



Lowell L. Klessig

JUL 5, 1945 - AUG 8, 2014



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Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
Events	Page 6
Tribute Wall	Page 7



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Lowell Louis Klessig, a resident of the Town of New Hope, died on August 8, 2014. He was 69 years old.

Lowell was born in Fond-du-Lac, WI in 1945. He was the first of five sons born to Edgar Klessig and Verona (Stecker) Klessig. His parents operated a dairy farm in Calumet County. Growing up on a farm instilled a strong work ethic in Lowell, which lasted his entire life.

Lowell's mother placed a high value on education. It is not surprising that Lowell was valedictorian of his class at Chilton High School, and obtained both a B.S. and M.S. from the University of WI-Madison, in addition to another M.S. from Vanderbilt University. In 1973 he was conferred his Ph.D. in Rural Sociology from UW-Madison. Lowell served as deputy director of the Sigurd Olson institute at Northland College in Ashland, WI. It was during this time that he purchased the Un-Hilton, an 80-acre farmstead with an original 1910 Finnish farmhouse "north of the tension zone."

Lowell's doctoral dissertation served as the foundation for Wisconsin's Inland Lake Management Law. The first of its kind in the country, it served as a model for other lake protection programs. Thus began Lowell's career with the University of Wisconsin-Extension as a Lake District Specialist. He crisscrossed the state to help lake property owners and county boards develop stewardship plans and lake districts. A UWEX branch was established in Stevens Point, and this marked the beginning of Lowell's richly rewarding relationship with the College of Natural Resources at UWSP. Lowell's teaching career expanded to traditional college courses, in addition to outreach education. In 1992, the UW-Madison Center for Resource Policy Studies presented Lowell with the "Wisconsin Idea Award" for his ground-breaking work on lake management, and continuing advocacy for the environment.

Lowell was deeply involved and committed to Wisconsin's Rural Leadership Program. In addition to teaching classes, he served as co-leader for foreign learning



Obituary

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experiences for group participants.

Lowell was a prolific writer – both during his professional career and after his retirement from UWSP. He authored numerous teaching manuals, and collaborated on the publication of several books. Most recently he co-authored “One Family’s Forest”. In the spring of this year, Lowell completed a rough draft of his lifetime personal memoirs.

He enjoyed the Wisconsin and national political scene, and believed in the democratic process. Lowell actively supported election campaigns of candidates over the years. He traveled to Washington D.C. for the March on the Pentagon, in protest of the Vietnam War. He also went to Atlanta to attend the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. On a local level, he served on the Town of New Hope Planning Committee and the Portage County Board of Adjustment.

Travel was a lifelong passion for Lowell. He visited 56 countries during his lifetime. His favorite travel companion was his wife Chris. Lowell found fascination in the landscapes he saw, but mostly in the people and cultures of the countries he visited. His personal essays document his wonderful travel adventures, leaving memories intact for his family and future generations.

Lowell has managed forest properties for 43 years in three counties in Wisconsin. He appreciated and greatly valued forests for scenic beauty. He was the moving force in establishing the New Hope Family Forest group, serving as president for the first ten years. His passion for the land led him to enroll his properties in conservation easements. He and his wife established the Tomorrow River Fund to assist other landowners in protecting the Tomorrow River watershed. He developed the Wisconsin Woodland Leaders Institute, and the Wisconsin Master Woodland Steward Program. Lowell served on the Scenic Wisconsin board and was an active member of numerous environmental groups.

Lowell was an avid outdoorsman, enjoying deer hunting, fishing, and ice-fishing. He participated in many rugged outdoor adventure trips, and hunting/fishing trips abroad. Lowell’s faith in God was strong. He was a member of Nelsonville Lutheran Church, taking on several church leadership roles, and he particularly enjoyed serving on the synod Science and Religion Task Force.



Obituary

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Going back to his farm roots, Lowell operated a small beef farm operation. His wife lovingly referred to him as the “philosophical farmer.” He cherished the close bonds he developed with his two sons, working together on animal husbandry, rotational grazing and sustainable farming practices.

Lowell is survived by his wife, Christine L. (Herlache) Klessig, the love of his life, who continues to reside at New Hopestead Farm. They recently celebrated their 35th wedding anniversary. He is also survived by his two sons Lance (Christine) Klessig of La Crosse, WI and Lukas Klessig, of Lake Wellington, FL. In these later years, Lowell especially enjoyed spending time and showing the farm to Elijah and Liam, his beautiful grandchildren. He is survived by his mother, Verona Klessig, Hilbert, WI, and brothers DuWayne (Sharon) Klessig, Chilton, WI; Daniel (Judy) Klessig, Dryden, NY; David (Rhonda) Klessig, Hilbert, WI; and Steve (Faye) Klessig, Brillion, WI; plus many nieces, nephews, and cousins.


A Celebration of Life will be held in mid-September at New Hopestead Farm. A short memorial service will be held on Friday, August 15th, at 10:30 AM at Nelsonville Church. Immediate family members, church family, and those who will not be able to attend the celebration of life are welcome to attend the memorial service. In lieu of flowers, and as a tribute to Lowell’s love of community and environment, donations in Lowell’s memory can be made to the Lettie Jensen Community Center at 487 Main Street N., Amherst, WI, 54406 or the Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin at 633 W Main St, Madison, WI 53703. The Jungers-Holly Funeral Home of Amherst is assisting the family with arrangements.




Events

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Memorial Service

 **Friday**, August 15, 2014

 10:30 AM CT

 **Nelsonville Lutheran Church**
3061 Oak Street, Nelsonville WI 54458

Cemetery Details

 **Holly Cremation Service**
Waupaca WI



Tribute Wall

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Martha Heisel posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with all of your family on the loss of Lowell. I didn't hear of his passing until yesterday. Lowell was a friend of my parents, Perry and Genevieve Risberg (both deceased), of Hayward, WI, and I met him sometime in the mid to late 1970's through my parents. Our family always enjoyed his very clever writings in his Un-Hilton Un-Holiday Greetings that he sent! I remember visiting his cabin near Highbridge sometime in the 1970's, and enjoyed seeing the cabin and property and visiting with Lowell and Kim Bro. May God's Holy Spirit comfort all of your family in your loss. Sincerely, Martha (Risberg) Heisel

December 11 at 8:27 AM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Lowell by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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