



Grant Cornelius

November 6, 1924 - May 14, 2008

Grant Leland Cornelius, 83, of Corvallis died May 14, at Regent Court, with family members at his side.

Grant was born Nov. 6, 1924, in a farmhouse located three miles northwest of Madrid, Neb. He was the son of Leland Stanford “Tim” Cornelius and Minnie Evelyn Ford Cornelius.

Grant graduated from Madrid High School in May 1942 and attended the University of Nebraska beginning the following September. He left school for four years during World War II to work the family farm. He returned to the University of Nebraska in 1947 and received his bachelor’s degree in agricultural economics in 1950.

Grant was drafted into the Army in 1950. He served two years and one day. On May 27, 1951, Grant married Gayle Gilmer in Lincoln, Neb. The newlyweds lived in Chicago until Grant completed his military service in October 1952. They returned to work at the family farm in Madrid for two years and then moved to Lincoln, where Grant enrolled in the master’s program at the University of Nebraska. He completed his master’s in one year and was accepted into doctorate programs at both Harvard and the University of Wisconsin. He chose the University of Wisconsin because Harvard had no married student housing.

In 1958, Grant accepted a position with the U.S.D.A. in Brookings, S.D. In 1961, the U.S.D.A. transferred him to Corvallis. In 1964, rather than accept a transfer to Washington, D.C., he left the U.S.D.A., and he and Gayle opened

The Inkwell, a gift shop in downtown Corvallis. During this time Grant completed his doctoral thesis and received his Ph.D. in agricultural economics from the University of Wisconsin. In 1973, Grant and Gayle bought a 106-acre farm south of Corvallis from Peggy Allworth. They loved the farm. Grant's new vocations became farming and real estate investment, and they sold The Inkwell in 1974. His passion, however, was gardening. He was a master gardener and delighted in spending many happy hours creating and caring for his large lawns, extensive flower gardens, orchards and vineyard.

In the 1960s and 1970s Grant was active in civic affairs in Corvallis. He was an early proponent of a downtown bypass and the Willamette Greenway. He ran for the State House of Representatives in 1968. He was a member of Rotary and the Corvallis Chamber of Commerce. He served many years on the Benton County Planning Commission. Grant and Gayle attended Calvin Presbyterian Church.

Grant was preceded in death by his parents and his older brother, Ford. He is survived by Gayle, his wife of almost 57 years; his sons Kevin, Tim and Eric; nine grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.

A memorial service will be at 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 7, at Calvin Presbyterian Church, 1736 N.W. Dixon St.