



Eldon Tessman

December 21, 1928 - January 22, 2024

Eldon Albert Tessman, 95, beloved husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, brother, uncle, friend, and proud potato farmer died peacefully on January 22, 2024, surrounded by his devoted family.

Eldon was born December 21, 1928, in Minneapolis, Minnesota to Albert and Esther (Hildebrandt) Tessman. In 1942, after the tragic death of his father in a hunting accident, 14-year-old Eldon helped his mother and 12-year-old sister Elaine manage the Tessman Farm. Eldon graduated as valedictorian from Osseo High School in 1946, then earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from his beloved University of Minnesota in 1950. Soon after graduation Eldon & June Oswald, the girl next door (so to speak) and his high school sweetheart, married in 1950 and raised five children. Sadly, June died in 2007. Eldon remarried in 2011 to Adale "Addie" Finch, a widow and mother of four adult children. A big blended family formed.

Many wayfaring visitors to Brooklyn Park found Eldon by locating the big red barn, believed to be the oldest in Hennepin County. Settled in 1870, the family homestead was located in what would become known as the center of potato-growing for the state of Minnesota. Indeed, Eldon liked to proudly claim that "there were more carloads of potatoes shipped out of Brooklyn Park/Osseo than any place in the U.S. We were known

as the potato capital of the world.”(Ever wonder where Brooklyn Park Tater Daze originated?)At 16 years of age, Eldon was crowned the “State Potato King” due to the success of a plot of starchy Russets! Eldon named his potato brand “Pride of Brooklyn Park,” and used the marketing slogan “Fresh Potatoes Make the Meal.” Eldon saw many labor-intensive tasks eased with the advancement of modern technology, especially in irrigation systems-- from booms to wheel lines to traveling guns. A severe drought that rendered potatoes \$2 per 100 lbs hastened the decision to bring 106 years of farming to an end. Eldon Tessman retired from farming in 1976. And began sharing stories about his experiences growing up on the historic family potato farm.

Not one to really “retire,” Eldon put his energy into his passions in life -- love of family, strong faith in God, community service, and traveling the globe. Eldon was an active and devoted founding member of Brooklyn Park Rotary and a life member of Brooklyn United Methodist Church. He also belonged to many fraternal organizations, such as Odd Fellows, Masons, Eastern Star, and Shriners. Eldon served on the Brooklyn Park Planning Commission for 12 years and co-founded the Brooklyn Park State Bank. He believed in education & research and supported young people through endowed scholarships at the University of Minnesota College of Food & Agriculture for potato research and the 4-H Helping Hands programs, as well as, North Hennepin Community College and Hennepin Technical College.

Eldon enjoyed being surrounded by his family and took the greatest pleasure from the annual family reunion on Gull Lake. Eldon was athletically active! Hockey. Golf. Fishing. Win or lose, he cheered the Gopher hockey team from his season seats. Eldon started golfing at fifty and achieved something most don't in a lifetime-- three hole-in-ones! And he loved fishing—always in search of the elusive walleye. Planes, trains, ships, automobiles, and the family motorhome--Eldon's travel adventures with June and the children, and Addie took him around the world to five continents, in addition to many of the contiguous United States, Hawaii, and Alaska. He visited many fun & famous sites such as the Holy Land, Taj Mahal, Panama Canal, and Tahiti. A family favorite was the trip to the 1962 Rose Bowl - Gophers vs UCLA. Gophers won big, 21-3!

I scream. You scream. We all scream for ice cream. But no one screamed louder than Eldon! He loved his daily ice cream. “It's yummy in the tummy,” as Eldon would say! Eldon will be best remembered for spreading joy: his caring & generous spirit, his deep heartfelt laughter, and his engaging stories that always began with “I have a story I'd like to share.”

Eldon was preceded in death by parents Albert & Esther (Hildebrandt) Tessman, June Evelyn (Oswald) Tessman, first wife of 57 years; brothers-in-law Martin Christiansen, Hal Routhe, and Rev. Arthur Klemp; sisters- and brothers-in-law Dorothy & Newell Jones, Millie & Bob Zumwalt, Bernice & Joe Williams, Clarence & Donna Oswald.

He is survived by Addie, his loving wife of 13 years; daughter Paula (Jim) Borer; sons Mark Tessman, Thomas (Dianne Blake) Tessman, Todd (Dawn) Tessman, and Robert Tessman; grandchildren Shannon (Rachel) Borer, Justin (Kristi) Borer, Nathan (Amanda McLain) Borer, Derek (Kiah) Tessman, Jason (Sarah) Tessman, and Anna Tessman; great-

grandchildren Carter, Emma, Keagen, and Brayden Borer, Davontey Parker, Kailah Borer, Camden, Beckett & baby girl Tessman; beloved sister and best friend Elaine Christiansen; adored uncle & father figure to many; sister-in-law Myrtle Klemp; Addie's children Jim (Lori) Finch, Jeff (Toni) Finch, Jane (Roy) Tom, Joanne (Denny) Belisle and many grandchildren, great-grandchildren and one great-great-grandson; and brother-in-law Richard (Lorna) Lauver.

A service celebrating Eldon is planned for Tuesday, January 30, 2024, at Brooklyn United Methodist Church, 7200 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center at 10:30 am with a lunch reception afterward, followed by interment at Brooklyn Crystal Cemetery. Visitation hours will be held at Brooklyn United Methodist Church on Monday, January 29, 2024 from 4-8 pm; and Tuesday, January 30, 2024 from 9:30 am-10:30 am (before the service). The service will be live-streamed at facebook.com/brooklynumc. To leave a testimony go to Evans-Nordby at www.evansnordby.com.

The family is grateful for the many kindnesses shown to Eldon at North Memorial Maple Grove Hospital and suggests that donation memorials be sent to The Rotary Foundation, North Hennepin Community College Tessman/Finch Scholarship, or your favorite non-profit organization.

Visitation



Monday, January 29th 4-8PM



Brooklyn United Methodist Church, 7200 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN

[Driving Directions](#)

Funeral Service



Tuesday, January 30th 10:30AM



Brooklyn United Methodist Church, 7200 Brooklyn Blvd., Brooklyn Center, MN

[Driving Directions](#)

Burial



Tuesday, January 30th 3PM



Brooklyn Crystal Cemetery
W Broadway Ave
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428