



Merlin E Graul

July 1, 1915 - September 20, 2016

Obituary of Merlin Graul

Merlin E. Graul, most recently of Leesburg, FL, passed away Tuesday, September 20, 2016. Born July 1, 1915 in Madison, WI, Merle was a Master's Degree graduate of the University of Wisconsin and remained a loyal and dedicated Badger fan throughout his life. Merle enlisted in the Army in 1941, rose to the rank of Captain; and was Honorably Discharged in 1946.

Supporting the war stateside, he was assigned to Camp Pendleton in Virginia Beach, VA where he met his bride Susan C. Graul (née Susan Ann Crockett). Married on his birthday in 1944, Merle and Sue lived in Pennsylvania, Illinois and then returned to Milwaukee, WI where he took a position with A.O. Smith Corporation, rising to the position of Chief Comptroller. They raised their 4 children in Brookfield, WI and were vibrant members of the community and their church. After retirement, they enjoyed "snowbird" status every winter traveling throughout the U.S. and eventually settled in Leesburg, FL in 1999. With his humble, yet witty and engaging personality he was embraced by all he met. He enjoyed making new friends, following and discussing politics, walking in the sun and engaging his faith with prayer.

Merle is rejoined in heaven with his wife, Sue, who passed in 2010 and is survived in life by his children Richard (Sharle) Graul of Waukesha, WI; James

of Quincy, FL; Dave (Maryam) of Simi Valley, CA; daughter Liz Ann of San Diego, CA; three grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

He was loved greatly and will be missed by all who knew him.

Mass of Christian Burial will be held Friday, September 30, 2016 at 11:00am at St. Paul Catholic Church in Leesburg, FL. Interment will follow at Florida National Cemetery in Bushnell at 2:30pm.

For those who wish, memorial donations may be made to St. Paul Catholic Church or to a charity organization of your choice

Tribute Wall

“ *Our Fathers Story Merlin Edward Graul, - A true member of the greatest generation Known better to us as Dad and Daddy Born July 1, 1915 on a Thursday in Madison, Wisconsin Went home to Heaven on September 20, 2016 on a Tuesday in Leesburg, Florida We are here to mourn the loss of our Father. But, when I thought about it, we are really here to celebrate my Father's life. Those of us left behind will be missing our Dad so deeply. Our hearts are sad, but at the same time happy. What an amazing life our Dad had. The things he has seen and heard. From the Industrial Revolution to the rise of computers and now iPhones. When my Dad was born, there was no television. Henry Ford had just perfected the moving assembly line for the Model T. Woodrow Wilson was president. Milwaukee and San Francisco had very similar populations and less than a million people lived in a swampland known as Florida - including only about 4,000 in Orlando. Since the passing of my mother, I have made it at least once a year to visit Dad. We had lots of talks; I was interested in learning about my Dad's youth. We would joke sometimes about how different we were as young people. My Dad didn't talk about his youth much; I had to pry information from him. When he was 10 years old he lost his mother while in child birth with his sister Dorothy. I can't imagine how devastated Dad must have been to lose his Mom at 10. I would ask him stuff like if he was a ladies' man or if he had a boat load of girlfriends or if I might have sat on his chair in the college club beer bar. His response was always the same, Dick, it was the depression and nobody was sitting at the college club. Never did get a straight answer on the Ladies man thing. But I have seen pictures from back when he was in high school and he was a good looking guy. Our Dad was born 2 years before the U.S. became involved in World War 1, to me that's something we learned about in High School. When World War 2 came along, Our Dad enlisted as a private in the Army. He volunteered to go overseas but was rejected because of a heart murmur. He went on to rise to the position of Captain. Before his enlistment he managed to get a Masters Degree from the University of Wisconsin - Madison. And deliver 200 newspapers every day. He always had a bit of a stoop on his right shoulder*

