

Kent F. Olson – BS 1958 Pharmacy

Kent Olson, 78 of Battle Lake died Tuesday, October 7, 2014 at the Sanford Health in Fargo.

Kent Franklin Olson was born on September 2, 1936 to Kenneth and Ethel Olson (Jacobson). He grew up in Battle Lake and made national headlines when he was four years old as the child lost in the swamps between Battle Lake and Underwood for about forty hours. Many "old-timers" still remember the ordeal and always asked him about it. Kent graduated from Battle Lake High School in 1954 and attended the University of Minnesota for one year, then transferred and graduated with a degree in pharmacy from North Dakota State University in 1958 and later, a business degree from the University of Minnesota in 1968. His pharmacy career began while serving his internship both at Mathews Drug in Frazee and the old Fergus Falls State Hospital.

After serving in the US Army (1959-60) at Brooke Army Medical Center (Fort Sam Houston) in San Antonio, Texas, Kent worked as a pharmacist in St. Paul and subsequently spent fifteen years as the Director of Professional Services and Director of Pharmacy Operations for Snyder Drug Stores based in Hopkins, MN. At the time, Snyder's was the largest chain drug company in Minnesota and encompassed six states. He then became President and CEO of Northwestern Wholesale Drug Company in Minneapolis until he retired.

Kent was very active in pharmacy affairs and belonged to the MN State Pharmaceutical Association; The National Association of Chain Drug Stores where he chaired the Pharmaceutical Marketing Committee in Washington, D.C. for one year, and later, The National Wholesale Drug Association in Alexandria, Virginia, for two years. He was president of the Midwest Drug Wholesalers for several years and active in their governmental affairs.

Kent was a Charter Member of the University of Minnesota President's Club; served as a member of the Pharmacy Oversight Committee at the State Welfare Department; the State Welfare Task Force Committee; and a Life Member of the University of Minnesota Century Mortar Club and served on its board for many years.

At retirement, he moved from his home on Lake Minnetonka to Victoria, MN. He then moved to his current home on Blanche Lake at Battle Lake, MN, and split time between there and a home in Scottsdale, AZ.

Kent was an avid tennis player and twice played for his Minnetonka team in the USTA Senior National Tournament. A fourth place finish in 1996 was a career high point. He enjoyed cross-country skiing and twice finished in the Vasaloppet event in Mora, MN. He went to the Gunflint Ski Trails each winter for many years and accomplished the

grueling Banadad Trail twice. Kent loved crosswords and was obsessed with his daily puzzle. He also loved to hunt ducks and small game on his hobby farm on East Mason Lake. Entertaining his friends and grandchildren there was a special time both he and they looked forward to.

He served on the Advisory Board of the Good Samaritan Society of Battle Lake for several years and was past Treasurer of Glendalough State Park Citizen's Advisory Board, and currently Chief Financial Officer and Board member of the Kappa Psi Alumni Group Foundation at North Dakota State University in Fargo.

Kent is survived by son Tedd Franklin Olson of Minneapolis, daughter Susan Emily Olson (Bill Hughes) of Sebastopol, California, step-daughter Cherie Ploof of St. Cloud, MN; grand-children Nicholas and Emily Hughes, Dan, Matthew, Joel, Alyssa, and Angel Ploof; nephews Mitchell (Lori) Papke, Marc Papke, Blake (Joy) Papke as well as grand nieces and nephews Cameron, Calen, Amanda, Drew, and Janessa Papke. He is also survived by fiancée Lou Barry with whom Kent had been friends since fourth grade at Battle Lake School. His extended family also includes his graduating class at Battle Lake and their families, to whom he remained very close over those many years. Kent was preceded in death by his father, mother, wife Claudia, sister Kathleen Papke, stepfather Julius Nelson and stepbrother Richard Nelson.

Memorials can be given to the Battle Lake Education Fund, in care of the school at 402 West Summit, Battle Lake, MN 56515.

Funeral Services: 2 pm, Sunday, October 12 at First Lutheran Church, Battle Lake

Visitation: one hour prior to the service at the church

Clergy: Rev. Jake Dyrhaug

Military Honors: American Legion Post 289, Battle Lake, Minnesota

Cemetery: Lakewood Cemetery, Battle Lake

Funeral Home: Glende-Nilson Funeral Home, Battle Lake