



Corliss Frederick Kortge

March 8, 1925 - February 6, 2008

Corliss Kortge lived a life saturated with honesty, integrity and respect. He was many things in his life – a musician, innovator/builder, nurse, artist, farmer, but most importantly, a devoted husband, father and grandfather. He lived his life deliberately, with a sense of purpose, always putting his family first and compassionately helping those in need. A man of many skills, Corliss could do just about anything, yet it was his incredibly kind heart that made him the man people were proud to know. As the United States was celebrating a time of temporary peace and prosperity between the two world wars, Frederick Oscar and Ruby Beatrice (Griswold) Kortge of Scottville, Michigan had a celebration of their own with the birth of their son, Corliss Frederick, on March 8, 1925. Corliss was born at home, which still stands today on First Street next to the post office. The Kortge household would eventually be a bustling place with the busyness of five children: Corliss, Cleon, Eulan, Gary Dean and Clarisanne. To support their growing family, Frederick worked for the Mason County Road Commission while Ruby was a teacher (the Griswold family had a long line of educators). Growing up, Corliss struggled with a hair lip and cleft pallet, which became quite profound in school. Teachers had a hard time understanding him, but luckily Corliss' fellow classmates understood him, and passed his answers on to the teacher. But this physical ailment never stood in Corliss' way of succeeding, especially in his academics and as a drum major in the marching band. He even entered several essay contests and proudly won. Corliss graduated near the top of his class at Scottville High School in

1943, while his brother went on to be the valedictorian. From a young age, Corliss had a real soft spot for animals and aspired to be a farmer when he grew up. After graduating high school, he went on to attend Michigan State University for two years, but was encouraged to become a nurse while working as an orderly at St. Lawrence Hospital in Lansing. However, it was hard for men to get into this field at that time, so he had to wait a year before starting St. Lawrence Nursing School. He went on to earn his RN degree with a specialty in Surgical and Emergency Room care. To help pay for nursing school, Corliss worked as a janitor at East Lansing Schools, but also earned enough to buy himself a 1957 Chevy Bellaire that turned out to be a lemon. Corliss started his nursing career at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing. However, after a year, he and some of the girls he went to school with moved west to Los Angeles, California. Once here, Corliss went to work at the Veterans Hospital for some time and in the ER at UCLA Hospital. Then, in 1959, he moved back to Michigan and took a job in the First Aid Center at Oldsmobile, where he focused on removing steel splinters from workers' eyes. Once back in Michigan, Corliss also tried to look up his old girlfriend through her friend, Margaret Millner, and as fate would have it, he and Margaret connected instead. They fell hopelessly in love and were married a year later in Lansing on November 19, 1960. Corliss and Margaret were blessed with four wonderful children: Cheryl, Jon, Laurie and Kim. Corliss and Margaret eventually moved from Lansing back to Scottville to raise their family. Here, Corliss took a job as Supervisor of the Obstetric Department and in the Emergency Room at Paulina Stearns Hospital in Ludington. After a while, though, he longed to be back in California, so they packed up and headed west for a while. Corliss wanted to share his love for the beauty and splendor of California with his children, so they would take many day trips up to the mountains. The kids rode in the back of the station wagon while Corliss drove slowly, so they didn't miss any of the grandeur surrounding them. After Corliss suffered his first heart attack, the family packed up once again and moved back to Michigan. They bought a farm on Chavez Road in south Scottville,

which was the closest Corliss would ever come to being a farmer. With a passion for nursing, he and Margaret then decided to add rooms onto their farmhouse so they could start Pinecrest Adult Foster Care Home. Here the couple compassionately cared for elderly patients, though they were only allowed eight patients, per their state license. They eventually retired from AFC in 1998. Although Corliss had a passion for helping others, he had many other hobbies and interests to keep him busy in retirement. Over the years, he had become a highly skilled builder of new innovations, like WWII German warplanes, ultralight planes and mini sailboats. Moreover, Corliss used his creativeness as an artist too, painting scenic pictures and drawing buildings and planes. But his artist talents did not end there; he was also a wonderful musician, playing the piano and organ, as well as the drums, by instinct. Corliss was an avid reader and history buff, especially as it related to World War II, and he never lost his love for animals and farming. Although Corliss made his career in nursing and helping others, it was apparent that his most important job in life was taking care of his children and grandchildren. His happiest moments always involved the time he spent with his wife and family. Corliss could be counted on as a provider, a friend, and most importantly, an inspiring role model. Through his love, compassion and dedication, Corliss touched the lives of many. He will be deeply missed and frequently remembered. Corliss Kortge died peacefully on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, at his home surrounded by his family. He was preceded in death by his parents, and his brothers, Eulan and Gary Dean. He will be greatly missed by his wife of 47 years, Margaret; his children: Cheryl (Martin) Schilling of Walhalla, Jon (Kari) Kortge of Scottville, Laurie (David) Shilander of Custer, and Kim (Will) Smith of Cary, Illinois; 13 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren; his sister, Clarisanne Gordon of Ludington; his brother, Cleon (Eileen) Kortge of Clarkston; his sister-in-law, Barbara Kortge of Texas; and many nieces and nephews.

Tribute Wall

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“ Terry Williams lit a candle in memory of
Corliss Frederick Kortge



Terry Williams - April 29, 2019 at 09:28 PM