



Dr. Howard Joseph Aleff

November 18, 2010

Dr. Howard Joseph Aleff, a Knoxville resident of nearly 60 years, died peacefully in Florida on Nov. 18.

Dr. Aleff, 95, was born on April 18, 1915 to Theresa (Loesing) and Joseph Aleff of Sheboygan, Wisconsin. He enjoyed growing up in the small city on the shores of Lake Michigan, where he was a football letterman at Sheboygan High School and earned pocket money working in the nearby Kohler factory. He attended Ripon College, where he played football and was a member of Delta Sigma Psi social fraternity.

He received a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Northwestern University in 1940. He was vice president of the senior class and treasurer of Iota chapter, Psi Omega dental fraternity. He was one of nine members of the senior class who was presented with a gold key and life membership in Omicron Kappa Epsilon dental fraternity for outstanding undergraduate work. In his senior year at Northwestern, he spotted a beautiful coed on campus and prevailed upon one of his dental school classmates for an introduction. In 1943, he married the coed, Phyllis Perkins, who was his bride of 65 years until her death in 2009.

He served in the United States Army as a member of the 619th Quartermaster Battalion, Medical Detachment. He landed on Omaha Beach in Normandy on D-Day and was the first dentist in occupied France. He worked long hours providing dental services to American servicemen and to French residents. In his spare time, he developed expertise locating champagne and Limoges for

his fellow servicemen, in the true quartermaster spirit.

For his service, Dr. Aleff received the Bronze Star and the French Croix de Guerre.

Dr. Aleff joined the Veterans Administration and served as a dentist for 37 years.

He also served as a clinical professor at the University of Iowa College of Dentistry from 1971 to 1975. He was recognized by the Iowa Dental Alumni Association for contributing to the scientific program of the organization's annual meetings in 1971 and 1972.

He was a member of the Knoxville Rotary Club for 48 years and served as president in 1972-73.

He retired as the chief of dental services at the Knoxville Veterans Administration in 1980. In the same year, he retired after serving 19 years on the board of Marion County Savings & Loan Association.

Following his retirement, Dr. Aleff embarked on a second career as a volunteer dentist, working through the Rotary International Foundation to assist underprivileged people throughout the world. Accompanied by his wife, who served as his assistant, he made several trips to the Philippines and Brazil, and also worked in Indonesia and Jamaica. He celebrated his 85th birthday while providing dental services to indigenous residents of the Amazon in Brazil.

He was recognized by Rotary International as a Paul Harris Fellow, "In appreciation of tangible and significant assistance given for the furtherance of better understanding and friendly relations among peoples of the world."

Dr. Aleff received many awards for his volunteer service, including a Rotary International Presidential Citation, a Rotary International Volunteers Certificate of Recognition and a Rotary Foundation District Service Award. He was twice recognized for his volunteer service by the American Dental Association.

He was recognized by WESCOM Palawan in the Philippines for his humanitarian services to Vietnamese refugees and by Fundacao Esperanca in Santarem, Brazil for his many periods of service at that clinic.

The Knoxville Rotary Club gave Dr. Aleff the 2007 Dr. George H. Andrew Award "For outstanding leadership and dedication to the ideals of Rotary." He had previously received the club's Extra Mile Award and the 3-H Volunteers Service Award.

He was a member of the American Legion for 63 years and of the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Howard Aleff was preceded in death by his parents, his wife Phyllis and his brother Kenneth. He is survived by three children, Andrea Nelson of The Villages, Fla.; Jane (Bob) Sirek of The Villages, Fla. and Jack Aleff of Knoxville; his sister June Harper of Denver; and five grandchildren: Andrew (Catherine) Nelson of Clearwater, Fla.; Jessica (Chris) Duran of Richardson, Tex.; Dr. Margaret (Jeff) Wilson of Carroll, Iowa; Lara Lin Aleff of Marshalltown and Abigail Aleff of Knoxville.

The family will receive visitors from 2-4 p.m. and 6-8 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 26 at Winfield Funeral Home in Knoxville. Services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Nov. 27 at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Knoxville, with the Rev. John Chadwick officiating.

In lieu of flowers, donations are encouraged to the Knoxville Rotary Club's Howard J. and Phyllis L. Aleff International Fund, which assists visiting foreign exchange students and local members who engage in international service. Donations may be sent to club treasurer Don Croghan at 109 E. Main St., Knoxville, IA 50138.

Tribute Wall



“ *Dr.Howard Joseph Aleff*

January 30, 2023 at 05:06 AM



“ *Dr.Howard Joseph Aleff*

January 30, 2023 at 02:53 AM



“ *So sorry to hear of your father's passing. Our prayers are with you.*

Jo Hackett - November 24, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ *You have our sympathy. We are so sorry for your loss.*

Greg and Mary Taylor - November 23, 2010 at 12:00 AM