where he carried his paper bag. When I asked him about how he met Mom, he would tell me about the USO club at Virginia Beach and how Mom walked in one night and he knew immediately that she was the one. He told his friends that he was going to marry that girl. Dad's thinking was to wait till he had some money saved up to ask her to marry him. But Mom had waited a year and decided to take matters into her own hands and asked Dad to marry her, and he said yes. The war was over and Dad and his Bride moved to Milwaukee where our Dad had a job waiting for him at A.O. Smith. This is at a time when Milwaukee was a major manufacturing town. And A.O. Smith was a big player. My Dad would rise thru the ranks to become the Chief Comptroller. In 1947 I happened along, and shortly thereafter Jim and Dave were born. Mom and Dad and we 3 boys all lived in Milwaukee on 85th Street. One of my earliest memories was going with Dad down to the Menomonee River. We would drive the car into the middle of the river and get out and wash it. We had a lot of fun slipping around on the moss covered rocks. Sometimes Mom would come along and teach us how to catch crabs (crayfish). She called them crabs because they reminded her of Virginia Beach. In 1957 the boys -- Dick, Jim and Dave - would welcome our baby sister Elizabeth Ann, to a brand new home in Brookfield, WI. In 1957 Brookfield had a small population, maybe 3000, and was thought of as farm country. When Dad and Mom decided to sell their home in Brookfield it had swelled to over 35000 people. It was now considered a suburb of Milwaukee. The introduction of the freeway system had made it possible for people to commute quickly into the city, and all over the country. Dad saw that. Our Dad was an accountant by trade. I remember him sitting at his desk with the adding machine and his slide rule, I could never figure out how that slide ruler worked. And the adding machine was new technology at the time. Dad could sure input numbers so quick, I could never keep up with him. Dad was a news junkie from my earliest memories. I remember Dad with his cup of coffee and reading the news paper at the kitchen table. Our Dad saw 16 Presidents come and go. He saw the bomb at Hiroshima explode. He saw President Jack Kennedy assonated on TV. He saw the first man to walk on the moon. He saw the shuttle challenger explode

and the jet airliners fly into the world trade center. He has seen it all from the model T to space travel. Yes, our Dad had an amazing life. Most importantly, he got to see all 4 of his kids grow to be wonderful adults. He had 3 grandchildren and 7 great grandchildren. He proudly displayed their picture on his wall. And I know raising 4 teenagers over a 20 year period was not easy on him or Mom, but, as all teens do, we grew up. And after we became adults our parents got to have a wonderful retirement. Dad and Mom loved to travel around the country, and wintering in Florida seemed to be the spot. They tried all over Florida and Tucson, AZ once. I visited them in Saint Augustine, New Smyrna Beach and Sun City Fl. When they had made the decision to move to Lake Port, I knew that they had done there research. Dad and Mom told me that they choose Lake Port because it offered everything they would need for the rest of their lives. Lake Port became their home and we all tried to make it down to Lake Port and visit our parents in their new home as often as we could. In fact, I had one of the employees and several of Dad's friends comment that Dad always had way more company than anyone else. That made me feel real good. Mom and Dad made a lot of friends, when we would visit Dad after Mom had passed away he would get us interested in a game called T's. Dad and his good friends played T's twice a week. Dad also enjoyed playing pool and played with several ladies from Lake Port. My heart is so sad that I lost my Dad. I am so grateful that we could make it to see him for one last time before he passed. And I am so thankful for Jim and Liz being with him to the end. He died knowing how much we all loved him. I'm sad for sure. But Merlin Graul had a life others can only envy. Full of love, happiness and God's richest blessings. He saw the world change around him, but always stayed true to himself and loved his family deeply. It's time to say goodbye, Dad, but we will never forget our Daddy.

Richard Graul - October 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

SG

“ Saying goodbye to anyone you love is very sad. It's even harder, when it's your husband's special dad. Merlin was blessed with 101 years. Think of all the laughs he had, and the tears. The night of my prom was the first night we met. Dick was in the hospital. I was quite upset. He came to my house with flowers in hand. He said, I know this is not the night you had planned. I couldn't believe what a nice thing he had done for me. I knew he was a nice man. It was plain to see. Merlin loved to go out to eat. Bob Evan's, Denney's, and Perkins. He found them to be quite a treat. I think his favorite restaurant was the Country Store. A Saturday lunch with a friend was nothing he enjoyed more. He loved his apartment at Lake Port Square. Don't talk assisted living to him. Don't you dare! He was proud to be a Packers and a Badger's fan. He was even more proud to say he was a Republican. He was a man who gave generously. He gave to charities, as well as his family. He relied on his faith to get him through a bad day. He loved his Lord. He loved to pray. He loved his exercises and keeping fit. He wasn't one to turn down a piece of chocolate. He had a unique sense of humor. He was kind, loving, caring, and a good friend. He was that man right up to the end. He lived a pretty simple life. He loved his kids. He loved his wife. He had an eye for a pretty girl. He was always a gentleman. That was our Merl. Merlin I'm so happy that now you don't need your walker, not even your cane. No more falls. No more pain. You have had a life filled with love. Now, you get to have the greatest gift of love in heaven above. You were a blessing in my life I have to say. I will look forward to meeting you in heaven one day.

Sharle Graul - October 02, 2016 at 12:00 AM

BH

“ Dear Liz and Graul Family, Our thoughts and prayers are with you all. When Liz texted that "Heaven got a new angel" we knew your Dad was where he was meant to be. And no doubt your Dad has heard the words from our Father and His Son "Well done! Good and faithful servant" as he entered heaven

Brenda & Charles Hickman - September 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MA

“ To Liz and her family, My heart goes out to you. Your father had an amazing life and will be greatly missed. I know he meant so much to you and everyone else that he touched.

