



Frederick E. Holden

March 10, 1932 - October 20, 2009

LIFE STORY: Frederick “Fritz” Holden was one of those men who seemed to know and be known by all. In part it was his iconic blue stepside work truck, partly because of his trademark cap, or often through his meticulous craftsmanship that graces many buildings and homes throughout his community. However, Fred was most well known simply because of the man he was – he was kind and generous, loving and strong, a man of true integrity. Fred was a man who was devoted to his family and who taught well the lessons of hard work and pride in a job well done through the example he set for future generations each and every day of his life. During a time in which the Great Depression loomed like a black cloud over the nation, Eliger and Ettie (Harvey) Holden were able to shift their focus to a joyous time within their own family. On March 10, 1932, they were celebrating the birth of their son, Frederick Ervin, in their family barn in Victory Township, Michigan. Frederick, who was commonly known as Fritz or Fred, was the twelfth out of fourteen children in his family and was known for his distinctive curly red hair. His father was a lumberjack and worked on the railroad while his mother cared for their family. Tragedy struck early in young Fred’s life with the death of his father when he was just five years old. His mother raised her fourteen children on her own, but they all came together as a family. They worked hard, shared everything, they all helped out with the family garden that fed them and made sure that nothing ever went to waste. While other children of this generation were entertaining themselves with the new 3-D View-Master, games such as Monopoly, or with comic books, the children in the Holden family entertained themselves with whatever creative ideas they could come up with on their own, an early introduction in using their own imaginations and developing their skills. Fred went to the neighborhood school in Crystal Valley and graduated from Hart High School. An even greater turn of events was right around the corner for Fred though. A sister’s friend, a young lady named Alfreida Carr was at their home. His sister asked Alfreida if she would go out with Fred if he asked her, to which she responded that she thought she would. Alfreida was staying at the Holden house for the weekend and by Sunday, Fritz asked her to go to the movies. Fred and Alfreida did indeed go to the movies, but so did his mother as he had previously promised his mother a trip to the theatre! Just 17 short days later the couple was engaged and making plans to marry. They exchanged their vows in July at the

Elbridge United Methodist Church beginning a new chapter in a love story which would span 56 years. Also during this time Fred had been drafted into the Army and reported for his basic training duties at Fort Knox in Kentucky in January of 1953. Fred was later sent to Panama just a short time after he and Alfreida were married and served in the Panama Canal Zone in the motor pool. Alfreida joined him in Panama and it was there that they were blessed with the birth of their son, Fred II. Upon his discharge, Fred returned to West Michigan with his family and they moved around quite a bit. They lived in New Era, Elbridge, and then in Shelby for several years until they finally bought a farm on Washington Road in Mason County. Once back in the states they were blessed with the birth of their daughter Deloris and later on their son Doug. Fred worked at DuPont in Montague for a time, and then drove a gravel truck during the construction of the Consumers Power Pump Storage Plant until its completion around 1973. Fred then started his own business as a builder, founding Holden Construction Company. Fred was so much more than a builder, he was a craftsman who paid meticulous attention to detail and perfection. His favorite projects were remodeling jobs since he loved the process of taking the old and transforming the space into something new, useful, and beautiful. Fred's constant trademark was the stepside panel van he purchased in 1975 – his first and last new vehicle. This van became quite the icon for Fred and even as he battled Alzheimer's disease later in life, he always recognized that van in the yard when he went to the house. Fred's handiwork can still be seen throughout the county whether gracing the woodwork of homes, including several of the bed and breakfasts along Ludington Avenue, office buildings, or even garages. As much as his work was a vital part of his life, Fred's family was of even greater significance to him. He melded his two greatest passions together when he passed his love of detail and building on to his children and grandchildren. Fred was always building something to show his love for his family whether a shop to house his wife's business, Kountry Kakes, homes for his children, a beauty shop in the basement for his daughter-in-law, or a dark room for his son Doug. Fostering family ties and relationships was always important to Fred. He was insistent about Sunday visits with family after church with both his family and Alfreida's. Fred's grandchildren were his pride and joy and he especially enjoyed teaching his grandson Fred III his love for building. He loved square dancing and polka and even taught all his children and grandchildren how to dance too. There were a few additional interests that Fred also enjoyed. He loved gardening on their farm and listening to country music. He especially enjoyed the music of Charlie Pride and listening to the Grand Ole Opry. Fred was always wearing a cap, usually one that read "Holden Construction," but each fall on Saturdays he proudly exchanged it for his University of Michigan hat. He loved attending the games when he was able. Fred was also proud to wear his "dressy" cap emblazoned with "OIP" representing Ohio Institute of Photography where Doug attended school. Fred Holden was a remarkable man who was happiest when he was building. He was a hard worker who

rarely rested – his love for his family was truly his driving force. He always put others first and had to be convinced to do anything for himself. Whether teaching his granddaughter Michaela dance steps with her feet on his, making deliveries for his wife's business or cultivating and watering their family garden, Fred was a man of great character in everything he did. Although his family will miss him dearly, the legacy Fred leaves behind will live on in their hearts and lives. Fred was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Vernon, Warren, Roy, Harold, and John Holden; his sisters Pearly Holden, Hazel Griswold, and Dorothy Kokx. Fred will be greatly missed by his wife Alfreida; his children Frederick L. (Cindy) Holden of Scottville, Deloris Stewart of Virginia, and Douglas (Lillian) Holden of St. Louis, MO; his beloved grandchildren Kristina (Michael) Tabaczka of Twin Lakes, Frederick M. (Michell) Holden of Free Soil, Grace Stewart of Virginia, Jessica DeMoor, and Alexander Holden both of St. Louis, MO; his precious great-grandchildren Frederick J. Holden, Michaela Holden, and Gabriella Holden; his brothers and sisters Norman Holden of Scottville, Lillian Weirich and Evaline Pearson both of Hart, Lois Adams of Crystal Valley, and Ruby Laudermilk of Coopersville; and numerous nieces and nephews. Fred and Alfreida were longtime members of the Scottville United Methodist Church where services will be held for Fred at 1:00 pm on Friday, October 23 with his pastor, Rev. Jack Conklin, and Rev. Kenneth Tabor officiating. Burial will follow at Brookside Cemetery in Scottville. Friends may meet with his family for a time of visitation on Thursday from 2-4 and 7-9 pm at the STEPHENS FUNERAL HOME in Scottville. Those who wish may make contributions to the Scottville United Methodist Church, or to the Alzheimer's Association in Fred's memory. Please visit Fred's personal memory page at www.stephensfuneralhome.net to read his complete Life Story, sign the guestbook, or to leave a memory of Fred for his family.