



William Charles Walker, age 92 of Ludington passed away Wednesday April 8, 2015. His wife of almost seventy years, Laura Ellen (Beebe) Walker was by his side in death as she was in life.

William (Bill) was born in Terry, Montana on October 11, 1922 to the late Charles and Caroline (Straugh) Walker. His family homesteaded in Terry until Bill was 15 when they, like many families, were driven out of the plains by the Great Dust Bowl. They headed east and eventually settled in Scottville, Michigan. Bill graduated from Scottville High School in 1941 and enrolled in County Normal where he attended until he was offered an opportunity through Central Michigan University to attend a Dow Chemical Company course in Chemistry.

At age 20, Bill was old enough to apply to take the written exam for the Air Corps. He received his call to arms in January of 1943. After completing flight training, he was sent to Italy where he was stationed in San Severo and later in Mondolfo. He flew 49 missions in P-51's for the 31st Fighter Group of the 308th Fighter Squadron. As was the custom, the pilot named their plane and Bill named his Lauralee after his girl back home, Laura Beebe. Bill remained in the Air Force until he was discharged on October 11th, 1945 on his twenty-third birthday.

While home on leave Bill married Laura Beebe on July 11, 1945. He resumed his college education at Michigan State University where he graduated with a BS in Science and Math and continued on to earn his MA in Education. He began his teaching career in 1951 in Reese, Michigan. From there he took a position in Harbor Springs, Michigan where he taught until becoming High School Principal. In 1959 he took a position as Principal in Fenton, Michigan. During the summer of 1965 the family moved to Gaylord, Michigan where Bill served as Principal and later Superintendent of Schools. After six years in Gaylord, Bill ended his long career in education as Student Teacher Coordinator for Central Michigan University. It was through this position that he returned to Mason County to live.

He retired in 1984. Besides his family, Bill dedicated his life to education and to his students. Even while he worked full time supporting his family, he earned a Specialist in Education from CMU and pursued his Ph.D. until poor health prevented him from completing his dissertation. He is remembered fondly by the many students whose lives he impacted. He is especially remembered for his generosity, his humor, and his devotion to his wife and family.

Throughout his life, Bill participated in many community, civic, and church organizations. He was active in Kiwanis, taught Sunday school, was a Hospice Volunteer where he also served as Volunteer Coordinator, was a devoted volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, and served in many capacities in his church, often making his famous homemade donuts for various church activities. In his retirement years he enjoyed fishing trips, woodworking, and making Maple Syrup. Just prior to retirement, Bill fulfilled a life-long dream through the building of his own home. This was accomplished with the help of his son Terry as he built a home on 20 acres in Mason County. This home has been the gathering place for the extended family for the past 35 years.

Bill is survived by his wife of 70 years, Laura Ellen (Beebe); daughter, Nona (Phil) Barela; son, Terry (Jane) Walker; daughters, Mary Walker, Margy (Ted Schriever) Walker, Peggy (Phil) Manor and Susan (Bob) Martin. He is also survived by his sister Kathleen (Earl) Spaulding and his brother Alvin Walker. He leaves behind his grandchildren, Chris Walker, Travis (Jenny) Walker, Jessica Martin, Nicole (Jeff) Martin Rice, Ellen Manor, Geoffrey Manor and Laurel Manor. He is also survived by his great-grandchildren Adrian Walker, Parker Walker, Hadley Walker and Zackary Rice. He was predeceased by his brothers Chester Walker, James B. Walker, and Frederick Walker and son-in-law Gary Gregg. He will be missed by his many nieces, nephews and friends.

A memorial service will be held at 11:00 AM on Saturday April 18 at the United Methodist Church in Ludington with a light lunch to follow. For those who wish to make a memorial donation the family suggests a donation to Habitat for Humanity of Ludington or to the United Methodist Church of Ludington.

Please feel free to share a photo or a memory with Bill's family on his personal webpage at www.oakgrovefh.com. The family has entrusted funeral arrangements with Oak Grove Funeral Home and Cremation Center.