



Dale E. Heckenberg

November 7, 1922 - May 4, 2018

Dale Edward Heckenberg, 95, of Eddyville, died Friday, May 4, 2018, at the Hospice Comfort House in Pella. He was born Tuesday, November 7, 1922, in Eddyville, the son of Edward George and Stella Florence McFall Heckenberg. He graduated from Eddyville High School with the Class of 1941. His love for baseball started when he heard his favorite team, the St. Louis Cardinals, play on the radio. At the time Dizzy Dean was his favorite player. Dale developed his baseball skills by playing catch with his younger brother Dean. At age 12 he was old enough to play with a local team at "The Beach" on Sunday's. The ball field was located along the Des Moines River just above the Eveland Bridge. This provided entertainment as well as fellowship for the neighborhood, but in Dale's eyes it was a chance to play the game he loved. Dale played for Eddyville High School and made the varsity baseball team. During their most successful season the team qualified for the State Tournament. In the semifinal game Dale pitched a 1 -0 complete game victory against Mediapolis. Dale was credited with a 1 hitter on the mound and got a hit to drive in the winning run. A baseball scout by the name of Adam Haluska noted Dale's skills and sent Joe Cambria to sign Dale to a contract for the Washington Senators. The Charlotte Hornets were the first professional team Dale played for and his first manager was Calvin Griffith who later became owner of the Minnesota Twins. World War II heated up and Dale was drafted. His baseball career was interrupted, as he was sent to the Philippines. During his time there, it was discovered that he was a professional baseball player. They immediately cut his orders and sent him to Manilla to play baseball for the soldiers. Two of the players in Manilla were major league stars, Early Wynn and Joe Garagiola. Can you imagine the thrill Dale got by meeting and playing with guys he had followed as a young boy! Dale's professional baseball career lasted 5 years. The best game he ever pitched was for the Grand Forks Chiefs (the Washington Senators Farm Club) against the Duluth Dukes (the St. Louis Cardinals farm club) in the Northern League. Dale pitched a 3 – 0 complete game victory. He was credited with a 1 hitter on the mound and two hits at the plate. Dale, Dean and Albert Heckenberg were all signed and played professional baseball. Dale would later move back to the Eddyville area. He worked at John Morrell in Ottumwa for 5 years as an engineer and as a foreman. In 1955, Dale started farming and raising cattle. Dale retired from farming in 1984 but continued to

work around the farm following retirement. On January 14, 1951, Dale was united in marriage to Mary E. Lagerstrom in Ottumwa, Mary died December 8, 2010. Dale was a former member of the First Lutheran Church in Ottumwa and currently a member of the First Christian Church in Oskaloosa and a member of the Eddyville American Legion. He enjoyed coon hunting and trapping with his sons, traveling with Mary especially to Europe and Sweden where they went to visit relatives and friends. He also enjoyed playing cards and dominos while wintering in California and Arizona. One of the main reasons Dale was sent to Earth by God was to be a “caregiver” for the important women in his life. He helped take care of his grandmother Margaret until she passed away in 1955 at age 91. Then he helped take care of his mother Stella until she passed away in 1993 at age 101. Finally, he took care of his wife Mary until she passed away in 2010 at age 85. All three ladies loved and appreciated Dale for the sacrifice he was willing to make so they could be as comfortable as possible until the end. Until he was no longer able, Dale would make trips to the cemeteries during Memorial Day weekend to place flowers on each grave.

Dale is survived by his two sons: Terry (& Barb) Heckenberg of Pella and Paul Heckenberg of Eddyville.

He was preceded in death by his wife; his parents; and a brother: Dean Heckenberg. Funeral services will be held Tuesday, May 8, 2018, at 1:30 P.M. in the Bates Funeral Chapel in Oskaloosa with Reverend Robert Goodrich officiating. Burial will be in the Henness Cemetery southwest of Oskaloosa. Graveside military rites will be given by members of the Oskaloosa American Legion and V.F.W. Visitation will begin Monday, May 7, 2018, after 4 P.M. in the Bates Funeral Chapel and the family will be present at the funeral chapel Monday from 5 – 7 P.M. to greet friends and relatives. Memorials may be made to the First Christian Church.

Cemetery

Hennessey Cemetery

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