



Virgil Arthur Lair

September 23, 1927 - May 11, 2016

On May 11th, 2016, Virgil Arthur Lair, 88, of Piqua and later Chanute died peacefully with his loving and devoted wife Mary Alice Lair at his side, holding his hand.

Virgil was born September 23, 1927, in Piqua, Kansas, the son of Otto W. and Anna J. (Bux) Lair. He grew up on a small farm in Piqua, attending Piqua primary school and later graduating from Iola High School. As a young man Virgil, known by many as 'Arnie', was an avid baseball player for the Piqua team.

He entered service in the United States Navy, serving in the Pacific Theater during World War II aboard the Navy destroyer USS Tolman, one of the first ships landing in Nagasaki after the bombing. Upon honorable discharge from the service, he entered Kansas State College of Agriculture and Applied Science (later becoming Kansas State University) under the GI Bill of Rights. He graduated from K-State in May 1950 with a degree in agronomy. He was a member of Alpha Gamma Rho Fraternity.

Post graduation he worked for Pfizer Veterinary in New York City. He then returned to Kansas and on October 15, 1955 married Mary Alice (Smith) Lair at St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Chanute, Kansas. They made their home in Piqua where Virgil began buying land for his farming operation. He often

noted “the big bean crop of 1966” as a pivotal point in his farming career.

Virgil, known as a straight shooter both in hunting and business began his banking career in 1970 when he bought a bank in Stark, Kansas. Likewise his banking operation grew to encompass many communities in Southeast Kansas, with its headquarters at Bank of Commerce, Chanute. All this from a man who, by his own admission, knew little in the beginning about the business of banking, except that one could potentially make a good living at it while doing something worthwhile for the community.

An avid outdoorsman, Virgil’s passion for hunting and fishing was endless. He hunted every pheasant season opening day in South Dakota since 1955. He accomplished the ‘Grand Slam’ of North American wild sheep, and had several record trophies, including a Canadian polar bear and a leopard from Zimbabwe, Africa.

Virgil served 16 years as a member of the Military Selective Service System from 1958-1976. Instrumental in starting the Piqua Coop, he also served many years on the Cooperative Marketing Association board in the 1960’s and 70s. Memberships include the Kansas Bankers Association Federal Affairs Board, Charter member of Flint Oak, Knights of Columbus, American Legion, St. Martin Catholic Church in Piqua, and St. Patrick Catholic Church in Chanute.

His family was the most important aspect of his life and he spent his time both working and leisure with them. For over 40 years, Virgil and Mary Alice have continued to travel with their 4 children to celebrate Christmas in Vail, Colorado. Over the years, the family grew and prospered, growing from 4 children to 29 children, spouses, grandchildren and great grandchildren on his most recent Christmas in Vail. He shared his passion and enthusiasm for life with his family through his many stories and lessons that he had learned along

the way. He will be truly missed, but his words will remain with us.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Alice Lair of the home; three sons and their spouses, Greg Lair (Judy) of Piqua, Mark Lair (Karen) of Chanute, Casey Lair (Julie) of Neodesha and one daughter, Jill Lair Aylward (Mike) of Chanute; 14 grandchildren, Damian Lair, Courtney Gonzales (Cesar), Monica Lair, Kevan Lair, Kelli Corwin (Chris), Whitney Schairer (Trent), Conner Lair, Emily Lair, Kate Lair, Valon Jones (Alex), Garick Lair, Ali Aylward, Regan Aylward, Michael Aylward, and great grandchildren Cesar Gonzales, Alexander Gonzales, and Harper Jones.

He was preceded in death by two sisters, Bernice Lair and Margie Kramer, and by a brother Mike.

Body will lay in state at Countryside Funeral Home Gibson Chapel on 16 N. Forest in Chanute from 1-5 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2016. A Rosary will be recited at 7:30 p.m. on Monday, May 16, 2016 at St. Patrick Catholic Church. A Mass of Christian Burial will be held at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Chanute, KS on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 at 10 a.m. Interment will be at St. Martin's Catholic Cemetery in Piqua, KS. Online condolences may be left at www.countrysidefh.com. In lieu of flowers, memorials have been suggested to St. Patrick Catholic School, Neosho Memorial Regional Medical Center Foundation or St. Martin's Cemetery Fund and may be left with or mailed to the funeral home. Services have been entrusted to: Countryside Funeral Home 16 N. Forest, Chanute, KS 66720.

Cemetery Details

St. Martin's Catholic Cemetery

Xylan Rd.
Piqua, KS 66761

Previous Events

Visitation

MAY 16. 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM (CT)

Countryside Funeral Home - Gibson Chapel
16 N. Forest
Chanute, KS 66720
(620) 431-2660
<https://www.countrysidefh.com>

Rosary

MAY 16. 7:30 PM (CT)

St. Patrick's Catholic Church - Chanute
424 S. Central
Chanute, KS

Service

MAY 17. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Patrick's Catholic Church - Chanute
424 S. Central
Chanute, KS

Tribute Wall

PC

“ *Mary Alice & family: I just found out about Virgil's passing, I worked at his bank in Erie for 12 years and got to know the family quite well. I know he will be missed by all. You and your family are in my prayers.*

Pat Clasen - May 20, 2016 at 01:42 PM

CL

“ *Our thoughts and prayers are with the Lair family. We will always remember the pheasant hunting seasons when Virgil and family came to Winner. He truly enjoyed walking the fields and harvesting the beautiful South Dakota pheasant. Those memories and no doubt his hunting stories will be passed on for many years!*



Colby LaCompte Family Winner SD

Colby LaCompte - May 17, 2016 at 06:25 PM

JA

“ *Dear Mary Alice:*

My thoughts and prayers are with you during this time. I am so very sorry for your loss. You had so many wonderful and joyous years together and I always enjoyed see him at The Kansas State Fair. Take care my friend.

