

Obituaries

Virgil Wagner

Virgil E. Wagner, 75, of Belleville, Ill., born Feb. 27, 1922, in Belleville, Ill., died Friday, Aug. 22, 1997, at his residence.



Virgil E. Wagner

Virgil was a professional football player. His playing career started at Belleville Township High School West from 1935 to 1939. He received his bachelor's degree at Millikin University, Decatur, Ill., from 1939 to 1943. While in college, he played football and won nine athletic letters, presidency of the senior class, recognition in "Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges & Universities" and was voted "Campus King" by the students. He entered the Naval Air Corps in 1943 as a pilot and played for the famed Iowa Seahawks Navy football team, active service kept him from playing in 1944 and 1945, but he returned in 1946 to report to the Detroit Lions training camp, during that time he was sent to the Montreal Alouettes. In his nine years with the Alouettes, from 1946 to 1954, he set many records including gaining the All-Star halfback slot on the Big Four Team for four years; the All Eastern Team for four years; and the All Canadian Team for two years. He has won all manners of Most Valuable Player Awards: The Jeff Russel Memorial Trophy, the McAlpine Trophy and the Lord Calvert Trophy. In his nine years of Cana-


dian football, he had averaged far better than a touchdown per game. For four consecutive years, he had led the league in scoring. When he took to the field for the Alouettes there was nothing but applause for "The Wag," and he was considered by many Canadians as among the best ambassador of goodwill the U.S. ever sent up North. In 1955, the #78 was retired. He was also inducted into the Canadian, Millikin, Decatur and Belleville News-Democrat Halls of Fame. He later retired from the Army Aviation Command in St. Louis. He was a member of Westview Baptist Church, Belleville; Belleville Elks Lodge 481; and World War II Naval Air Corps veteran. He was a devoted husband, father and grandfather, who held closest in his heart the love, joy and deepest commitment for his family. He will be sadly missed by those close to him.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Dr. Arthur W. and Nellie, nee Stehfest, Wagner; two brothers, Dr. Myron W. Wagner and Dr. Arthur W. Wagner; and a great-granddaughter, Alexis Wagner.

Surviving are his wife, Mary J., nee Rothgangel, Wagner of Belleville, whom he married July 13, 1946, they celebrated 51 years of marriage together; a son, Michael J. (Pam) Wagner of Seattle, Wash.; three daughters, Martha J. Wagner of Fairview Heights, Ill., Sara E. (Mark) Boyd of Freeburg, Ill., and Rebecca L. Beatty of Belleville, Ill.; eight grandchildren, Erica, Kyle, Gavin, Kristi, Jeffrey, Christopher, Erin and Hannah; and a great-grandchild, Ethan.

Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 26, 1997, at George Renner & Sons Funeral Home, Belleville, Ill., with the Brother Jim Robinson officiating. Burial will be in Valhalla Gardens of Memory Cemetery, Belleville.

Friends may call after 4 p.m. Monday, Aug. 25, 1997, at the funeral home.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Hospice of Southern Illinois or to Westview Baptist Church Together 
W. David Fund