



## Mrs. Mary Virginia Geiger

September 19, 1922 - May 16, 2020

Geiger, Earl and Virginia Ginny Brush was a vivacious girl of nearly 16 in the summer of 1938, living on her family farm and grooming an Angus steer to show at the county fair. Earl Geiger was 19, and had just graduated from high school when Ginny caught his eye during a 4-H tour. Earl courted Ginny, taking her on picnics, despite her parents' misgivings. As in a fairy tale, the two eloped and lived happily married for nearly 79 years, rarely apart, even in death. Ginny and her family struggled throughout the Depression, losing the family farm. She remembers eating apples from the farm as her main source of food and wearing shoes long after they had become too small. Always striving to succeed, even as a youngster, Ginny competed in the county spelling bee and won a ribbon at the fair for her home baked bread. She always loved the heel of a freshly baked loaf the best. At age 12, she bravely left the farm to enter high school in Brooklyn, IA, where she stayed with a family she didn't even know. After high school graduation and secretarial school, Ginny returned home to help her parents. Even as a small child Earl Geiger was eager for adventure. While playing in his rural Iowa hometown on a Saturday morning Earl saw a barnstormer land in an open field and the offer of airplane rides for \$1.50. Earl ran home as fast as he could to grab his paper route savings so that he could be the first to go up with the pilot. Others in town were afraid but not this small boy who never forgot the ride of a lifetime! Earl came by his brave spirit naturally. When Earl's father William fell in love with Dora Ahrens, an "outsider" to his tight knit Amana Colonies community,

he left his home to marry this young telephone switchboard operator. At that time members of the Amana Colonies were not allowed to marry outside the community. As a youngster while squirrel hunting with friends, Earl was accidentally shot through his neck. He hitched a ride to the hospital on the running board of a farmer's truck. Earl claims he managed to survive only by insisting the hospital staff give him hot lemonade which stopped the bleeding in his throat. This incident resulted in Earl's signature husky voice. Earl called on farmers with his father, an Extension Agent who worked with farmers on improving agriculture practices. At this young age, Earl became excited about all the new ideas of the time for agriculture, such as rotation of crops and hybrid corn. This interest in innovation would stick with Earl throughout his long and successful career. When Earl was only 14, his father was killed in a car accident. Earl and his younger sister survived along with their mother who was severely injured. Because their three older siblings were at university, Earl cared for his sister, working at various jobs during the year their mother was hospitalized. Earl's family moved to Ames after his mother recovered and he attended Ames High School where he was an All Conference running back and won an award for highest grades in History. After high school Earl managed the family farm as a partner with his uncle. After marrying, Earl and Ginny lived on the family farm when their first child Gary was born. Earl was a natural innovator and entrepreneur. He designed a 5-story heated chicken barn highlighted in a newspaper article titled "Chickens That Live at the Ritz". Always striving for a better life, Ginny encouraged Earl to leave farming and follow his many business interests. Earl took a job with Hybrid Hogs Company for a short time before launching into owning his own business as partner in Grinnellian Seed, and moving the family to Grinnell, IA. He eventually sold Grinnellian Seed to Cargill. Their daughter Mary Lynn was born in Grinnell. In 1953, they moved to Edina, MN, where daughter Jane was born, for Earl to head Cargill's seed-production division. In 1956, Earl's partnership in Larson Boat Works took them to Little Falls, MN, where son Tom was born. Under his leadership, Larson and Remington Rand designed a revolutionary fiberglass

gun, making the production of boats less costly and higher in quality than before. With markedly increased sales, Larson became the world's largest runabout boat company. The family's time in Little Falls became life defining. Earl and Ginny formed lifelong friendships, the boat business thrived and they built their beloved home on Gull Lake. After selling Larson to Brunswick, Earl and Ginny moved their family back to Edina. At this point their business involvements included Oil-Dyne and The Warren Company. After several years, Earl was asked to again head Larson. Under his leadership the company went public as Larson Industries and acquired C. A. Lund Company, Rolite, Inc., and Brinktun Pool Tables. Larson Industries developed a new lines of Northland skis with the endorsement of Olympic Gold Medalist Stein Erickson. In addition, Northland produced 90% of the hockey stick market. The Minnesota Marketing Association named Larson Industries "Marketing Company of the Year". Later, when Earl ventured into banking, forming Heritage Bancshares Group, Inc., Ginny took computer classes and kept the corporation's records. Throughout their lives Ginny and Earl gathered many dear friends. They were known for hosting dinners, cocktail parties and long weekends at the lake house. Together they traveled the world, eventually spending winters near friends on Longboat Key, FL and in Scottsdale, AZ where they loved to play golf. Ginny was known for painting birds, especially her beloved chickadees, and countryside scenes. Her artwork adorned the hallways of Friendship Village in Bloomington where they spent their final years among many lifelong friends. (Continued)

# Cemetery Details

## Hillside Crematory

2610 19th Ave NE  
Minneapolis, MN 55418