Mark Adams - September 30, 2016 at 12:00 AM

NM

“ Cousins, my heart breaks for all of you at the loss of your dad and yet the thought of the reunion with your mom and his mom (as well as his dad, my mom and many others) makes me smile. He will always be with you -watching over you and guiding you- as you carry him in your hearts. Love, Nancy

Nancy McGinness - September 29, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JG

“ I love you to the moon and back; I love you more; these are the words Liz and dad spoke to each other every day. Each night Liz and dad spoke of the day's events to stay current and to keep our father's mind adept We all understood the special love relationship between Liz and dad. Nothing could come between their daily 9 pm chats which served to keep dad's aging brain centered and to remind him that he was loved and cherished. When we were young dad would "diden" us and flip us over his head and we would somersault and he would gently guide us to the ground. Every Sunday we would go to mass and then to Goff's for lunch sometimes on weekends we would go to lake Oconomowoc and swim underneath the pier. Dad built us a high jump where we could pole vault into sawdust, We set up the croquet and played in the yard. He built us a rabbit hutch and we learned how bunnies can multiply and he got us a big yard so we could learn lawn maintenance. Dad provided us with an education at a private Catholic school. I remember dad showing me how to use the file to sharpen the blade of the mower, then how to check the oil and keep the engine maintained. We spent a lot of time scraping and painting. There was always jobs to be done on our yard which was an acre large. And it was good for football games and even golfing. When I needed help he bought me a Karman Ghia so I could get to United Parcel to work from 2 AM to 6 AM and then off to school. He helped me finance my education. My dad also worked hard to earn his way through school. He had hundreds of customers on his newspaper route that kept dad and his dog active. He got his masters degree from the university of Wisconsin and became a captain in the army during world war two. His father was a beloved soils professor at the university. I remember dad building a dog house for a German Sheppard we had named Patience. Even though my dad was allergic to dogs he got us one anyways. Dad seemed to always be at work. He had his regular job at A.O. Smith but also he took on and took care of accounts for people in the evenings. When he had the chance he worked around the home. He did all the landscaping himself. Once retired dad and mom traveled as snowbirds during the winter to many different places that made their retirement years

exciting. As age caught up with them they decided to settle down at Lake port square in Florida. Here they enjoyed the beautiful grounds with a pond and Lake Harris with a pier. Being near New Smyrna beach made for nice times for the family when we visited. Dad enjoyed his many friends. He loved to play tease with George, Martha, Ted, Alice, the Wainwrights, and Julia. He loved to eat with his dear friends the Hosmers, Jeanne Bailey, and Susan Ireland. One of his friends Dick Hosmer played piano for my dad's 100th birthday. Dad cherished his friends. Getting older Dad started to fall more and broke his hip several times and got brain hemorrhages. It took long time to recover but dad made some of his closest friends with the therapists. The many godly people that came into dad's life cause of his rehabilitation played a big role in deepening his faith and spirituality in his life. I believe Dad felt God's love through his caretakers and therapists like Georgia, Suzannne, Terri, Ebony and Rosealba and during these hard times he drew closer to God. Dad had a wonderful friendship with his ear specialist Jeannie Weiss who always took time every two weeks to clean dad's hearing aids and to have a cup of coffee with dad at the Mid Florida eye and ear clinic. Dad always was faithful to go to church but now he was on his knees each night praying in a new and deeper faith than I had seen from my father. In his last hours when his energy was so low he could barely be heard but when we prayed the Lord's prayer as a family he came through loud and clear. I pleaded with dad, quoting scripture that God had shortened man's years to 120 in Genesis and that he should claim that promise. I read to him how Moses lived to 120 and his eye was sharp and he was full of vitality. I asked dad how old he was and he told me 119. He was joking of course but I also think he was letting me know that he was coming to the end of his work on earth. But his will to live could not be staunched. At eleven pm at the rehab center where dad had gotten so weak he had been bedridden for days Dad was trying to earnestly tell me something but he was so weak I could barely hear him. I put my ear to his mouth to hear him say get the wheel chair so he could go to therapy. I had to laugh at the spirit of my dad to get better. But he was suffering from a terrible nagging cough and a persistent annoying gurgling. He tried to cough up the mess but he just did not

