

John R. Gehlbach, 89, of Elkhart, Illinois died Monday, August 23, 2010 at Memorial Medical Center in Springfield, Illinois. He was born October 9, 1920 in Beason, Illinois, the son of Frank P. and Hester Keys Gehlbach. He married Mildred Poole in 1956, and she preceded him in death on March 7, 1972. He later married Joanne Hoyt Greve on January 9, 1993 in Beverly Hills, California.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brothers Virgil Gehlbach and Raymond Gehlbach, sister, Virginia Gleichman and his two (2) sons; William Gehlbach and John Richard Gehlbach II.

John is survived by his wife, Jo of Elkhart, Illinois, daughter, Greta (Dr. Valentin) Gribkoff of Wallingford, Connecticut, two (2) granddaughters, Elizabeth Anne Gribkoff and Katerina Maria Gribkoff of Wallingford, Connecticut.

Three (3) Step-Daughters, Jane Greve (Ken) Jermac of Chapin, South Carolina, Susan Greve (David) Diggle of East Peoria, Illinois and Nancy Greve (Steve) Conlon of Mattoon, Illinois. Seven (7) Step-Grandchildren, Sarah and Jonathan Buhrow; Ben, Amy and Daniel Diggle and Megan and Paul Conlon.

Mr. Gehlbach graduated from Beason High School in 1938, studied for two years at the University of Illinois where he served on the staff of the Daily Illini, the university newspaper. From the U. of I., he transferred to Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota, receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree as a member of the class of 1942. During World War II, John spent 4 ½ years of Navy service for his country in the Seabees. He was on duty in the Pacific Theatre in Australia and New Guinea. While in the Navy, John studied for 8 months at the Harvard University School of Business. Discharged in 1946, he had attained the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

After the war he enrolled at Northwestern University Law School, a member of the class of 1949, he was an editor of the Northwestern Law Review and received a bachelor of laws degree in 1949. After being admitted to the bar in the State of Illinois, Mr. Gehlbach became assistant to the general counsel for Swift & Company in Chicago until 1951 when he moved back Lincoln, Illinois to open his law firm.

John served as a Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Illinois for 20 years. He served as Trustee of Lincoln College, Lincoln, Illinois for over 56 years, where he became the longest serving Trustee in that institution's history. Mr. Gehlbach was elected to the Board of Directors for State Bank of Lincoln in 1972 and retired with the distinction of becoming State Bank's first "Director Emeritus" in 2010. He was awarded the Lincoln Courier's Man of the Month award in July of 1968.

John was a member of the Logan County Bar Association, Illinois Bar Association, American Bar Association, University of Illinois, President Council; Abraham Lincoln Association; Lincoln Elks Lodge; American Legion; American Legion 40/8; Logan County Farm Bureau.

He was the former Chairman of the Board of the Illinois State Historical Library; former Chairman of the Illinois Historical Society; Past President of the Lincoln Kiwanis Club; Past President of the Illinois F.F.A., and Past Treasurer of the Logan County Republican Central Committee.

He was Past Trustee of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, Past Board Member of Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital, Illinois Executive Mansion Association and the Committee to Restore Historic Postville Courthouse.

John was a member of Trinity Episcopal Church of Lincoln, Illinois.

John and his wife Jo enjoyed traveling the world together. John was proud to have visited all seven continents. He was also proud of his son, Rick who joined him in his law practice after graduating from Tulane University and Southern Illinois University School of Law in spite of a courageous battle with Cystic Fibrosis. Attorneys Gehlbach and Gehlbach together again!

Family will receive friends from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., on Thursday, August 26, 2010 at Fricke-Calvert-Schrader Funeral Home, 127 South Logan, Lincoln, Illinois.

A funeral ceremony will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 402 Pekin Street, Lincoln, Illinois on Friday, August 27, 2010 at 11:00 with Father James Cravens officiating. Burial will be in Elkhart Cemetery, Elkhart, Illinois.

Memorial contributions may be made to Lincoln College or Trinity Episcopal Church.