



Merle Montgomery Illingworth Jr.

July 30, 1928 - December 20, 2021

Merle Montgomery Illingworth Jr., age 93 of Albia, entered into eternity with the Lord Monday, December 20, 2021, at the Ottumwa Regional Health Center.

Merle was born July 30, 1928, to Merle Montgomery and Thelma Marie (Lowe) Illingworth in Grinnell, IA. He married Marilyn Edith Kester on June 15, 1947, at First Christian Church in Albia. To this union two children were born, Marc and Mari. They shared 66 years of marriage before her passing on January 9, 2014.

Merle graduated from Albia High School, class of 1946 and then went to Elgin Watchmaking School in Elgin IL where he was the only one to receive an A+ in watchmaking. He was also a GIA certified gemologist. Merle also had his pilot license since 1945 and was considered a “salty dog.” Merle and Marilyn opened Illingworth’s Jewelry in August 1947, shortly after getting married and were in business for over 66 years they worked side by side with Marilyn doing the bookkeeping.

Merle enjoyed working on watches and clocks and buying cars. Merle enjoyed playing the coronet and singing in the choir and he had an amazing tenor voice as music was a hobby of his. He enjoyed sharing God’s word with people to make sure that they were saved and knew God. He was a very kind

and intelligent man. Merle loved Cadillacs and cars were a big hobby his entire life. He used to buy Cadillacs and drive them to California to sell them for profit back in the 1960's when cars were hard to come by in California.

Merle is survived by his two children, Marc Illingworth of Indianola and Mari Illingworth of East Moline, IL; three grandsons, Andy (Angela) Illingworth of Indianola, Adam (Jennifer) Illingworth and Nickolas (Bailey) Illingworth both of Des Moines; and three great grandchildren, Drew, Carter, and Jude Illingworth.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Marilyn and his parents, Merle and Thelma, his sister Virginia Holden Crabb, his brother Jack Illingworth and his brother Ron Illingworth.

Visitation will be held from 3:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 5, 2022, at the Tharp Funeral Home in Albia, with Merle's family present throughout to greet family and friends.

Funeral services will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at Trinity United Methodist Church in Albia; with Pastor Dave Clark and Pastor Roger Henry officiating. Burial will follow services at Oak View Cemetery in Albia.

An open memorial has been established to the family to be determined at a later date.

Previous Events

Visitation

JAN 5. 3:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Tharp Funeral Home
116 Benton Ave.
Albia, IA 52531
(641) 932-3129
<https://www.tharpfh.com/>

Funeral Service

JAN 6. 10:30 AM (CT)

Trinity United Methodist Church
1117 Benton Ave East
Albia, IA 52531

Tribute Wall



“ *Merle Montgomery Illingworth Jr.*

January 30, 2023 at 05:06 AM



“ *Merle Montgomery Illingworth Jr.*

January 30, 2023 at 02:53 AM



“ *Merle was a very nice man. He loved to talk and tell stories. I talked to Marilyn and Merle many times.*

Linda Johnson - January 19, 2022 at 06:05 PM

 Milton
Cragg

“ I spent the summer after high school graduation in Albia. Merle taught me how to repair his loaner watches. Every morning, we would rise early to play three holes of golf. Then breakfast at home. Opened the store at nine. After supper, we would play 'pool tag' with a group of regulars. We had to enter the water to go around a corner. We would crouch on the bottom of the pool and jump high enough to just step onto the edge of the pool. One kid didn't realize that he was under the diving board when he did that and about knocked himself out. We went to DQ for hot fudge sundaes at 10:00. Every weekday was the same.

Saturday night was miniature golf with two of M&M's friendship couples. Sundays were picnics at various parks. Grandmother Kester would make fried chicken, potato salad, and the best lemonade ever. Merle and I would buy ice and made hand-cranked ice cream.

Merle and I were so in tune that summer that one of us would whistle a song which was triggered by something we were witnessing ... sometimes simultaneously. Followed by chuckling.



Milton Cragg - January 08, 2022 at 09:11 AM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Merle Montgomery Illingworth Jr..



January 06, 2022 at 05:09 PM



“ Seems like it was yesterday when we had our telephone conversations!!
All his wonderful stories and love for Marilyn, Mari and Marc.
He will always be with us...
Love and positive vibes for you Mari and Marc.
Maggie, Michelle and James Smith

Maggie M. Smith - January 05, 2022 at 02:39 PM



“ Tom and I thought the world of Merle ,,so glad he came into our lives oh what a wonderful and caring man , he will be missed ❤️❤️
❤️🥹

Tom and Bobbi Yaw - January 04, 2022 at 09:40 PM



“ What a kind and caring and forgiving man. Intelligent , always looking ahead . He always wanted to continue to learn . A very great privilege to have known him. A great Christian.

dave - January 02, 2022 at 08:40 PM

GM

“ I can still remember seeing Merle out for his summer evening bicycle rides back when we were kids in the early sixties. My condolences to Mary and Marc.

Greg Mattis - December 28, 2021 at 04:56 PM

JC

“ I remember Merle singing "Let There Be Peace on Earth" at the community Christmas Eve services when I was in high school. Janice Clark

Janice Clark - December 28, 2021 at 10:45 AM

KJ

“ Illingworth Family,

I'm sorry to learn of Merle's passing, but I rejoice knowing he's in Heaven in his Savior's presence and reunited with many loved ones.

It was a blessing to get to know Merle at church. He was a kind and caring man.

May you feel God's loving presence surrounding you during this difficult time and in the difficult days ahead.

Sincerely,

Kim Jolly

Kim Jolly - December 24, 2021 at 06:55 PM