Jan Peters

Jan - May 17, 2016 at 12:30 PM

LH

“ He was a good man and an influence to so many Mary Alice you have been so blessed God's strength be with you Lloyd Houk

Lloyd houk - May 16, 2016 at 07:23 PM



“ Secret Garden Basket was purchased for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



May 16, 2016 at 06:10 PM



“ Strength & Solace Spray was purchased for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



May 16, 2016 at 01:41 PM

DR

“ Mary Alice and family, I remember many baseball games with Arnie and the Piqua team. I remember his speed, when he got on base he would soon be stealing second base and maybe even third. He had a "good eye" at bat and rarely struck out. After the day game on Sunday in Piqua we would head for the rock quarry for a cool, refreshing swim. He had a nice Oldsmobile to ride in for the trip there and back. Deacon Dave Robinson and wife Judy

David Robinson - May 16, 2016 at 12:15 PM

JO

“ Jeff Oakes and the Staff of Flint Oak purchased the Sentimental Dreams for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



Jeff Oakes and the Staff of Flint Oak - May 16, 2016 at 11:32 AM



“ Vivid Recollections was purchased for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



May 16, 2016 at 11:25 AM

KT

“ K Bar Z Family and Sam Taylor purchased the Ocean Breeze Spray for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



K Bar Z Family and Sam Taylor - May 16, 2016 at 10:22 AM

CM

“ Virgil always took time to share some of his witty wisdom from his many experiences in life with us. Those stories always put a smile on our face, and many became a teaching moment for my future career. Sincere condolences to all of the family. We have so many fond memories of the Lair family. God Bless. Craig and Peggy Meader



CRAIG MEADER - May 16, 2016 at 09:29 AM

TH

“ Tom and Cynthia Hoenig purchased the Enchanted Cottage for the family of Virgil Arthur Lair.



Tom and Cynthia Hoenig - May 15, 2016 at 06:02 PM

TH

“ Dear Mary Alice and family: Please accept Cynthia and my sincere condolences on the passing of Virgil. I don't have to tell you how many years he and I knew one another and how much I will miss him. We went through some difficult times in the banking business and Virgil was always so optimistic and positive to work with. We hope to be back in Kansas City soon and to visit you and Mark and the Lair family. Tom and Cynthia Hoenig

Tom and Cynthia Hoenig - May 15, 2016 at 04:55 PM

FS

“ My deepest sympathy to Mary Ann and all the Lair family. Virgil was a most generous man and I will always be grateful for his being a major contributor to the addition of St. Patrick's school. I will offer Holy Mass for the repose of his soul.

Fr. Tom Scaletty

fr tom scaletty - May 14, 2016 at 12:27 PM

CM

“ I had the honor of being Virgil's nurse on his first stay at NMRMC. He always told me I was his favorite due to the fact that I work a KSTATE badge on my scrubs. I will never forget his warm Wildcats blanket. He was always so patient and kind despite his health. My heart goes out to his amazing family who showed unconditional love and support. Thank you for allowing me to be a very short part of his life! God bless!

Cassie Mueller, RN

Cassie Mueller - May 13, 2016 at 08:58 PM

BP

“ Mary Alice and Family,
You are in our thoughts and prayers.
Grace Hyatt, Gas City.
Betty Hyatt-Pierson, Emporia.

Betty Pierson - May 13, 2016 at 08:54 PM

LS

“ My condolences to Mary Alice and the family. I have memories of babysitting the children when they were all under the age of 6.
Linda (Westerman) Sandy

Linda (Westerman) Sandy - May 13, 2016 at 06:24 PM

KW

“ Thoughts and prayers to the family for your loss. Virgil always had a smile and always spoke to me . he will be greatly missed. Kris Collins Wallace.

Kris wallace - May 13, 2016 at 04:42 PM

DZ

“ Mary Alice & family, I just want to say I am sorry for your loss. I am glad that I had these past 2 1/2 years to care for Virgil. It has been a great pleasure. Thank you for that opportunity. I will truly miss Virgil. I will cherish the memories. R.I.P. Virgil. Love and prayers, Donna Zillner

Donna Zillner - May 13, 2016 at 03:00 PM

DD

“ Donna Dye lit a candle in memory of Virgil
Arthur Lair



Donna Dye - May 13, 2016 at 01:18 PM

MP

“ Mark and Karen and all the family, so sorry for your loss. "Arnie" sounded like quite a guy, someone I would have liked to have known. You all will be in our thoughts and prayers. Love, Pat and Maureen Purcell

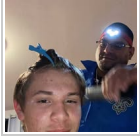
maureen purcell - May 13, 2016 at 07:27 AM

CC

“ I will never forget how much fun and laughter he generated. His kindness and generosity to me and my family will always be remembered.

Craig and Jody Cole

Craig Cole - May 12, 2016 at 11:30 PM



“ *It was definitely a pleasure working with Virgil. Such a wise and humorous guy. He will be missed by the Country Place family. R.I.P Virgil and my thoughts are with you Mary Alice.*

Edgar Arauz - May 12, 2016 at 11:18 PM