

**Orin Clark Benson**

Very early Saturday morning, July 9, 2005, at his home in the woods, Orin's spirit left his body to the mournful



cry of howling wolves, which he so dearly loved. Orin was 91. He left in the company of his protégé, Roy Piala, and other good friends.

To have known Orin

Benson was a rare and unforgettable experience. At an early age it was apparent that he had a gift for training animals of all kinds. He made training dogs his life's work at Benson's Kennels in Eagle for nearly 70 years. Roy Rogers, Gene Autry, Prince Phillip, Joan Crawford, Clark Gable, Joe Foss, Clayton Moore (the "Lone Ranger") and many other notables were among his thousands of clients and friends.

Orin traveled the nation many times over, giving memorable performances with his troop of dogs. He also worked with bears, foxes, otters, skunks, hawks and other animals. He was well known for the wolves he kept. Mel Ellis wrote a book based on the life of one of the wolf's experiences, and the book was translated into many languages. He made many wildlife film segments for Walt Disney. He was broadcast on television and the radio.

Orin was inducted into the Retriever Field Trial Hall of Fame and the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sports Show Hall of Fame. He was instrumental in forming the sports show 65 years ago. He received a citation from the Wisconsin State Senate for his abilities and contributions to society, and he has numerous other accolades for his work.

Orin was the consummate jokester, doing such things as showing up at an event disguised wearing "hillbilly" teeth and ragged, old clothes. He once even let a descented skunk loose in Sasso's Tavern and surreptitiously squirted patrons.

Orin lived a very full life, giving much more than he received. He left us all more enriched for having known him.

Orin is survived by his sister, Mabel Smiley of California, and his daughter, Lynn Marie Benson.

He was preceded in death by his loving first wife, Lucille (nee Sondericer); his devoted second wife, Vivian (nee Rankin); his son, Robert; and his brothers.

A memorial service for Orin will be held at a later date.

Memorials are appreciated by trust for Orin Benson at First Oconomowoc Bank, 155 W. Wisconsin Ave., Oconomowoc, WI. 53066.

For more information, contact the Cesarz, Charapata & Zinnecker Funeral Home and Cremation Services at 542-6609, or for an online obituary, directions or to leave condolences, go to [www.waukeshafuneral-home.com](http://www.waukeshafuneral-home.com)