provides automated material handling systems for industrial and institutional laundries. The company now employs 220 people and installs equipment around the globe.

Lee and his beloved wife Beverly met at a picnic in 1955, and since their marriage in May 1956, they have been nearly inseparable. Their family grew to include five children. Lee did not like to be idle. He loved to build things (kitchen cabinets, a picket fence surrounding their home, a garage for his son's family), and always had his eye out for something to fix, especially at the family's lake home and for friends. He loved boats. Starting in his teens and lasting into his 70's, he built speedboats, runabouts, sailboats, and dinghies. He had boats on Lake Harriet and Lake Superior. He enjoyed cross-country skiing, biking, and volleyball. In the later years of his life, he was an

enthusiastic volunteer with Urban Homeworks.

Lee is survived by his wife, Beverly; sisters, Judy Porter (Dave) and Lynne Harrington (Jeff); brother, Dean; children, Susan Caron, Nancy Ekola, Darlene Nye (Steve), Ali Gohar (Jane), Peter Ekola (Carita Zimmerman); and seven grandchildren. He is preceded in death by his parents, Gus and Agnes (Swanson) Ekola; and his granddaughter, Fiona May Ekola.

Visitation will be held on Thursday, December 29, from 5 -7 PM, at Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel. Memorial service on Friday, December 30, at 11 AM, at Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (5025 Knox Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55419). Due to severe allergies, we request no flowers or live plants at the visitation or memorial service. Thank you for your understanding. Memorials may be made to Urban Homeworks, which provides quality and affordable housing to Twin Cities' residents (urbanhomeworks.org) or to the Alzheimer's Association (alzheimers.org)

Previous Events

Visitation

DEC **29**. 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Edina Chapel
5000 West 50th & Highway 100
Edina, MN 55436

Memorial Service

DEC **30**. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (CT)

Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (So. Mpls)
5025 Knox Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55419

Tribute Wall

DB

“ Dear Bev and Ekola Family,

We are deeply saddened by the loss of Lee. We have been friends for over seventy years. I met Lee on a warm summer day in 1948 when he stopped his home-built hydroplane in front of our cabin on Sturgeon Lake. Then this person that I had never met proceeded to wave and shout at me, "let's go for a boat ride." That was the beginning of a lifelong friendship that created many wonderful memories.

Lee and Bev are very special people that are always thinking and doing for others. One example of this would be that many years after our high school graduation, the Ekolas searched for and located many of our high school friends that were scattered across the country. They proceeded to host a gathering of this large group at their "camp" in Wisconsin. The reunion in Wisconsin continued bi-annually for several years until Lee's health became an issue.

Lee was an exceptional person who will be greatly missed by all who were fortunate enough to have known him. May he rest in peace.

*Dave and Kathleen Barrett
Lansing, MI*

DAVID BARRETT - December 29, 2022 at 10:52 AM

KV

“ *Kathy Varrassi, niece. Rest in peace Uncle Lee. Your gentle ways gave peace to others.*

Kathryn Varrassi - December 28, 2022 at 04:24 PM

JM

“ Dear Peter, I remember your dad when I first met him... as we were all helping you get settled in your current home. He was so comfortable to "hang out" with!..a very gentle and kind man, whose devotion to his wife was obvious, as is the tremendous influence he had on you, his beloved son. I have fond memories of Lee, and am happy for his having completed his journey here and for what must have been a very joyful, celebratory return to his heavenly home!

Judy Felker, Peter's aunt by marriage - December 22, 2022 at 09:55 PM

DH

*Dear Ekola's,
My Heart has broken with the passing of my Dear Friend Lee. I was So Blessed to become companions to Lee and his Beverly. I Thank you Peter and Susan for allowing me many years as Lee and Beverly's friend. My heart will hold him with love forever.
Donna Hechsel*

Donna Hechsel - December 23, 2022 at 09:48 AM