



Ralph Allen Engstrand

November 3, 2017

Engstrand, Ralph Allen February 17 1923 November 3 2017 Minnesota pioneer in the boat, snowmobile and RV industry, 94 year old Ralph Engstrand passed away peacefully at his winter home in Pompano Beach, Florida where he lived with his son Michael Engstrand for the past 8 years. Born in 1923 to Allen Engstrand and Margaret (Mooney) Engstrand in Minneapolis Minnesota, he attended school in the Minneapolis area. He spent many summers as a child with his sister Doris at his grandparents' home near Maple Lake. He became a very good roller and ice skater while working at the old Minneapolis Arena and was part of the "Rink Rat" group. Ralph was a West High School graduate "Class of 1942". He then joined the Navy during WWII and was a member of the "Fighting Sea Bee's" Construction Battalion helping to build and maintain runways in the South Pacific Theater. These runways were used by the famous pilot Pappy Boyington and the Black Sheep Squadron. The skills and disciplines Ralph learned in the Navy helped later in life to be a successful businessman. Upon his return to Minneapolis, Ralph attended the University of Minnesota but soon met and married Leola (Lee) Nelson. He soon tried his hand at Real Estate before landing at Gabbert's Furniture in TV sales. Growing up near Lake of the Isles, Lake Calhoun plus visits to Lake Minnetonka and Gull Lake, and his experience in the Navy, Ralph frequently thought about boating. He convinced Don Gabbert to start selling Evinrude outboard motors. Mr Gabbert saw the great potential in Ralph and soon added Trojan boats to Gabbert's Marine Sales Division. Ralph was so good at selling

boats he was hired to be a Trojan Factory Sales Rep. Within a few years he was asked to join Brainerd Marine as General Manager and part owner. During that time while living on Gull Lake near Brainerd, he was instrumental in helping start Ski-Gull snow skiing facility and promoted the first snowmobile races on Gull Lake. Ralph was also an early promoter of the Gull Lake Yacht Club where he eventually became Commodore. Because of a growing family, Ralph then decided to purchase his own Boat and RV business in Iowa. First it was Dubuque Iowa but then relocated to Des Moines to be more centrally located. His two sons Mark and Mike were becoming more involved with the family business which was growing rapidly. Ralph became a private pilot at this time flying his own Beechcraft Bonanza which allowed him to travel to the various boat and RV factories. The real reason he purchased the airplane was because it allowed fast trips to Gull Lake on weekends during the summer. Ralph and his wife Lee were frequent customers of Bar Harbor on Gull Lake. Ralph was an avid hunter and fisherman catching many fish in Minnesota including Walleye, Northern pike and a few Muskies. He also caught larger fish deep sea fishing in Florida including Amberjack, Sailfish and a 10 foot Hammerhead Shark. Due to the great success Ralph had in the boat and RV business, he and his wife were able to travel around the world on countless trips provided by the various boat and RV manufactures. Ralph retired in the late 1980s so he could spend more time at Gull Lake in the summer and Pompano Beach Florida in the winter where he regularly attended the Fort Lauderdale International Boat Show as well as the Miami and Palm Beach Boat Shows. Ralph is preceded in death by his father Allen Engstrand, stepfather Ward McCutcheon, mother Margaret Mooney McCutcheon, wife Lee Engstrand and granddaughter Andrea O'Leary along with various other relatives. He is survived by his sons Mark Engstrand and Michael Engstrand (Kristy Fox), stepdaughter Charleen Bacigalupo, granddaughters Monica Anderson and Megan Bacigalupo, sister Doris (Ray) Rucinski, nephews Dennis (Shiela) Hoiseth, Curtis Hoiseth, niece Patty Hoiseth and niece Kathy Wallat, life long friend and high school classmate

Harry Spell along with various other family and friends. Services : Viewing Friday November 10th from 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm at Washburn-McReavy Davies Chapel at 2301 Dupont Ave S, Minneapolis, MN 55405. Burial: Saturday November 11th at 12pm noon sharp at Lakewood Chapel & Cemetery, 3600 Hennepin Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55408.