

LOUNSBERRY, Robert Horace 1918-2001

Decorah Journal, Thursday, Feb. 15, 2001

Robert Lounsberry, 82, of McCallsburg, Iowa, died of heart failure Feb. 10, 2001 at Story County Medical Center, Nevada, Iowa.

Funeral services were held Wednesday, Feb. 14 at 11 a.m. at Bethany Lutheran Church in McCallsburg. Interment was in Colo Cemetery, with Fredregill Funeral Home of Zearing, Iowa, in charge of arrangements.

Robert Horace Lounsberry was born June 22, 1918, in Carlisle, Iowa, the son of H.C. and Alice Elmore Lounsberry. He then lived in Colo from 1919 until 1933, when he moved to the current family farm near McCallsburg.

Robert Lounsberry graduated from McCallsburg High School in 1935 and was a member of the state tournament basketball team that year.

He went to Luther College, in Decorah, where he earned a double major in biology and chemistry, and also participated and lettered in football, basketball and track.

He attended two years of graduate studies at the University of Iowa, and then enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942. He qualified for pilot training and became a U.S. Air Force B-24 Pilot, serving in the Asiatic Pacific theater in World War II. He flew a full tour of combat missions, receiving several military honors including the Distinguished Flying Cross, Four Oak Leaf Clusters, and the Philippine Liberation Medal. He was honorably discharged with the rank of 2nd Lieutenant in 1945 and returned to Story County to begin farming there.

Robert Lounsberry married Muriel Dirks of Decorah August 2, 1942. To this union six children were born.

He was very active and a long time member of a variety of professional and community organizations, serving in many leadership positions on the local, State and national level.

He was a 50 year Mason, 50 year member of VFW and a lifetime member of American Legion serving as Iowa State Commander and National Committeeman.

Robert Lounsberry was a charter member and past president of the McCallsburg Lions Club, and the Lounsberrys were chosen for Lion's Citizens of the year award.

Robert Lounsberry was a long time member of the McCallsburg Presbyterian Church, where he served as ruling elder, Presbytery Delegate, Sunday School teacher and choir member. He was active in the Republican Party, serving on the local, county, district and state levels. He also served many years on the Iowa State Fair Board, the Iowa Arboretum Board, Iowa Association of School Boards, Iowa Boys State and Iowa Farm Bureau.

He entered state government as Deputy Secretary of Agriculture in 1969. He was then elected Iowa Secretary of Agriculture in 1972, re-elected in 1974/1978, 1982 and served until retiring Jan. 3, 1987.

Robert Lounsberry participated in several agricultural trade missions across the U. S. and led tours promoting Iowa products to Germany, Japan, Egypt, Hong Kong, China, Israel and Italy.

He received many honors from vocational agriculture, 4-H commissions, state committees, commodity groups and other state organizations. He served as president for Mid-America International Trade Council, Midwest Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture.

Surviving Robert Lounsberry are his wife of 58 years, Muriel Lounsberry; five children: William Lounsberry of McCallsburg; Beth Rumph of Plano, Texas; Janet King of Cedar Rapids; Paul Lounsberry of Columbia, S. C.; and Steven Lounsberry of Cedar Rapids.

Additional survivors include grandchildren Melissa Lounsberry, Janet Rumph, Brian Rumph, Nathan, King, Zachary King, Michael Lounsberry, Kerri Whitley, Kristine Thompson, Jordan Lounsberry, Andrew Lounsberry, Jeffrey Lounsberry and Sara Lounsberry, and two great-grandchildren.