

Stewart E. Calkins

July 28, 1929 — Jan. 8, 2015

Stewart Edward Calkins, age 85, died Thursday, January 8, 2015 at Waukesha Memorial Hospital.



Stewart was born into the hands of old Dr. Dunn in Whitewater on July 28, 1929. Unfortunately the good doctor was not known for his compassionate bedside manner and when the expectant parents, Edward and Mary Jane (Stewart) Calkins, arrived at Doc's little hospital, he told Mary Jane that "Only a fool would have a baby on such a hot day," and when Stewart was born he pronounced him "the homeliest damn baby he's ever seen."

Stewart was an only child. He grew up during the great economic depression of the 1930s and World War II on the historic Knapp-Calkins farm near Palmyra, which his pioneer grandparents, Albertus and Polly Knapp, bought from the government in 1844.

Stewart attended the local schools and graduated with the class of 1947 from Palmyra High School. He then went to the University of Wisconsin's two year Agricultural Short Course. When Stewart was 24, his father died and he took charge of the family farm, where he lived for the rest of his life.

He married Carol Pierce, a schoolmate and farm girl in Eagle Township, on May 6, 1955. They enjoyed 59 years together in the big brick Calkins home on Highway 59, where they raised three daughters.

Stewart loved his family, his friends and his community and was always willing to help those in need. For example, he never complained during the many years he helped his mother-in-law, Clara Pierce, continue to live in her farm home until she was 98.

He was a lifelong member of the Palmyra United Methodist Church and its Men's Club. He was a loyal member of the local Masonic Lodge for over 50 years, serving several times as Master. He also found time to serve on the Jefferson County ASCS Committee for 30 years, retiring in 1991.

Stewart served the Township of Palmyra for 40 years, 14 years as a supervisor and 26 years as chairman, retiring in 2013. His motto was "Keep the township roads up and the people's taxes down."

Stewart and Carol belonged to several local historical societies and they were honored in 2001 as the Palmyra Old Settlers that year at the annual picnic in July. In 1990, he wrote a booklet for the Palmyra Historical Society titled "Room and Board and A Dollar a Day," which told of the many interesting hired men that worked on the Calkins farm during the 1930s and 1940s.

Stewart served as treasurer for the local Hillside Cemetery Association, bowled for many years in Whitewater and, in his later years, could be found at the "House in the Woods" auctions near Eagle or having breakfast at the Edge of Town restaurant with his friends.

Stewart is survived by Carol, his wife of 59 years; three daughters, Nancy (Jon) Denzin of Whitewater, Gayle (Tim) Beck of Eagle Township and Mary Beth (Mark) Schmidt of Palmyra Township; nine grandchildren, Erica (Erik) Allermann, Kyle, Kevin and Calab Denzin, Rachel (Paul Carnot), Betsy and Timmy Beck, and Tyler and Shawn Schmidt; and two great-grandchildren, Mason and Austin Allermann.

He will also be fondly remembered by several foster boys he treated as his own, plus many other friends and relatives.

Stewart was preceded in death by his parents, Ed and Mary Stewart Calkins (McClure); his stepfather, William K. McClure; his wife's parents, Charles and Clara (Howell) Pierce; and a brother-in-law, Charles A. Pierce.

Visitation will be on Wednesday, January 14, from 5:00PM to 7:00PM and on Thursday, January 15, from 10:00AM until the time of service at 12:00PM at the Haase Lockwood and Associates Funeral Home, 320 W. Main St., Palmyra. Pastor Karen Klatt will officiate with burial to follow at Hillside Cemetery in Palmyra.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions made to the Palmyra United Methodist Church or the Melendy's Prairie Cemetery Association would be appreciated.

The family wishes to thank Stewart's longtime physician, Dr. Martin Kern, for his compassionate care and support. Also, the family thanks his many excellent care givers at Waukesha Memorial Hospital during his last illness.

Haase-Lockwood & Associates Funeral Homes and Crematory of Palmyra is assisting the family, 262-495-2127. For the online guest registry, please go to www.haaselockwoodfh.com.

*Here's to Dad
A beautiful life that came to an end,
He died as he lived, everyone's friend.
In our hearts a memory will always be kept
of one we loved, and will never forget*

(Freeman — Jan. 13, 2015)