



## Edmond Pierce

September 6, 1923 - October 15, 2009

Edmond W. Pierce, 86, of Dixon, died Thursday, Oct. 15, 2009, at Van Matre Rehabilitation Hospital, Rockford. Edmond was born Sept. 6, 1923. Survivors include one son, Richard B. of Dixon; sister-in-law, Leila Bashaw of Orland Park; four nieces, Kathleen (Arlyn) Schier and Theresa (Gary) Buccola, both of Dixon, Sylvia (Russell) Kramer of Hudson, and Joan (Gary Graczyk) Bashaw of Park Forest; and three nephews, Gary (Carol) Pierce of Dixon, James (Brandi Montavon) Pierce of Amboy, and Gary Bashaw of Fort Meyers, Fla. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lorraine; sons, Fred "Gene" and Gerald; brothers, Richard Wayne and Robert; and his parents, Earl and Florence (nee Stackpole) and Gail (Donald) Bushong. Ed moved to Dixon from Ashton at the start of his sophomore year in high school, and graduated with the Class of 1943. In high school, he was painfully shy. His classmates were surprised when he helped plan their 60th high school reunion. He learned how to throw a party that everyone loved. In 1943, Ed joined the Marine Corps, but was soon discharged because he had asthma. Immediately, he joined the Army Air Corps and was stationed at Navy Pier. Soon after he arrived, he met a beautiful woman at a USO event, who offered him a piece of pie. He gladly accepted, and he was completely entranced. The woman's name was Lorraine Bashaw, and they were married in November 1943. On their 50th wedding anniversary, he said that he'd forgotten whether he'd first fallen in love with the woman or the pie. He said that either way, it worked out pretty well. Ed and Lorraine had three sons, Richard born in 1945,

Fred Eugene "Gene" in born 1947, and Gerald, born in 1949. Gerald passed away in 1951 from a rare form of cancer, and the tragedy was a life changing event for the Pierces in many ways. They gained an appreciation for life, a passion for living, and a deep sense of generosity, and community service. They began focusing their time and energy on helping others. Ed was a member of the Dixon Fire Department from 1945 until 1980. He studied the lore, and was immersed in the technical aspects safe fire fighting and the complexities of ordering fire trucks. He was among the first in northern Illinois to identify emergency medical assistance as an important part of fire departments. Not long before he became chief, he helped form the Dixon Firefighters Union. In 1963, he began a decades-long crusade for a new fire station and was extremely proud of Chief Dean Rhodes' ability to complete the project in 2006. In the early years, the firemen volunteered their down-time while on duty working in "Santa's Repair Shop," in the old hay loft that served the fire horses in days gone by. The firemen fixed broken toys, repainted those that were only scratched, and then took them to Mrs. Leydig's home, the original Leydig Center. The firemen became known as The Goodfellows. And Ed put his sons to work as testers to make sure the toys were in good working order. The boys knew they couldn't keep any of the toys, because they were especially for kids who really needed them. The firefighters were always helping each other as well. In the early 1950s, Ed and Lorraine began to build their home at 1009 University Ave. It was his second do-it-yourself project, and over time, all of the firemen pitched in to help him build his home. After the house was buttoned-up, the family lived in the basement while Ed finished off the upstairs. At Christmastime, Lorraine's parents were coming from Chicago to see the house, so Ed and Lorraine put up a Christmas tree the night before. Ed was on duty at the fire station, and Lorraine turned on the tree before she gathered the kids to get the Bashaws at the train station. When they returned, smoke billowed out of the house when Lorraine opened the front door. She ran in, dialed 911, and Ed answered the phone. Lorraine yelled "Fire! 1009 University!" Ed, a man who never swore, made an

