



Milton E McLain, Sr.

February 9, 1920 - February 22, 2008

Some people achieve greatness by some notable act, something that is recognized in the newspapers or mentioned on the radio. Others, like Milton McLain, Sr., are quiet heroes, whose great deeds are softly given to the people fortunate enough to have them in their lives. The early 1920s were a collage of interesting events. There were power struggles in Russia, Babe Ruth was setting baseball records, and the first Miss America was crowned. In the bustling city of Chicago, Illinois, LeRoy Andrew McLain and his wife, Mabelle (Brockhaus), were having some excitement of their own. On February 9, 1920, the couple welcomed the birth of their son, Milton Elmer McLain. He was one of four children, with a sister, Veal, and two brothers, LeRoy and Andrew. Milton grew up in Chicago, where he received his elementary education in the area schools. His father earned a living working on tug boats, while his mother managed a brickyard and played piano and violin in a band. During the Roaring 20s, Chicago was a real hotspot of activity, with prohibition in full swing and bootlegging wars between gangsters. Milton's mother worried about her boys getting caught in the crossfire, and decided to send Milton and his brother, LeRoy, to live with their Uncle Gustav Heidemann and work on his farm in Riverton Township, in Mason County, Michigan. Here, Milton was able to continue his schooling at the Butler School in Riverton. Like his mother, Milton was musically inclined and played the guitar since he was a young boy. As a teenager, Milton played the banjo with a band called the Hay Lofters, and traveled all over the county playing at dances as well as on radio stations in

Muskegon and Ludington – WKLA. This was definitely a fun and carefree time for Milton, but he soon met a lovely young girl named Elizabeth Jobbins, who changed the direction of his life; she was from a strict family in Pentwater. He and Elizabeth were introduced to each other through one of the band members. They hit it off right away, and began dating. As fate would have it, the two fell in love and were happily married on June 29, 1941, at the First Baptist Church of Pentwater. After saying “I do”, the newlyweds settled into married life together in a home on Harrison Street in Ludington. Milton worked hard to support his new bride, and held a variety of jobs, including as a truck driver, farming, and in a landscaping business. They were soon blessed with the birth of their first child, son Milton Jr. Just as he was starting to build a new home for them on James Street in Ludington, Milton received his draft notice from the U.S. Army to serve during World War II. He proudly served with the 104th Infantry Division of the First Army called the “Timber Wolves”. This unit was trained for the invasion of Germany, among other battles. Milton saw much combat, including over the Cologne River and in the Battle of Aachen, where he was wounded, returning to the front lines after a three month recovery. His unit was also instrumental in liberating a concentration camp. Milton was awarded the Purple Heart for his courageous actions. Milton was on his way to the Pacific Theatre when the war officially ended, and he soon returned home to his beloved bride and son. Unfortunately while he was gone, someone stole the wood he was using to build their house, so he had to start over. It wasn’t long before Milton and Elizabeth filled their new home with the joy and laughter of three more wonderful children: Tony, Cindy and Lawrence. Milton was a real hands-on father, and enjoyed being with his children. His kids have many fond memories of time with their dad on Saturday nights, having popcorn and grape juice while watching Gunsmoke, followed by a good old tickle contest. Milton also took the time to teach his sons how to fix just about anything, and never to be afraid to tackle something to big. If he didn’t know how to do something, Milton headed to the library and read up on it. He had a wealth of knowledge on a wide variety of topics, and made sure to

stay up to date on all current events as well. The family eventually moved to a home on Third Street in Scottville in 1953. Shortly before this, Milton was working on a landscaping job at Great Lakes Foundry in Ludington, and the owner of the foundry was impressed with Milton's strong work ethic and offered him a job at the foundry on the spot. Milton earned a good living there for the next 30 years, attaining the title of Iron Master. He eventually retired in 1982. As a proud veteran, Milton was a life member of the Harold Snyder Disabled American Veterans Post #30 in Ludington. Milton wasn't one to be idle for very long. He was a tinkerer by nature and always found something around the house to fix, tear apart and rebuild. Many of the tools he needed for a job he built himself, including a conveyor to remove dirt from under their house for a basement. One of Milton's most impressive skills was as a woodworker. He was a master of the scroll saw and made beautiful decorative items, which many stores wanted to have for display, but Milton preferred not to. His greatest joy was making craft items for the DeVos Children's Hospital, which the children could paint. But that was Milton – always looking for ways to help others; he was generous to a fault. He did odd jobs for people, never looking for anything in return, and continued to snow-blow his neighbor's driveway well into his later years. Above all, though, Milton was a true family man, who loved nothing more than spending time with his loved ones. It was always evident to everyone around them that Milton loved his beloved Elizabeth dearly, and treated her like a queen. He had a special spot in his heart for his grandkids too, and loved to get down and play with them. He'd chase them around the house and once caught, he'd carry on the tickle contest tradition with them. Milton's good spirit and smiling face served as testimony to the fact that he enjoyed every moment of his life. A loving and devoted husband, father and grandfather, Milton will be greatly missed and frequently remembered. Milton E. McLain Sr. died on Friday, February 22, 2008, at Oakview Medical Care Facility in Ludington. He was preceded in death by his parents, his granddaughter, Robbi Lynn McLain, his sister, Veal

Codd, his brothers, Andrew and LeRoy McLain, and Robert Rochette. He will be greatly missed by his wife of 67 years, Elizabeth; his sons: Milton E. (Laurel) McLain Jr. of Owosso, Dr. Tony (Melissa) McLain of Sault Ste. Marie, and Lawrence McLain of Scottville; his daughter: Cindy L. (Gordon) Wyant of Scottville; 14 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren, 6 great, great-grandchildren; and several nieces and nephews.

WHEN I COME HOME
When I am home again to stay, and there are no more wars;
everything will be bright and gay, just like they were before.
A new house to build, twill fill our hearts with joy;
a lot of promise to be fulfilled, a little house for my loving boy.
A lot of friends to greet and shake their hand, and talk about the good old times;
The little old church still stands, all covered with ivory vines.
A kiss for mother, a hug for dad, oh how they missed me;
I know they have been sad, ever since I left home for overseas.
A wife I love who has been true, and been waiting patiently;
For the time I cross the ocean blue, and come home again to my family.
When were settled down again, and no more this world I'll roam;
We will hang this sign again, God Bless Our Happy Home.
Written May 27, 1945 by Milton to Elizabeth