



Clyde "Hezzie" Packer Jr.

May 5, 1922 - October 12, 2023

Clyde "Hezzie" Packer Jr. of Traverse City, Michigan, age 101, passed away peacefully on Thursday, October 12, 2023, surrounded by family and friends. Clyde was born on May 5, 1922, to Clyde L. and Eva (Pitman) Packer Sr. in their home in Rapid City. He was 8 years old when his mother died and his father never remarried. He graduated from Rapid City High School as the Salutatorian on May 5, 1939.

Clyde joined the Army Air Corps in January, 1942, and served actively until December, 1945. He served as a B-24 bombardier as the Captain of the 531st Bomb Squadron. He remained in the Air Force Reserve in Traverse City for 20 years until he reached the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He was able to visit the Air Force Memorial in Washington DC, in June of 2016, during Honor Flight Mission Number Five.

On May 31, 1948, Clyde married Esther Ruth Herman at the Alden United Methodist Church before moving to Saginaw, Michigan where they lived for 10 years. Clyde and Esther attended the Sheridan Ave. Methodist Episcopal Church in Saginaw where they were saved by faith in Jesus and disciplined by Rev. Frank and Louise Getty. Living for Jesus, serving in the local church, supporting foreign and domestic missionaries, raising their six children to love and serve the Lord became their life mission. Spending two weeks in Israel made a lifelong impression upon them.

After the move to Traverse City in 1959, they discovered Bayview Wesleyan Church and attended anytime the “doors were open,” becoming active servants who lead children and bus parents to the Lord and taught children, teens, and adults to walk with God.

Clyde played catcher for his High School and Air Force baseball teams and later in life, softball for Bayview Wesleyan. He was a lifelong Detroit Tigers fan, rarely missing a game on TV. For his 100th birthday he was honored at a Tiger’s game, appearing on TV with 32 family members.

Clyde maintained the railroad signals for the 100 miles between Petoskey and Manistee for the C&O/B&O Railroad for 38 years before retiring in 1987. After retirement Clyde and Esther moved to Alden, Michigan, and attended Bellaire Wesleyan Church. They spent their retirement years as volunteers with World Gospel Mission at Southwest Indian School in Peoria, Arizona. They also worked in the bookstore at Indiana Wesleyan University. After 49 years of marriage, Esther passed away August 11, 1997, and Clyde volunteered at Taylor School in Brownsville, Texas and also served with a group of volunteer builders, assisting with church and parsonage construction.

Clyde, at the age of 85, 10 years after losing Esther, married Phyllis Peterson at the Church of Christ in Rapid City on September 14, 2007. Clyde and Phyllis lived an active life; wintering in Avon Park, Florida, family camping near Mackinaw and other places in their travel trailer, doing home projects, playing games (mostly “Wizard”) with family and friends, celebrating 16 years of marriage, and walking the Mackinaw Bridge with over 80 family members at ages 90 and 95. He was fun loving, with a quick wit, and a joy for life that was contagious. He was loved by everyone he met.

Clyde was preceded in death by his wife, Esther; parents, Clyde and Eva

Packer; brothers, Dale and Oscar; sisters, Doris, Willodean, Ardeith, Esther and Eva. Clyde is survived by his wife, Phyllis; sister, Etta; his six children, Steven (Linda) Packer of Alden, MI; Cathryn (Dale) Chilson of Sauk Rapids, MN; Cheryl Packer of Moorhead, MN; William (Maureen) Packer of Bear Lake, MI; Paula (Ed) Gray of Brohman, MI; Marlene (Kevin) Overmyer of Jonesboro, IN; 19 grandchildren and 32 great-grandchildren; Phyllis' six children; Lynne (Jim) Dodge of Jackson, MI; Doug (Nancy) Peterson of Williamsburg, MI; Dale (Carol) Peterson of Byron Center, MI; Suzette (Scott) Blair of Traverse City, MI; Shellie (Jeff, deceased) Smith of Scotland; Connie Rathbun of Rockford, MI; 16 grandchildren and 29 great-grandchildren.

A celebration of life service is being planned at Bayview Wesleyan Church in Traverse City, Michigan on Saturday, November 11, 2023, at 11:00am (viewing beginning at 9:00am) with a luncheon following and a 3:30pm Graveside Service with military honors at Clearwater Cemetery in Rapid City, MI. Memorial donations will be directed to Global Partners for Dan and Pada Merrilat, missionaries to Thailand.

Arrangements have been entrusted to Kalkaska Funeral Home.

Cemetery Details

Clearwater Township Cemetery

6833 Gillett Road NW
Rapid City, MI 49676

Previous Events

Celebration of Life Service

NOV 11. 11:00 AM (ET)

Bayview Wesleyan Church
720 Wayne Street
Traverse City, MI 49684

Graveside Service

NOV 11. 3:30 PM.

Clearwater Cemetery

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Clyde "Hezzie" Packer Jr..*



November 04, 2023 at 02:49 PM



“ *I have such sweet memories of Clyde sharing his testimony at church and family get togethers when I was young. He was a wonderful testimony of God's love!
Praying God's peace and comfort over you!
Melissa Weiselberg Dodge*

Melissa Dodge - October 19, 2023 at 03:12 PM



“ *What a comfort to know that my dad touched so many lives for Jesus!*

Steven Packer - October 19, 2023 at 06:26 AM



“ *Medium Dish Garden was purchased for the family of Clyde "Hezzie" Packer Jr..*



October 18, 2023 at 04:22 PM