have the strength to clear himself. My dad through his suffering never became bitter and only showed gratitude to the people around him. He was full of nobility and everyone who encountered him felt the love and they cherished my dad. One of dad's therapists Kristine talked to dad about how exciting heaven would be. She was palpably excited for dad and I know dad's spirit caught what her spirit was saying. Getting dad to look forward to the joy of being present with the Lord. At one time dad asked me if he was going to hell or heaven. I said "Dad you have a blessed assurance to be with the Lord." I read him about the thief on the right who asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom. Jesus merciful response was that "today you will be with me in Paradise." Jesus did not say in a hundred years or he did not say after the millennium, he said today you will be with me in paradise. Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine goes the great hymn. I remember getting short tempered with the frustrations of life in rehab and my father reminded me that it was not like me to show impatience and anger. When dad would discipline me when young, he would say go to your room and I will be there in ten minutes. That gave us both time to cool off. It also gave me time to put magazines in my pants to protect my but from the spanking. My dad always said this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you. It was true. It broke my fathers heart to spank us kids. But we sure needed it. I remember only one time my dad showing anger. I had disrespected my mother in a big way. When dad came home he called me out. He said I chose your mother to be my princess but you just showed up. My teen age disrespect had gotten out of hand and my fathers righteous anger is something I never forgot and I never disrespected my mother again. I do believe that dad grew a deep heart through adversity and learned in his final years how to love even deeper. I will never forget the image of my father on his knees at night praying. He had become a man of prayer, a man of faith, and a man of love. I will miss him greatly and will live the rest of my life to make him proud of me.

James Graul - September 27, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JD

“ Liz - I'm so sorry for your loss, my deepest sympathy and heartfelt prayers to you and your family. Your Dad truly was the energizer bunny, an amazing man! May you find peace in knowing that now you have one more energizer-angel in heaven watching over you. The pictures are great! Love you, Jeanne

Jeanne Donaldson - September 27, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ Liz - I feel I got to know your Dad through our conversations. I love the pictures you posted. I know you would step out when we were at dinner to call your Dad at the appointed time. You still need to do that - stop and have a conversation with him and your Mom. My heart breaks at your loss but knowing that you had him for 101 years is such a joy. Love you. Joanne

Joanne Tenney - September 26, 2016 at 12:00 AM

MG

“ Dear Liz: You and your brothers continue to be in our thoughts and prayers. We'll be with you in spirit on Friday. Rest in the knowledge that you fulfilled your Mom's last wishes. The care you gave your Dad during the past years was especially beautiful. Your Mom would have been so proud of you! Love, Mary and Henry

Mary and Henry Gundling - September 26, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RB

“ To our fiend Liz, my family and I would like to express our deepest sympathies for your loss; Your Dad had a wonderful and long life to which you have contributed so much. Blessing to you all.

Roberto Basilio - September 26, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KK

“ To Liz and family, Linda and I offer our sincere condolences to you and your family for your loss. Merle lived a remarkable life which we were blessed to hear about over the years we have known Liz. May he now rest in peace. Sincerely, Karl and Linda Kohlmoos

Karl Kohlmoos - September 26, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Dad i miss you so much. We had a prayer for you in church today.

And the Packers are winning 23 to 3 in the second quarter. but I don't need to tell you, I bet your watching the Game with Mom, and your Dad and Sister

Richard Graul - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Dad i miss you so much. We had a prayer for you in church today.

And the Packers are winning 23 to 3 in the second quarter. but I don't need to tell you, I bet your watching the Game with Mom, and your Dad and Sister###GESTURE###

Richard Graul - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Dad, I am going to miss you so very much, I am so glad we did have the time together. 101 years of knowledge, who will answer the rest of my questions? Love You Dad Your son, Dick

Richard Graul - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM



“ Merlin E Graul

September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

KW

“ Liz and family, So sorry for your loss. The men of his generation were great men that loved God, country, family and friends. I am sure you will miss his presence greatly. I pray that your memories of him will help you during this time of sadness. My deepest sympathy,
Karla Stanek Williams

Karla Stanek williams - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

RG

“ Dad i miss you so much. We had a prayer for you in church today. And the Packers are winning 23 to 3 in the second quarter. but I don't need to tell you, I bet your watching the Game with Mom, and your Dad and Sister

Richard Graul - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

JS

“ Liz and Dave, how Lucky to be able to share life with your Dad until he was 101! What a life! Ann and my thoughts and prayers are with you on your Dad's celebration of Life JAY

Jay Sandstrom - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

NK

“ Liz, Your love for your dad has always shined bright. From the frequent cross-country visits, the daily phone calls to the memories and pictures you have shared here - this is a man who was well-loved by his girl. Chris and I extend our deepest sympathy to you and your brothers. Love, Nancy

Nancy Kallianos - September 25, 2016 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ *Merlin E Graul*

Elizabeth Graul - September 24, 2016 at 12:00 AM

EG

“ *I didn't know I could love so deeply, you opened my heart and I will miss you "more."*

Elizabeth Graul - September 24, 2016 at 12:00 AM