

Hiawatha , KS



Bernard D. Larson, 79, of Hiawatha, died Sunday afternoon, February 5, 2012, at the Hiawatha Community Hospital.

He was born July 28, 1932, at Horton, one of seven children of Jalmer E. & Georgia Irene Larson and had lived in this area nearly all of his life. He graduated Horton High School in 1950 and enlisted in the Kansas National Guard at that time. In 1952, he volunteered for active duty from 1952-1954 during which time he deployed in support of the Korean Conflict. In 1956, he received a direct commission as a 2nd Lieutenant. Bernard served in numerous positions to include Battery B Commander, Headquarters Battery Commander, and Tan An Airfield Commander while deployed during the Vietnam War. During his military career, Bernard served as an enlisted member where he attained the rank of Sergeant, a commissioned officer where he attained the rank of Major, and a Warrant Officer where he attained the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 4. Bernard's military career in the Kansas National Guard and active duty Army spanned over 42 years. His awards included the Silver Star Medal, Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Legion of Merit, Air Medal, Army Commendation Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with Silver Hourglass Device, Korean Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Civil Action Medal, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal, Good Conduct Medal, Three Overseas Service Ribbons and the Army Service Ribbon. Bernard's exemplary service was recognized in November 2001 when he was inducted into the Kansas National Guard Hall of Fame. Bernard worked as a telephone company employee for United Telephone, Sprint, and Embark for 36 years retiring in 1994. After his retirement, he enjoyed golfing and keeping engaged with both the Telephone Company and Kansas National Guard.

Bernard was married to Joan Molt in Dec 1956 at Troy. She survives of the home.

They have 4 children: Mark (Susan) Larson of Overland Park, Kansas; Tamre (Tony) Smock of Kansas City, Kansas; Christopher of Grantville, Kansas; and Kelly (Kim) of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; 9 grandchildren & 6 great grandchildren.

Preceded in death by parents & brothers Paul, Richard, Jimmy and sisters: Elva Schuetz, Dorothy Larson, Mary Louise Berger

Bernard was a member of St. Ann's Parish where he served as an usher and on the church council. He served on the Hiawatha Redskins Chain Gang for over 30 years. He enjoyed golfing and fishing throughout his life. Bernard was loved & admired by his family who knew him as Husband, Father, Grandpa, & Grandpa Great!!

Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at St. Ann Catholic Church of Hiawatha, at 10:30 a.m. Thursday, February 9, with Father Sylvester as the celebrant, Abbott Ralph Koehler as the co-celebrant. Interment will follow at Mt. Hope Cemetery, Hiawatha, with military honors a courtesy of 2nd BN, 130th FA, Kansas National Guard of Hiawatha.

Friends may call at Chapel Oaks Funeral Home after 9 a.m. Wednesday. The parish rosary will be recited at 6 p.m. Wednesday followed by the family visiting with friends until 8 at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions are suggested to St. Ann Church, National Guard Museum, or NEK Hospice, which may be sent in care of the funeral home, 124 S 7th St., Hiawatha 66434.