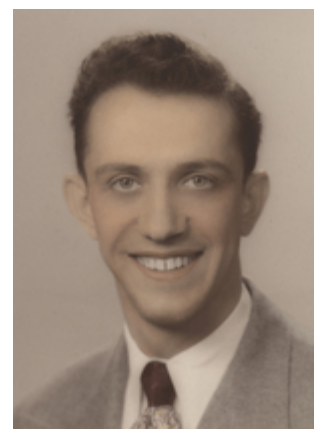


Benedict Leonard Jesionowski, 87 of Fort Wayne died on July 15, 2013 at St. Anne Home in Fort Wayne, IN,

As an Industrial Engineer, Ben Jesionowski held key positions for Magnavox and CTS of Berne before forming a consulting firm serving corporations in the Fort Wayne area. As a member of "The Greatest Generation" his life was molded by major events of the 20th Century, the Great Depression and World War II.



Ben started life in the humblest of circumstances. His father was disabled and bedridden when Ben was six years old. His mother raised nine children during the Great Depression working menial part-time jobs. She told her family she would be too embarrassed to accept outside assistance. They just did without. Like his brothers Ben quit school at age 16 and worked in the steel mill in Pittsburgh to support the family. He did well in school and enjoyed learning. Nonetheless, he quit school and went to work at a job he greatly disliked. In the middle of WW II he turned 18, and he went to the draft board and asked to be drafted. He barely passed the physical because he only weighed 123 pounds. He was assigned to the U.S. Army Air Corps, 19th Bombardment Group, to fly some of the first B-29's. The original and innovative B29's were referred to as flying coffins by the ground crews because over 20% of the B-29 air crews were killed while in training stateside. By the end of the war he had attained the rank of Sergeant Major, had become an instructor, and was partially disabled due to a training accident. He had seen first-hand the advantages that the college-educated officers had and was determined to complete his education. He went back to finish two years of high school and was admitted to the finest Catholic Universities in the U.S. and the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania. He completed four years of college in three years and worked at part-time jobs in his spare time to pay for what the G.I. Bill and his disability benefits didn't cover. In 1950 he received his Bachelor of Science degree from Xavier University in Cincinnati. He married Mary Lou Hillen, his wife of 63 years. He had a fine career as an industrial engineer. Typical of many in his generation, he was extremely frugal. As a partially disabled veteran he greatly appreciated the increase in VA disability benefits following the wars on Iraq and Afghanistan. He was a happy individual with a wonderful sense of humor. His response to complaints was a reminder that things could be a lot worse. He, in his low key way, instilled in his children the desire to do well in school and to develop a strong work ethic. He saw these attributes as the keys to great results in the long run. He also instilled in his children the belief that every human being merits respect and that many individuals in poor circumstances are victims of limited options due to grinding poverty. In the face of the adversities and challenges he faced and surmounted he didn't consider himself

lucky. He would say "I wasn't lucky. I was blessed".

His children have held senior positions at major corporations, including IBM, Navistar, Accenture and Harding Partners Architects. He is survived by his wife, Mary Lou, and their children Paul (Cheryl), Greg, David, Lee (Amy), Jim (Sheila), Tom (Awilda), Mike, Gail (Kevin) Sprunger, John, Kim Bodkin, and Stan (Cheri); his sister Alberta; 21 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

Visitation will be 4:00-8:00 Friday, July 19, 2013 at Haggard-Sefton & Hirschy Funeral Home with Reciting of the Holy Rosary at 3:30 p.m. Calling also from 9:00-10:00 a.m. Saturday, July 20th at the St. Mary's Parish Hall.

A 10:00 a.m. Mass of Christian Burial is on Saturday, July 20, 2013 at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church. Father Patrick Joseph will be officiating. Burial will be in St. Joseph Catholic Cemetery with Military graveside rites by American Legion Post 43 Color Guard.

Memorials are to St. Anne Home in Fort Wayne.

**Haggard-Sefton & Hirschy Funeral Home online obit (accessed 3/26/2016)**