

Lawrence Sundahl

Lawrence Sundahl, 89, of Stephen, Minnesota passed away early Sunday morning, March 6th, 2011 at North Valley Medical Center in Warren, Minnesota.

Lawrence Charles Sundahl was born on December 27, 1921, to Otto J. and H. Amelia Peterson Sundahl at Stephen, Minnesota. He was baptized and confirmed at the Norwegian First Lutheran Church in Stephen. He attended primary school and high school in Stephen and graduated in 1939. His extra-curricular time was spent in his father's garage and implement business in Stephen. He was working at the Douglas Aircraft factory in Long Beach, California, when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred. He enlisted in the Navy in 1942, and was stationed in Okinawa when the atomic bomb ended the war with Japan in August, 1945. He was discharged from the Navy in July 1946 with a rating of Aviation Chief Petty Officer. After spending 1946 and 1947 in an electronics school in Minneapolis, he returned to his home town of Stephen.

In 1948 he married Phyllis E. Thibodo who became his lifetime partner.

The same year he became involved in a business partnership with Adolph Johnson. They named their new enterprise "A & L Motor Lab". The partnership was amicably dissolved in 1952 and Lawrence became the sole owner. In 1958 a new building was erected at its present location to better serve the local clientele. The business was renamed "Sundahl TV & Appliance". In 1984, after thirty-six years in business, the store was sold to son David and his wife Carol.

Lawrence served 32 years on the Stephen Volunteer Fire Department; half those years as chief. He was a member of the Stephen City Council and served 15 years as mayor. He was an active member of the Stephen Civic & Commerce Association, and was a Boy Scout Cubmaster. He was a 64-year member of the local American Legion Post and a 50-plus year local Masonic Lodge member.

He represented Stephen on the Northwest Regional Development Commission.

He served for three years on the State of Minnesota Waste Management Board and several League of Minnesota Municipal committees. He represented Stephen as a charter member of the Northern Municipal Power Agency, which provides electrical power to twelve member cities. His leadership on local county water boards assured Stephen of a dependable quality water supply.

Lawrence served as the local city historian. In his retirement, he worked for the Messenger, the local weekly newspaper, as a correspondent for their weekly "Yesteryears" column. He also wrote a number of articles titled "Backward Glances" which were his personal historical insights about people, places and events that have shaped the community and which he thought would be of interest to the Messenger readers.

His personal interests were tracking the occurring events on the national political stage. He had an intense interest in the history of World War II, some of which he shared with the readers of his "Backward Glances" columns.

He is survived by his wife, Phyllis; son David (Carol); daughters Mary (Jim) Davenport of Glade Park, Colorado; Laura (Linton) Bradford-Mathews of Grand Junction, Colorado; Donna (Richard) Pierson of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; seven grandchildren; Elizabeth, Christopher, Meredith, Michael, Melody, Preston and Julie; and 8 great-grandchildren; Brother Richard (Elaine) Sundahl of Faribault, Minnesota; sister-in-law Ruth Sundahl of Litchfield, Minnesota; and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; a brother Norman Sundahl, and infant sister, May and nephew Gregory Sundahl.

He affiliated with the Presbyterian Church after his marriage to Phyllis in 1948.

Funeral services are scheduled for Wednesday, March 9th, 2011 at 10:30 a.m. in First Lutheran Church, Stephen.

Interment will be in the Stephen City Cemetery.

Visitation will be held on Tuesday evening from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in the Austin Funeral Home, Stephen with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m. and at the church on Wednesday for one hour prior to the service.