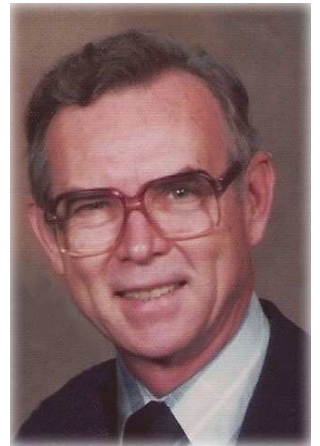


For Dad
Lee Minear – May 29, 2008
Mary Beth Cavert



This is what I read at Dad's funeral service at Westminster Presbyterian Church on May 30, 2008 – the traditional day of observance of [Memorial Day](#). I have added a few things that I left out that day.

I am honored to have this chance to publicly acknowledge and celebrate, with you, the life of Lee Minear, the kindest, most generous, gentle man I've ever known. And I've known Lee for almost 60 years, a lucky few of you have known him longer than that. Wonderful Dad, Loving Grandpa and Devoted Husband – here are some thoughts ...

The over riding impression I have of my Dad is that he always thought of others first. He was a helper and, I must confess, my safety net. For him, the “cup was always half full” and he always looked for the positive in any situation.

He was grounded in the humbleness of his mid-western upbringing in a large self-sufficient, good-natured family. He was very fond of his many older sisters and admired his older brothers.

His strong sense of duty made it possible to carry out his service to the US Army in the most horrifying of circumstances for a young optimistic man -- he served in the bloody snows of the Huertgen Forest and the Battle of Bulge. I was honored to hear him tell me about his experience, although it was with great and overwhelming emotion. He choked up many times and tears came but he told what he could. Many times young soldiers have survived by the luck of the draw – one instance for him was when he bent over to pick up a grenade to throw at the enemy as machine gun fire swept across over him. He was a lucky man and he never forgot it. I imagine he lived with survivor's guilt in some way but he was a hero to me, not just for doing his duty no matter what the odds, but because he came home and had a happy life that affected so many others in happy and positive ways.



Sometime this spring, Dad said how sad he was that he wouldn't live long enough to meet any more great-grandchildren. I told him that if he did, he would only want to live long enough to meet his great-great grandchildren and on it would go. He chuckled and said, “That's right.” Lee was rightfully and immensely proud of his grandchildren. He made it to every graduation party. Will Cavert is the oldest one and Dad was so happy to welcome Will's beloved Katie into the family in 2006. At that wedding he



September 30, 2006

bonded with Nick, who became granddaughter Liz's husband last Sunday. Over the last few months, Dad was clearly broken-hearted to miss Liz's special day. We talked about it often and, when he was getting a transfusion, I described how the wedding was going to look, because I knew he couldn't be there. But, I am choosing to believe that Dad wanted to be Liz and Nick so much that he released himself from the encumbrance of his own failed body that day to be present with his whole family. It was and continues to be a magical and poetical day in our lives.



His second grandchild is Melissa and she was practically raised by Dad and Mom. Throughout her young life, she was in his care and attention nearly every day. He was very proud of her maturity, responsibility, humor, and perseverance – all traits that he highly valued.



It was a gift for him to spend a great deal of time with Melissa's son, Collin Lee Minear. While we worried that it was too much for him to be handling a toddler and active preschooler, he reminded us that it was a true delight and he wouldn't have it any other way. Dad read to Collin and the two of them would snuggle up in bed until Melissa would come to pick him up.



Collin could always light up Dad's face. And, this was extra apparent when additional Grand-boy, Robbie Petersen, was here to join Collin to scamper around the house just being young and joyful. Dad had a large sense of family and blended people into his circle of affection without a second thought.

Lee married a World War II widow and immediately adopted the family of her lost husband as part of our own. We spent every holiday with her first in-laws, Pat and Treva Southern, and their daughter, our Aunt Betty, who has always been a blessing for our family.

Dad was a happy host. There were no better times for him than when the house was filled with people eating, talking and laughing – even if Dad couldn't get a word in edge-wise, and he usually couldn't, especially with Mom's family. Mom's brother and sisters and their spouses were good friends to him. And, I want to mention my Billingsley cousins who were such respectful company for him -- the youngest, Joe, always called him on Veteran's Day and it meant a lot to Dad.



When Lee came back from the Army, he picked out a beautiful brilliant wife – he wooed her out of her sorrow and gave her 60 years of security and stability to nurture her talents.

Lee's brothers married good-looking generous women. My Uncle Paul's family was especially close to us in many ways. Aunt Mardelle fed us and clothed us magnificently! They had two handsome athletic sons and we were lucky to have their family live nearby for

frequent celebrations. Dad's sister Faye was a special person to him as well as her son, Dick and Dad's grandniece, Cricket, was a welcome guest in his home.

Dad was a banker but I don't think he ever made much money. But we did live well somehow, probably beyond our means -- we had one or two cars, a tv in the early 1950s and most importantly for our mental health, an air conditioner! Somehow he made it work. Lee was lucky to finish out his career at West Bank. He appreciated his co-workers and friends from the bank and was happy to have worked with Dave Miller, and most recently, Carol Stone. He also was grateful for the steady bank stock dividend checks, which he monitored on the computer, even though he had never learned to type (because he always had a secretary).



Mom and Dad made a good choice when we moved to Des Moines in 1949 to leave their Baptist and Methodist backgrounds and throw their lot in with the Presbyterians here at Westminster. It has been a good home for both of them.

Lee was a great Dad for us three kids. He claimed that he didn't raise us, but he did. He only spanked me once that I can remember and I don't remember that he ever spanked the boys, so I'm sure I did it for him on occasion. He was easy for us to buy gifts for because we always got him a pipe, or pipe cleaners, or a pipe holder, or tobacco. Dad was an excellent fire builder (we had wonderful fireplaces in our house), an ice-cream maker, a popcorn cooker, family photographer, driver, financial advisor, flower gardener, piano player -- he swam with us, he taught us to drive, and he sang to us. At night when we were little he sang the song, "(go to sleep) My Little Buckaroo." It's probably my favorite song. His favorite music was Mozart's Symphony No. 41 in C major ("Jupiter").



He said that in the war he was never afraid -- because he never expected to come back from it. But when he did, he lived his life in a useful way and paid his own way. That was the hardest thing in his last years, his diminishing energy to be useful, as he put it, and take care of us. But we still had his mind and spirit and that was the most important thing for us. He left us with memories of his laugh and dimples, his dignity and class. He didn't want to be in the spotlight but he did want to look good and be prepared in case it should shine his way.

He was my Go To Guy and I will always miss him and be grateful that he was the one who was our Dad and their Grandpa Lee.



We put some mementoes into the casket:

- A yellow “livestrong” bracelet symbolizing his strength and courage and control of his own life,
- A small box of trail mix that was a gift to the guests at Liz and Nick’s wedding,
- A photo of Mom and Dad from the autumn of 2007,
- A West Bank pencil,
- A love note from Collin and a love note from Robbie,
- His business cards from three banks,
- A Mortgage Payment Table Book that he kept on his desk,
- A pack of Kent cigarettes,
- A pack of Juicy Fruit gum, which he often gave to Liz and Will when they were kids.

