



William J. Whitbeck

June 4, 2013

Whitbeck, William J. (Bill) 95, died on June 4, 2013 in Minneapolis. He was perhaps best known as a raconteur of fascinating stories from his ninety years of varied and frequently unusual experiences. Possessing a remarkable memory he created vivid pictures of settings all over the globe, and actions and ironies that befell him and others, too. His presence was larger-than-life and his personality warm and affable. Whitbeck, 95, was born in 1918 in St. Paul to Henry J. and Cecilia Bergeron Whitbeck. The family moved to a property in Stillwater in 1921, where Bill's daughter and son-in-law now live. In 1935 Bill graduated from Stillwater High School, and in 1942 from the University of Minnesota majoring in journalism, and a member of the journalism fraternity, Theta Xi. Whitbeck was the first student to join Naval ROTC when it was first established at the University. A Lieutenant, he served in the Pacific in WWII on the U.S.S. cruiser, the Nashville, the periodic flagship of Gen. Douglas McArthur. Whitbeck fought in the historic Battle of Leyte Gulf and had duty at Finschafen, New Guinea where he also was the Naval Provost Marshal. Following the war Whitbeck moved to Manhattan as an advertising account executive, mainly with McCann Erickson. There he met and married Elizabeth Janet Steele of Gouverneur, NY in 1948. They returned to Minneapolis to raise their family, work, and be active in community service. Managing the Gluek's, Twin City Federal and Advance Machine Co. accounts among others, Whitbeck worked for Vance Pidgeon & Assoc. Advertising Agency. He then moved into sales management with Beck, Inc. selling and

designing copper imbedded circuit boards. When Control Data acquired Beck, Whitbeck continued working with Control Data. Finally, he moved to Advance Machine Company, principally a manufacturer of floor machines, and after twenty-three years retired from Advance in 1990 as a Vice President of Sales. Active in Republican politics for nearly 60 years, Whitbeck characterized himself as a "Rockefeller Republican." Except for State Chair he served in most Party offices at the Congressional and State levels, both managerial and financial, and was elected a delegate to two National Republican Conventions. In 1972 Whitbeck was honored to be named a Presidential Elector, and voted as a member of the Electoral College. He served on countless campaign committees for candidates at every level, including U.S. President. For such service he was honored twice in Minnesota as "Most Outstanding Republican of the Year." Whitbeck was also active in the U of M Naval ROTC Alumni, Friends of the Library, Skylight, 5th Police Precinct Citizen Advisory Committee, and the East Isles Neighborhood Assn. He had a strong interest in the quality of public education and so was at one time active in PTA organizations for Kenwood Elementary, Jefferson Junior High and West Senior High schools. He notably served on a citizen's committee with the goal of creating a junior college in Minneapolis, successfully helping to establish the Metropolitan Junior College. He is survived by his dearly beloved wife of 65 years, Liz, daughter Betsey Whitbeck and her husband Jim Nelson, brother-in-law Cecil (Lois) Steele and children Chris, Ellen, Peggy and Nan and their families, niece Anne Whitbeck (Brian) Huysman and children Elizabeth and Peter, nephew Bill (Kim) Whitbeck and children David and Katy, adopted grandchildren M.E. Head (Chris) Kirwan, Ginny Head, Michael Rybicki, U.S.A.F Lt. Jessica Rybicki, dear friends Martha (Mrs. Douglas M.) Head, Roger and Mary Ann Rybicki, Hans and Lynne Dekker, Gloria (Mrs. Gale W.) Freeman, and many others. Memorials can be sent to the Woman's Club of Minneapolis, MinnPost, or the charity of choice . Committal service is Wednesday, August 14, 10:00 AM at Fort Snelling National Cemetery, assembly area #4. Memorial service at the Officer's Club at 11:00 AM will be

followed by noon reception. www.Washburn-McReavy.com Davies Chapel
612-377-2203

Note: the westbound entrance from I494 to 34th Ave at Fort Snelling
Cemetery may be closed for construction.

Cemetery Details

Fort Snelling National Cemetery

7601 34th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55450

Tribute Wall

EK

“ our sincere condolences to Betty,Betsy and Jim your cousin Eric W.and Nancy Shortt-Kerr

Eric Kerr - June 09, 2013 at 05:44 PM

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“ My fondest recollection of Bill, is that of his showing up on my doorstep one day, lawn sign for his beloved Betsy's campaign @ the ready for planting in my front yard. Though the details of our conversation no longer linger in my mind, I recall that we spoke @ length and had a great time together. To my regret, I fell out of the Friday morning gatherings once they moved to the new locale. Bill was a great patriot, an endlessly interesting conversationalist and my kind of Republican.

Darryl Carter - June 09, 2013 at 03:29 PM