



Ervine Roger Pankow

October 23, 1922 - June 16, 2011

ERV'S LIFE STORY: It was clear to see by the way he lived his life that Ervine Pankow never worried about gaining wealth and success according to the world's measure, but was more focused on impacting the hearts and lives of those around him. He was a man of faith whose life exemplifies what it truly means to be a man after God's own heart. There was no greater gift in Erv's life than his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and in the words of his son-in-law, "Dad was the kindest and most generous man I've ever met." All who knew him would certainly echo that sentiment. Nestled within the vibrant decade of the Roaring Twenties was the year 1922 that boasted of several noteworthy events such as the completion of the Wrigley Building in Chicago and the dedication of the Lincoln Memorial. This was a year to remember for one young family from Mason County, Michigan, since they welcomed a healthy baby boy into their hearts and home on October 23rd. Ervine Roger was born on his grandparents' farm in the Sugar Grove area and ushered into the arms of his loving parents, Ervine Carl and Hester (Rogers) Pankow. He was raised in the family home in Roseville and was joined in his family by his three sisters, Florence, Kathlyn, and Evelyn. Erv attended local schools and was awarded an airplane ride as a sixth grade student for being at the top of his class. In high school Erv participated in school plays, band, and football, and he also worked doing yard work, at a golf club, and on a farm during the summer to earn some extra money. Erv graduated from Roseville High School in 1940 as class salutatorian and "best

all-around senior."When Erv's family came into possession of the Sugar Grove farm, Erv along with his mother and two of his sisters, Evelyn and Florence, began farming. Erv's father continued his job at Packard Motor Company in Detroit while his sister, Kathlyn, stayed at her job as well. Because he was needed on the farm, Erv was not able to utilize his scholarship to Michigan State University. In 1944, they sold their farm and purchased another in Eden Township. Life was forever changed for Erv when he met the young woman with whom he would share an abiding love. Her name was Loretta Hayward and they were introduced after Erv's sisters, Kathlyn and Evelyn arranged a date for them. Although their date didn't get off to a good start, more dates followed, which gave way to a blossoming romance. Deeply in love, they married on June 2, 1945, at the St. John's Lutheran Church of Pelton's Corners. The couple exchanged their vows just before Erv was inducted into the military. He qualified for officer's training, but the war ended and his training was put on hold. With his time in the military cut short, Erv returned home and went back to farming. It was then that he became a board member of Marble School. When the farming industry no longer provided enough income, Erv secured employment at the Carron Company in Ludington and later at Petersens Furniture Specialties. Their second farm was later sold and the whole family moved back to the Sugar Grove area. When Erv became a father, he couldn't have been happier. Their daughters, Shelley and Constance, were born in 1947 and 1949 respectively, and they were the light of their parents' and grandparents' lives. Loretta went back to teaching while Erv and his father went to work in the broiler business. Erv also drove the Sugar Grove school bus. With experience gained from Petersens Furniture, Erv constructed a modest home next to his parents as well as the kitchen cabinets and some furniture. At the urging of his wife Erv enrolled at Central Michigan University at the age of 41 to obtain a degree for teaching industrial arts. He and daughter Shelley shared a unique bond by attending CMU at the same time. After graduating in January of 1966, Erv was hired at Bear Lake Schools where he had the privilege of equipping a brand new shop. He also

continued taking courses in special education, receiving his master's from CMU in 1969. From there Erv taught special education and industrial arts at Mason County Central Middle School where he again had the privilege of equipping a brand new shop. After 25 years of working with children in a variety of ways, Erv retired in 1998. Erv was a man of faith and an active member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Pelton's Corners. He later became a charter member of Our Savior Lutheran Church in Scottville where he served in various capacities including chairman of the congregation. Erv wrote poetry and hymns, and he was honored when some of his hymns were used in services at Our Savior Lutheran Church. After he retired Erv continued to embrace the days he was given. He was delighted when his children married, giving him beloved sons-in-law, adorable grandchildren, and cherished great-grandchildren. He always sang "You are my Sunshine" to all of them. Erv put his woodworking skills to good use making many craft items for family, friends, and for donation, and he also made more furniture for the home. Additionally, Erv was a member of Gideon's International, Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel, the MMAP Program, and volunteered at White Pine Village, the Council on Aging, and TRIAD. He humbly accepted recognition for his service with the Council on Aging, the Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel, and by the Mason County Historical Society. There were so many ways that Ervine Pankow touched the hearts and lives countless others. He was funny, kindhearted, and generous with both his time and his resources. Someone who treasured his family above all else, Erv was both the rock and the sunshine of his family. He will be deeply missed. Ervine Pankow went to bed on Thursday night, June 16, 2011 with a kiss good night from his wife, and woke up in the presence of his heavenly father who welcomed him home to glory. He was preceded in death by his parents, Ervine Carl and Hester, his sister, Florence, and a son-in-law, Patrick Mantei. Erv will be lovingly remembered by his wife Loretta, his daughters Shelley (David) Switzer of Granger, IN, and Constance Clifton of Denver, CO; his grandchildren Wendy

(Paul) Tackett of Battle Creek, Ryan (Amy) Switzer of Cary, North Carolina, Dominic Clifton and Jaimie Clifton of Denver, his great grandchildren Payton and Emerson Switzer, and Athena Clifton, his sisters Kathlyn (James) Dobias of Ludington, and Evelyn Battige of Newaygo, several nieces, nephews, cousins, and a host of friends. Funeral services will be held for Ervine at 3:00 pm on Tuesday, June 21 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Scottville, with his pastor, the Rev. James Schroeder officiating. Burial will take place at Sugar Grove Cemetery. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Tuesday afternoon from 1:30 pm until time of services at the church. Those who wish to make memorial contributions are asked to consider Our Savior Lutheran Church, Peace Lutheran Church in Ludington, or the Mason County Central Educational Foundation.