



Merlin Everett Karlock

July 17, 1931 - August 16, 2023

Merlin Karlock

July 17, 1931 — Aug. 16, 2023

With deep sadness, his family announces the passing of Merlin Everett Karlock, of Bourbonnais.

Merlin was born July 17, 1931, in Kankakee County and remained an active resident and promoter of the county throughout his life.

Merlin was the beloved husband of Donna Karlock for more than 65 years; loving father to Kendra and Kent Karlock; cherished grandfather to Meredith Smiley (husband, Clay) and Mallory Sanchez (husband, Alredo). He was also the proud great-grandfather to Axel Sanchez and Scout, Whitney and Preston Smiley.

His friends and their "Merlin stories" are countless as are his achievements.

Founder of Municipal Bank, located in Bourbonnais and Momence, Merlin diligently worked as the bank's chairman of the board for more than 40 years.

His early education was in a one-room schoolhouse in Pembroke Township, later receiving an agriculture degree from Florida Southern College in

Lakeland, Fla.

Merlin proudly served his country in the U.S. Marine Corps.

In 1976, Merlin ran for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. He also served on the White House Rural Council under President George H.W. Bush and was appointed to the Illinois State Banking Board by Governor George Ryan.

New opportunities and education excited Merlin. Some of his many businesses included a radio station, a propane gas company, grain elevators, the Bon Vivant Golf Course, housing developments, and Florida citrus groves. Many homeowners in the community enjoy beautiful homes in subdivisions he designed and constructed. But first and throughout his life, Merlin was a farmer and cattleman like his beloved grandfather, Everett Madison. In the 1980s, Merlin owned the largest ranch in Indiana.

Kankakee Community College was built during Merlin's tenure as its first chairman of the board. He later became a member of the Illinois Community College Board and served on the executive committee of the Illinois Board of Higher Education. He was also a director of Governors State University, a trustee of the Illinois Universities Retirement System and a member of the Citizen Advisory Board for the University of Illinois.

He played croquet well, winning a national croquet title with his partner, Richard Reedy.

Merlin owned Thoroughbred racehorses and golf courses and made time to travel the world extensively.

Over the years, Merlin and Donna donated land for parks throughout

Kankakee County.

Together, they also donated land for the North Campus of Kankakee Community College in Bradley.

He will be remembered for his keen intelligence, humorous stories, innumerable acts of kindness, generosity to others and his mentorship of many. According to Cathy Boicken, president of Municipal Bank, "Merlin had a big presence and left a significant legacy within the community. He made quick decisions and never looked back. He was a paradoxical person – bold but unassuming, stern but kind, fierce but generous. Always in a suit and ready to strike up a conversation, he was a champion for respect, excellence and knowing customers by name – a precedent that continues at Municipal Bank. He frequently downplayed his success and could see possibilities not only in people, but in businesses and communities."

After a long battle with Alzheimer's Disease, Merlin passed away Wednesday (Aug. 16, 2023) under Uplifted Care Hospice, Bourbonnais. In his final years, he was attended by devoted caretakers to whom the family is grateful.

Merlin will be interred in a private family ceremony in the All Saints Mausoleum, Bourbonnais. The family is thankful for all he bestowed on his family, friends and community. Merlin will be honored through a celebration of his life at the Kankakee Community College Success Center. Notice of the date and time will be provided at a later date.

Memorials may be made to the Kankakee Community College Foundation online at foundation.kcc.edu. Click "other" to make known that your contribution is made in remembrance of Merlin.

Online condolences may be directed to MKremembered@gmail.com.
Arrangements by Clancy-Gernon Funeral Home in Bourbonnais.

Cemetery Details

All Saints Cemetery

1839 W. Route 102
Bourbonnais, IL 60914
(815) 933-2342

Tribute Wall

JE

“ Mr. Karlock was always so kind to me. I was a customer of his for many years. Sometimes he would even hold the door open for me when I came into the bank. And when time permitted, he would invite me into his office to talk awhile. I first met him, when I wanted to buy some land. He asked me my name, where I worked and how long I had worked there. That's all he asked before he said, "Would you like a check now"? I was floored....I said "That's it"? No bank meetings, your going to loan me the money based on what I just said? His response was....."It's my money, I'll give it to anyone I want" He always helped me whenever I needed it. Thank You Mr. Karlock, for being a friend. Your kindness will always be remembered.

Jim Enz - January 09, 2024 at 12:56 PM

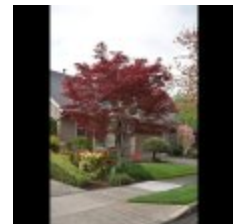
BP

“ Deepest sympathy to Merlin's family. I remember good times with Merlin and Jack Verhines in the 50's and 60's. Merlin was a good friend and man. RIP Merlin.
Barb Verhines Phillips

Barbara Phillips - August 24, 2023 at 06:13 PM

LE

“ Linda, Carlton, Scott Ellis purchased the Red Leaf Japanese Maple for the family of Merlin Everett Karlock.



Linda, Carlton, Scott Ellis - August 22, 2023 at 07:59 AM

LE

“ Linda, Carlton, Scott Ellis planted a [Memorial Tree](/store/Product.aspx?ProductId=4518) in honor of Merlin Everett Karlock.

Linda, Carlton, Scott Ellis - August 22, 2023 at 07:59 AM

DG

“ Deepest sympathy to you and your children on your loss, Dorothy & Jay Griswold

Dorothy Griswold - August 21, 2023 at 04:23 PM

MC

“ Sincere condolences.
Sue and Pat Foley
Michele and Matt Cannon

Michele Cannon - August 21, 2023 at 01:50 PM

TT

“ I have only great memories of Mr. Karlock. I remember the times he would take Kent and I riding bikes over to the farm to ride bikes. I am sure he and Jack are having a drink and talking ole times together now

tyler tedford - August 20, 2023 at 01:03 PM

CB

“ I will never forget sitting at TRH, waiting for a table, and visiting with both of you, Donna. We had such a delight conversation about farming and horses with Merlin. One of both of our parents had Alzheimer's so we were very familiar with this evil disease. I'm glad we were able to give him a little bit of joy that night. May he RIP, and you find joy in the memories before he lost his. Prayers to all of you!

Cindy Baker - August 20, 2023 at 10:37 AM

RM

“ *Rest in peace sir.* ”



Rose Mitchell - August 20, 2023 at 09:27 AM

JG

“ *Joseph Giacchino lit a candle in memory of Merlin Everett Karlock* ”



Joseph Giacchino - August 20, 2023 at 08:19 AM

DK

“ *Donn & Darcy Kane lit a candle in memory of Merlin Everett Karlock* ”



Donn & Darcy Kane - August 19, 2023 at 11:46 PM

DT

“ *Sorry for your loss, Donna.* ”

Donna Taylor - August 19, 2023 at 10:03 PM