

Hiawatha, KS

Alvin J. Backhus, 94, of Hiawatha, died Saturday, August 11, 2018, at Maple Heights Nursing and Rehabilitation Center.

Alvin was born February 5, 1924, at Tampa, KS, one of nine children of the late William and Martha Meyer Backhus and grew up in Tampa where he attended school. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II, and witnessed the emperor of Japan to sign surrender papers ending the War, from the deck of USS Missouri, in Tokyo Bay.

Alvin married Grace "Ivalou" Bender at St. John's Lutheran Church at Tampa, August 11, 1946. After discharge from the service, they lived and farmed near Tampa for a number of years.

Alvin and Grace moved to the Kansas City area in 1954 to live until 1988. Alvin owned and operated a service station and was an auto mechanic for several car dealerships. He retired from TWA as machinist after 20 years of service. Upon his retirement, they moved to Phoenix, AZ to make their home. They moved to Brown County, KS about 10 years ago and settled in the Robinson/Hiawatha area to be near family. They celebrated their 71st wedding anniversary at Maple Heights before Grace passed in September. Upon making their home in the Hiawatha area, they became members of Zion Lutheran Church.

Survivors include a daughter Edna Lehew of rural Hiawatha, a son Edward Backhus (Tina) of Sarasota, FL; three sisters: Ruth Taylor (Bill) of Shawnee, KS, Alice Yoachum (Gerald); Lydia Evans (Keith) both of Wichita, KS; a brother Paul Backhus (Edna) of Tampa; five grandchildren: Dan Backhus, Doug Backhus, Dawn Perdomo, Billy Baker and Cheryl Tarwater; 18 great-grandchildren; and a great-great-grandchild.

He was also preceded in death his son in law Robert "Bob" Lehew; by two sisters and two brothers.

A Celebration of Life Service is planned for 1 p.m. Friday, August 17, at St. John's Lutheran Church at Tampa, with Reverend Sean Kilgo officiating. Interment with military honors will follow at the Church Cemetery, nearby, with a visitation/reception immediately following back in the Church basement.

Friends may call at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home, Hiawatha after noon until 7 Thursday evening.

Memorial contributions are suggested to NEK Hospice, sent in care of the Funeral Home, 124 S 7th St., 66434. A special message may be sent to the family at www.chapeloaksfuneralhome.com