exception to the rule that day. And the fire department's response time was remarkable. The Pierces lost only a curtain, but Ed lived with that story forever. Ed was also the janitor (not the Sexton – he would correct you) of St. Paul Lutheran Church in the mid 1940s, when it was opposite the old fire station. When the church moved into its new building on Peoria, the janitor's staff grew by two. His sons attended South Central Grade School across the street, and after school, they each had Sunday school classrooms and bathrooms to clean. Shoveling the church's walks was a winter obligation. After the service started, if it was snowing heavily, they were right back at it so those walks would be clean when church let out. Then, if the snow continued, the process was repeated for the late service. One of those mornings, Gene just had enough of it. As people were coming out of church, Gene yelled over to his father, "Dad, why don't you ever let me go to church?" Ed replied that he did. "Getting inside the church was up to God." Perhaps the most longstanding service project that Ed and Lorraine took on was Meals on Wheels, which was founded by Pauline Hermes and Lorraine Pierce in the mid 1970s. For many years, Ed served as its treasurer. After retiring as fire chief in 1980, Ed helped Lorraine with the delivery routes. Those trips always became debates – endless debates over the order in which recipients got their meals. Finally, Lorraine would go to her desk, start typing, and Ed would attempt to tell her what to type. That never worked though. She always took off her hearing aids first. He never gave up. Ed also served as treasurer for the Dixon Elks, beginning right after a fire that destroyed their original lodge. They were having dire financial trouble, but Ed made sure that the lodge returned to solvency, and, when he stepped down, the lodge had money in the bank. He was responsible for making sure that volunteers showed up when the new lodge was constructed, and he recruited many skilled craftsmen for complex construction jobs on a voluntary basis. He and Lorraine took over the 20/20 Club, (a fundraising activity within the lodge) and, when he left that job, there was a waiting list of people wanting to become members. Tomatoes

were Ed's plant passion. He had a love/hate relationship with green beans because they often disappointed him. However, even in bad years like this one, the tomatoes he grew in Leonora Bushman's backyard never let him down. He grew them from seed gathered from the preceding year's crop. His absolute favorites were Belgians. Nothing was more highly anticipated than the first Belgium tomato of the season. No lunch surpassed the following sandwich, two slices of hand-cut sourdough bread, toasted and slathered with real mayonnaise. Top the first slice of toast with Romaine lettuce. Top the lettuce with a ½-inch-thick slice of peeled Belgium tomato. Add three to four slices of crisp thick-cut bacon. Complete by adding the last slice of toast. That was Ed's idea of food heaven. At least once a week after Lorraine died, Ed visited some of the nicest ladies in town. He was up until the wee hours of the morning enjoying the entertainment they provided. Ed was a prolific reader and the ladies on staff at the Dixon Public Library introduced him to many authors they thought he would like. He paid them his ultimate compliment. He gave them his homegrown tomatoes. Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at St. Paul Lutheran Church, Dixon, with the Rev. Bob Hansen, pastor, officiating. Burial, with military honors by the combined Dixon veterans group, will follow at Oakwood Cemetery, Dixon. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Jones Funeral Home, Dixon, and from 10 to 11 a.m. Wednesday at the church. Memorials have been established.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Edmond Pierce*

October 08, 2023 at 11:30 AM



“ *Edmond Pierce*

December 31, 2022 at 02:40 AM



“ *Dick, I thought I knew your Father for these past 12 years through the Elks and your Dad's wonderful Christmas letters - but I clearly didn't know him - your obituary for your Dad was an insight to him. Your Dad was the first person to reach out to me when and certain gentleman walked out of my life; he got me back involved in the Elks calling Bingo and eventually becoming an officer. I will miss your Dad and my thoughts and prayers are with you.*

Sharon Kay Dirck - October 15, 2009 at 12:00 AM



“ *Such a considerate, concerned, and inspiring man. I was fortunate to have met him. What a great loss.*

Bruce Jacobsen - October 15, 2009 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Dick,

*My sincerest condolences on your dad's passing.*

*"There are things that we don't want to happen but have to accept, things we don't want to know but have to learn, and people we can't live without but have to let go."*

*~Author Unknown*

*May the perpetual light of peace shine upon him.*

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**Melody Smith** - October 15, 2009 at 12:00 AM

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“ *My thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Edmond Pierce. I feel as if I got to know him through his son Dick. I'm very sorry for your loss of this wonderful spirit in your lives.*

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**Rosemary** - October 15, 2009 at 12:00 AM