



ALAN JOSEPH HUESMANN

December 22, 1935 - December 30, 2013

Alan Joseph Huesmann, well known as a banker, hunter, fisherman, and wild turkey advocate, died on Monday, December 30, 2013, at age 78, surrounded by his beloved daughters, Susan, Connie and Kim and very dear friend and loving companion in his later years, Wanda Merzenich.

Alan was born to Alphonse (Al) and Mary (Ernster) Huesmann on December 22, 1935 in Minneapolis. After his family moved to his mother's home town of Caledonia, he attended Caledonia schools, graduating from Loretto High School in 1953. Alan received a degree in Animal Husbandry from the University of Minnesota, School of Agriculture in 1955. Later he graduated from the Minnesota School of Banking at St. Olaf College in Northfield MN and over the years pursued ongoing education in banking at the American Institute of Banking.

On June 4, 1960, he married his darling, Geraldine (Gerry) Ranzenberger, also of Caledonia, at St. Peter's Church in Caledonia. They lived a traditional family life, with Gerry, as Al often said, "the best homemaker and mother I could imagine", and he the breadwinner. Over the years, Al became the family recreational leader, at the same time conveying strong family and life values to his daughters and their families. Their accomplishments have always been a great source of pride for him.

Alan served his country in the U.S. Army in 1961 and 1962 and was honorably discharged from the Army Reserves. In 1962 he began his banking career at Sprague National Bank under the tutelage of Bob Sprague. Al served as President of the bank from 1974 to 1993, when he retired to spend more time with his family. His dear wife Gerry, died about two years later in January 1995.

Other family members who died before Alan are his parents, Al and Mary Huesmann; his nephew, Peter (son of Dot and Harold Hendel); his niece, Greta Hendel Ingvalson (daughter of Mary Jane and George Hendel) ; brother in law, Harold Hendel; sister and brother in law Bill and Audrey (Ranzenberger) McGrath and brother in law Reggie Ranzenberger.

Alan is survived by his brother, Robert (Bob) and sister in law Marcelina (Ongoco) Huesmann of Bethesda, MD; his two sisters, Mary Jane (George) Hendel and Dorothy Hendel both of Caledonia. His three dear daughters, Susan (David) Breyer of La Crescent; Connie (Fred) Sandvik of La Crescent and Kim Betz of Caledonia; and nine grandchildren: Jaimee, Nicole, Kyle and Derek Breyer; Kayla, Morgan and Joe Sandvik and Maria and Amber Betz and Wanda Merzenich.

Alan bought a boathouse on the Mississippi River near Brownsville when his daughters were small. There the entire family enjoyed boating, fishing, water skiing, picnicking and visiting with friends. The boathouse remains a favorite family gathering place. The Huesmann family also enjoyed many vacations together traveling in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Reminiscing recently, Al said, "My family is the most important thing in my life."

Like his father, he loved nature and wild life and worked to nurture and preserve Minnesota's landscape by developing wildlife habitat and planting thousands of trees on farm lands he owned. Al liked to hunt deer and game

birds, like quail and pheasant, and shared this interest with his daughters.

However, Al was best known as a supporter of wild turkey, seeking to restore and increase their range in Minnesota both northwards and westwards. One result of work like Al's was to see wild turkeys become common up the Mississippi River in Wabasha and beyond. Today they are a common sight even within urban areas like Rochester and the Twin Cities.

Al served as the charter president of the Houston County Wild Turkey Federation, a director of the Minnesota Wild Turkey Federation and a director of the National Wild Turkey Federation. He was inducted into the Minnesota Turkey Hall of Fame for his work. As a turkey hunter he earned the rare National Turkey Grand Slam. Al was instrumental in having Caledonia declared the Wild Turkey Capital of Minnesota. Caledonia recognized him with a key to the city and both the MWTF and NWTF joined in this recognition. He served as chairman of the NWTF banquet fund raising committee.

Al greatly loved Caledonia and this was evident in his involvement in several community organizations. Some of his favorites included serving on the board of Directors for the Caledonia Playground, the Caledonia Hospital, the Caledonia Sno Gophers and the Caledonia Rotary where he co- led the Gazebo project.

Al was an avid and adventuresome fisherman, angling in Mexico, Alaska and Canada. His largest catch was a 105 pound halibut he hooked off the coast of Alaska. He also held a national record for Northern Pike.

Besides his love of agriculture, Al was a great home gardener, especially of flowers and vegetables. He enjoyed home canning his produce and was an expert maker of gourmet sauerkraut. Al and Wanda enjoyed several trips around the United States, Canada, Alaska and annual trips to Ixtapa, Mexico.

The past two years they wintered in Ft. Myers, FL until Al's health would no longer permit travel.

Instead of a memorial, Al's wish is that you go out and do some kindness or help a friend or neighbor.

A Mass of Christian Burial for Al will be at 10:30 am on Friday, January 3, 2014, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Caledonia. Father Gregory Leif and Fr. Matt Fasnacht will concelebrate. Burial with military honors will follow in Calvary Cemetery, Caledonia. Visitation will be from 4 to 7 pm on Thursday at Holy Family Hall, next to the church, with a prayer service at 7 pm. Visitation will also be one hour prior to the service at the church on Friday.

McCormick Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.