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In Memory of Yewell G. Lawrence

AUGUST 24TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Yewell G. Lawrence, Loving husband of Sandra (nee Cowsert, deceased 2012) died peacefully in his home in Naples, FL on August 18, 2019 at age 87. He will be remembered for his keen intelligence, good character, and easy, self-deprecating sense of humor. Born in Dexter, MO on March 5, 1932 to Yewell Lawrence and Pearl White Lawrence, Yewell grew up in Bloomfield, MO with his parents and two sisters, Verna and Gerry.

He attended Missouri University after high school, enjoying new friends, accounting classes, and politics (he established Missouri University's first Young Democrats Club). A lifelong fan of the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team and a baseball player through his youth, Yewell joined Mizzou's baseball team with the hope of becoming a professional first baseman after college. Learning of this aspiration, his father, a Missouri State Senator, informed his son that he was not a good enough ball player to make a living at it and encouraged him to concentrate on his studies instead. This was useful and timely advice given that a year later Senator Yewell Lawrence died in an automobile accident. Yewell soon understood that he must leave school and return to Bloomfield to manage his family's business interests, among which were shares in the Bank of Bloomfield, a livestock feed store, and a drive-in theater. He had enjoyed learning to read a balance sheet in high school and found that he liked the challenges of building and operating a business. Years later, Yewell said that what motivated him to work hard was not his competitiveness; it was his "great fear of going broke." In 1957 Yewell and his business partner and brother-in-law, Lehman Godwin, opened Monarch Feed Mills next to the railroad in east Dexter. Soon becoming one of the largest employers in Dexter, Monarch

bought and sold grain and manufactured their own brands of livestock feed, shipping feed to livestock farmers in 5 states and opening a second manufacturing plant in Pocahontas, Arkansas. In recognition that the company's success was substantially due to its excellent employees, Monarch implemented the first employee profit-sharing program in Stoddard County. Yewell and Lehman sold Monarch in 1981 after 24 years in business. At age 32, Yewell had also become the president of the Bank of Bloomfield. The bank expanded under his time as president, opening branches in Essex, MO and Marble Hill, MO. The sense of community responsibility was strong in Yewell. He was one of several community leaders who raised money to build the Dexter Hospital for the residents of Stoddard County when several voting initiatives had failed. He served on the hospital board for several years. Always a staunch advocate for education and the Dexter Public School system, he served on the Dexter School Board from November 1962 to March 1972.

Despite his work and community service, Yewell always made time for family and fun. Yewell said that he had returned home "to marry the prettiest girl in the county", Sandra J. Cowsert. By 1960, Sandra and Yewell had their three children, Bud, Karen and Kelly and had made Dexter their home. A small aircraft pilot, Yewell flew his family on vacations every summer and was very proud when Sandra earned her pilot's license, too. He and Sandra also shared an interest in sports and physical fitness. Both jogged regularly well before jogging was locally fashionable and both were accomplished tennis players and golfers. They were active members of the Stoddard County Country Club and, when it was relocated and renamed, the Hidden Trails Country Club. Love of golf and warm weather led Yewell and Sandra to spend winters in Naples, Florida. After Sandra's death, Yewell moved to Naples full time in 2014, where he was everyone's favorite restaurant customer and neighbor. Above his professional and civic life, he loved and valued his family. At his core a humble and dutiful man, it was for his wife, children and grandchildren that Yewell worked so hard, served so readily, and lived so honorably.

He is survived by his son Yewell (Bud) G. Lawrence, Jr. and spouse June Lawrence of Dexter, MO; daughters Karen E. Lawrence of Dexter, MO, and Kelly A. Lawrence of Fort Myers, FL; sister Geralene L. Harvey of Indianapolis, IN; brother-in-law Lehman Godwin spouse of sister Verna Dean, deceased; granddaughter Natalie Wolfe Adams and spouse Charles M. Adams of Dallas, TX; grandson Hunter Yewell Lawrence of Dexter, MO, step-granddaughter Bridgett L. Kielhofner and spouse Brandon of Kelso, MO.

Visitation service will take place at the Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter on Friday, August 30, 2019 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

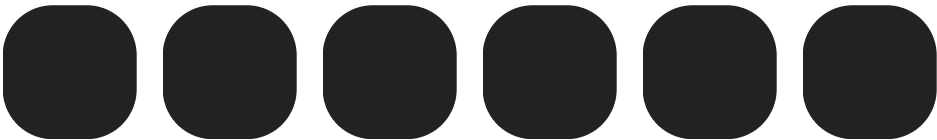
Memorials may be made in honor of Yewell G. Lawrence to: Dexter Public School Foundation, c/o Laura Miller, 1031 Brown Pilot Ln, Dexter MO 63841.

Rainey-Mathis Funeral Home in Dexter is in charge of all arrangements.

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