

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF...

Ralph James Lileks, a husband, father, businessman, philanthropist, aviator, and proud Navy veteran of WWII, died at home at the age of 93 on July 9th. It was unexpected, as all who knew him would attest: people who were fortunate enough to run into Ralph in his daily jaunts, or see him piloting his Harley, would think the sun would run out of light before Ralph ran out of life.

He was born in Harwood on June 12th, 1926, and died in Fargo, with a four-year detour in the South Pacific from 1942 to 1946 in between. He served on the USS Block Island, where he distinguished himself participating in the rescue of the survivors of the Bataan death march, as well as several operations against the enemy.

He returned home, married his sweetheart Eloise Monson, and set about building a family and a business. At the start, he drove someone else's truck; at the end, he had a fleet of tanker trucks with the LILEKS OIL on the side, transporting oil and fuel around the area, filling the trains that took goods from the coast to the heartland. As late as the age of 90, he still drove truck, wrestled the heavy hoses, and kept the customers satisfied.

From the early 60s on he was a West Fargo business pioneer, opening a service station at I-94 and Sheyenne Street. Texaco, Conoco, then Tesoro today - the brands changed, but the man behind the service stayed the same. In 1997 he opened a convenience store on the spot, and the sign said RJ's. It still does.

A harder-working man you'll never meet. And he made it home for family supper every night. A church-going man, he was generous with the products of his labor, and was most involved in helping orphaned and impoverished children whose upbringing he had shared.

Among those who will not miss him one bit are the deer and pheasant of western North Dakota, and the fish of many lakes. The owners of nearby casinos may likewise doff their hats to a worthy adversary, whose luck made mockery of the odds.

It is also possible that the NDSU Bison football team may find their fortunes dimmed, since Ralph - a 50-year Bison fan - was the most enthusiastic and devoted Team-Maker in the stands. Who knows how often his cheers and encouragement made the difference?

Ralph is keenly missed by his family, but grief is overwhelmed by gratitude - for his love, his devotion to his family and the lessons he taught by word and example, and the remembrance of the laughter he brought to the world with his antics and stories.

He was preceded to the Great Beyond by his first wife and mother of his children, Eloise, to whom he was married from 1952 until her death in 1998, and by his second wife, Doris Soberg, with whom he was married from 2005 until her death in 2014.

He is survived by his 2 children: his son James Lileks and daughter-in-law Sara and his daughter Kimberly Olson and son-in-law David; three beloved grandchildren - Alexa and Brandon Olson, and Natalie Lileks; by his brothers Gene and Roger Lileks, and by his sister LaVerne (Lew) Bengston. On Doris' side, he is remembered by her children: Virginia Soberg Hultquist, Pam Hanson, Nancy Trenbeath, Greg Soberg, and Bryant Soberg.

Our condolences extend to his friends who met him at West Acres every morning for coffee and conversation after his walk, and who may have started to worry last winter when it seemed like he might be slowing down. He'd done the walk, as usual. But it was 20 below, and for the first time he'd decided not to walk around the outside of the mall, but inside. He admitted he thought he was going a little soft. But then the temps climbed to ten below, and he was out in his element again - a North Dakotan to the bone.

We know Ralph would want to thank all the past and present employees of RJ's Tesoro and Lileks Oil that were so instrumental in our over 70 years of business. Their hard work and many long hours cannot be overlooked.



IN LOVING MEMORY

Celebrating the life of
RALPH J. LILEKS



FUNERAL SERVICE

Hope Lutheran Church

- South Campus -

Fargo, North Dakota

Tuesday, July 16, 2019 - 11 a.m.

Officiant

The Rev. Matt Cordes

James Lileks, *scripture reader*

Alexa & Brandon Olson, *eulogists*

Music

Worship Arts Team

Congregational Hymns:

"How Great Thou Art" & "Navy Hymn"

Victoria Melchior, *soloist* "On Eagle's Wings"

"In The Garden"

Pallbearers

Keith Monson, Drew Emanuel, Dave Emanuel,

Neil Krueger, Dale Rust & Perry Rust

Interment

Maple Sheyenne Lutheran Cemetery Harwood, ND

HIGH FLIGHT

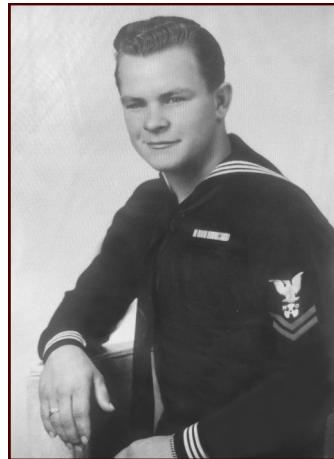
Oh! I have slipped the surly
bonds of Earth and danced the
skies on laughter-silvered wings;

Sunward I've climbed, and
joined the tumbling mirth of
sun-split clouds, - and done
a hundred things you have
not dreamed of - wheeled
and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence.

Hov'ring there, I've chased the shouting wind along, and
flung my eager craft through footless halls of air....

Up, up the long, delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind-swept heights with easy grace where
never lark, or ever eagle flew -
And, while with silent, lifting mind I've trod
The high untresspassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand, and touched the face of God.

John Gillespie Magee, Jr.



MILITARY RITES

West Fargo VFW Post No. 7564
ND Military Funeral Honors Team



*The family wishes to express their appreciation for your
kindness and support during this difficult time. Please join
them for fellowship immediately following the service.*