



## Russell Arthur Leighton

February 17, 1932 - April 18, 2024

Russell A. Leighton,

Age 92, of Golden Valley, passed away peacefully on April 18 at St. Therese of New Hope. Preceded in death by his beloved wife of 58 years, Jeanne, and great granddaughter, Summer "Sunny" Jean Sullivan. Also preceded in death by his parents, two sisters (Josephine and Mary Lou) and a brother (Al).

Russell was born in Otsego during a snowstorm on Feb. 17, 1932. The doctor arrived by horse-drawn sleigh, and just in time. Russell often joked that "he was born between the house and the barn!" He was a 1950 graduate of Elk River High School where he was a three-sport standout and a popular student leader. After a year at the University of North Dakota, where he played football and majored in History, he returned home to enlist in the U.S. Army with seven other Elk River natives. Russell's military journey and decorated service to his country included battle during the Korean War and Purple Heart recognition.

He was a sought-after speaker for Veterans Day programs with audiences eager to hear accounts of his military journey. Following his military service, he embarked on a career in the automotive industry, which included nearly 30 loyal years with Champion Spark Plug Company. He and Jeanne married in 1955 and raised four children. Russell had an infectious, upbeat demeanor and an energetic personality that could light up a room. He was especially passionate about serving Minnesota's Chapter 8 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Survived by children: Julie (Roger) Kline, Russell, Jr., "Rick" (Alice), Timothy (Denise) and Christopher (Sara); grandchildren: Victoria

Samuelson, Sophia Stoos, Catherine Chicoine, Elizabeth Sullivan, Roz Leighton, Ted Leighton, Elizabeth Zumpano, Andrew Leighton, Thomas Leighton, Carly Leighton, Emily Leighton and Alison Leighton; great grandchildren, Vincent, Lucie, Joseph, Michael, Henry, Jack and Evan, as well as many adoring nieces, nephews and in laws. A heartfelt thanks to Mary Ann Christenson for her love and support during a special nine-year friendship with Russell. The family is eternally grateful for your presence in his life. Additional thanks to Park Nicollet Hospice and the nursing staff at St. Therese for their outstanding care. In lieu of flowers, memorials preferred to Honor Flight Twin Cities at [www.HonorFlightTwinCities.org](http://www.HonorFlightTwinCities.org) . We invite you to celebrate a true officer and a gentleman.

Memorial Service, Saturday, May 4 at 11am, visitation 10-11am, and reception following the service at:

Washburn-McReavy.com

Edina Chapel 952-920-3996

5000 W 50th & Hwy 100

# Previous Events

## Visitation

MAY 4. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

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

## Memorial Service

MAY 4. 11:00 AM - 11:45 PM (CT)

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

## Reception

MAY 4. 11:45 AM - 1:30 PM (CT)

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

# Tribute Wall

YA

“ Your friends at WCCO Radio & Audacy purchased the Blue Caribbean Bouquet for the family of Russell Arthur Leighton.



Your friends at WCCO Radio & Audacy - May 03, 2024 at 12:53 PM



“ Dreams From the Heart Bouquet was purchased for the family of Russell Arthur Leighton.



April 29, 2024 at 11:04 AM

ML

“ Minneapolis North, HSM and Leadership purchased the Sweetest Sunrise Bouquet for the family of Russell Arthur Leighton.



Minneapolis North, HSM and Leadership - April 23, 2024 at 02:25 PM

ML

“ Minneapolis North, HSM and Leadership planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Russell Arthur Leighton.

Minneapolis North, HSM and Leadership - April 23, 2024 at 02:25 PM

LW

“ *LAW - Ladies of Aspen Woods purchased the Beautiful in Blue for the family of Russell Arthur Leighton.*



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**LAW - Ladies of Aspen Woods** - April 20, 2024 at 06:00 PM