

Decatur Daily Democrat (IN) - Tuesday, March 17, 2009

Ralph E. Biggs, 73, of rural Decatur, passed away on Saturday, March 14, 2009, at 3:40 a.m. at Parkview Memorial Hospital in Fort Wayne.

He was born on October 20, 1935, in Vincennes, Indiana, to Emmett and Helen (Keller) Biggs. He married Jeannie L. Smith on October 7, 1967; she passed away in 1997. He married Christine R. Rourke on January 20, 2007.

Ralph was a loving husband, father, grandfather, brother, and friend. He was an avid golfer, outdoorsman, private pilot, and entrepreneur.

Ralph's faith was extremely important to him and he served on numerous committees as well as being a eucharistic minister at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church in Decatur, of which he was a member. He will be greatly missed by many.

Surviving are his wife, Christine of Decatur; two sons, Kevan (Heather) Biggs of Ft. Wayne and Eric Biggs of San Marcos, California; three grandchildren, Avery, Lauren, and Charles Biggs; five brothers, Don (Marie) Biggs of Vincennes; Jerry (Pat) Biggs of Tulsa, Oklahoma; Bob (Doris) Biggs of Vincennes; Norman (Virginia) Biggs of Virginia Beach, Virginia; and Richard (Linda) Biggs of Vincennes; one sister, Rita (George) Lavelly of Vincennes. Ralph was preceded in death by his parents and first wife, Jeannie.

Ralph attended Purdue University, where he graduated with a masters degree in business administration and an undergraduate degree in agricultural economics. Ralph came to Decatur in the fall of 1962 to work for Clark Smith at Ideal Suburban Homes. Ralph became President of Ideal Suburban Homes in 1964 and has been honored three years in a row as a Top Builder by Professional Builder Magazine. He founded Biggs, Inc. in 1964 and founded Ideal Realty in 1965 along with Clark Smith and Allen Felt. Ralph founded GKB Enterprises in 1980 along with Steve Kreigh. Over the years, Ralph developed 43 communities in northeastern Indiana and Ohio, through Biggs, Inc. He developed 32 apartment complexes and managed 2,700 apartment homes. Ralph also developed Cross Creek Golf Course, Eagle Glen Golf Course, and the Blackford County Country Club. He was one of the founders of the Rural Rental Housing Association as well as the Boys and Girls Club of Adams County.

Ralph supported the St. Vincent DePaul Society, was a board member of Catholic Community Foundation of the Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend for 14 years, was a member of Christ Renews His Parish, and a member of the Fort Wayne Home Builders'

Association for 44 years, from which he received numerous Spike Awards. Ralph was involved in many organizations including Elks Lodge 993 in Decatur, the U. S. Air Force Reserves, the Knights of Columbus, the Lions Club, the 100% Club, Big Brothers-Big Sisters, the Jeremiah Millbanks Society of the Boys and Girls Club, Phi Kappa Theta fraternity, and the John Purdue Club. Ralph was also honored twice as the recipient of the Sagamore of the Wabash.

Public visitation will be after 3 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2009, and all day on Thursday, March 19, 2009, at Haggard and Sefton Funeral Home, with family present from 3-8 p.m. both days. Reciting of the Holy Rosary will be on Wednesday, March 18, at 2:30 p.m. at the funeral home.

A 10 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial will be held Friday, March 20, 2009, at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church, with Bishop John M. D'Arcy officiating. Burial will be in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery, Decatur.

Memorials are to St. Vincent DePaul Society in Decatur or to the Boys' and Girls' Club of Adams County.

Contributed by Jane Edson