



Harry Billica

July 14, 1919 - June 24, 2009

Dr. Harry R. Billica, 89, of Fort Collins, passed away on June 24, 2009. He was born in Spokane, WA on July 14, 1919 to Harry J. and Vera (Behling) Billica, the eldest of 3 children. He was preceded in death by his parents; his sister, Betty Hahn; and his oldest son, Glenn. He is survived by his wife, Ruth, and by his brother and sister-in-law, Barrett and Mary, all of whom live at Rigden Farms. Harry grew up in San Mateo, California and moved to Muncie, IN where he graduated from Ball State High School. He graduated with honors in chemistry from the University of North Carolina in 1941 where he was Phi Beta Kappa and belonged to the Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity. During WWII, he was stationed at the Naval Research Center developing protective clothing for gas warfare and was discharged as a Chief Petty Officer. Harry then proceeded to earn a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Wisconsin in 1947. He met Ruth Guthier while at the university and they married July 6, 1946. Harry spent most of his career with the DuPont Company, initially at the Experimental Station in Wilmington, DE, then a brief time in Chattanooga, TN, and finally at the new Dacron Polyester plant in Kinston, NC. Harry found the key catalyst to make Dacron polyester, the first polyester fiber, and his name is on the patent. He lived in Greenville, NC for 28 years while working as director of chemical fibers surface research for DuPont. He pioneered the use of scanning electron microscopes in industry and his first microscope is now in the Smithsonian Institute. As a member of the American Chemical Society and a member and President of the Fiber Society, he traveled extensively around the world consulting and lecturing. After retiring from DuPont, he continued to consult around the world and was on several United Nations consulting trips for textiles to India, China, and other countries. Harry was an avid Boy Scout having earned his Eagle as a boy. His three sons are all Eagle Scouts, as well as, his grandson, Brad Billica, who just earned Eagle this year. Harry served in many positions as a Volunteer Scout from Scoutmaster to the National Committee and earned many awards including the Silver Beaver and Silver Antelope awards from the National BSA for his extensive work. He was instrumental in developing the Bonner Scout Reservation for East Carolina Council in North Carolina. Another interest for Harry was orchids and botany. He was active in the NC Orchid Society and served as President and then President Emeritus of the North Carolina Botanical Gardens. He was an avid boater

and loved the Outer Banks of North Carolina. After retiring from DuPont, he moved to Hilton Head Island, SC for 10 years from 1980 to 1990. From there he moved to Spring Hill, Florida, where he lived until moving to Fort Collins, Colorado in 2006. While in Florida, he was able to pursue his life long interest in rock hounding and lapidary with more travels and stone cutting and polishing work. He taught and participated with several rock clubs. Also, while in Florida, he taught digital photography and computer classes to local groups. Other interests included golf, walking, and world travel. His last two years in Fort Collins were as a resident at Rigden Farms Senior Living center. Harry and Ruth had 4 sons. Glenn died at age 10. Harry is survived by his wife, Ruth, of Fort Collins; son, Barry, and wife, Anne, in Florida; son, Roger, and wife, Linda, with granddaughter, Catlin, in Fort Collins, CO; and son, William (Bill), and wife, Karen, with grandchildren, Brad and Jenna, in Fort Collins, CO. Roger and Bill are in medical practice together at TriLife Health in Fort Collins, CO. A private family service will be held at a future date. Any memorial donations can be made in Harry's name to the East Carolina Council, BSA, PO Box 1698, Kinston, NC 28503; or with Pathways Hospice Community Care, 305 Carpenter Rd, Fort Collins, CO 80525.

Comments



“ Ruth,

We were so sorry to hear about Harry; our deepest sympathy to you and your family.

Alan & Marge Schreiber - June 24, 2009 at 12:00 AM