



Mr. Melvin Richard Nelson

January 29, 1922 - February 17, 2015

Melvin Nelson was born in Galesburg, Illinois in 1922. He was the son of Swedish immigrants who settled in Galesburg because it was a hub for several railroads. Galesburg is an "All-American City" whose impact and reach throughout history has been greater than it should have been, given its size and location.

After serving on a destroyer in the South Pacific during World War II, he returned to Galesburg to marry Dorothy Jordan and start a family. He became a craftsman...a sheet metal worker...a pretty good golfer...a great softball player...and an avid photographer. He would give slide shows in the basement theater of his home on Willard Street. He presented shows on a variety of subjects...holidays, birthdays, family vacations and all events at the Covenant Church in Galesburg, including the construction of the new church. His color photographs taken between 1955 and 1963 were published in a book by his three sons titled "Our Father's Images" and shown at The College of the Canyons in 2008. Here is a quote from the show..."Melvin Nelson photographed his three sons as they grew up in Illinois during the 50s and 60s. With the backdrop of vacation destinations, such as Disneyland, these images take on an additional historic significance. Utilizing an instinctual gift for composition and an intuitive use of equipment, Melvin Nelson created works that might bring to mind the photographs of Diane Arbus or Elliott Erwitt." He never acknowledged it...but he was an artist.

His three sons, Michael, Stephen and Gary made their parents move to California in 1986 after attempting to get to Galesburg for Christmas. They were stranded in Denver and St. Louis, and finally got to Galesburg the day after Christmas. That was enough to convince Mel and Dot that Christmas ...
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after Christmas. That was enough to convince Mel and Dot that Christmas was a lot more fun in California.

They lived at Mission Lakes Country Club for 13 years before moving to Sahara Park. They loved the park...especially the view from their house. Mel always said, "it was like a train that never left the station." He really enjoyed sitting in the living room and waving to everyone as they past by.

His life always centered around the church. They were members of the Covenant Church in Galesburg and the United Methodist Church of Palm Springs.

His wife of 67 years died 18 months ago. He was completely devoted to her. He is survived by his 3 sons, their wives, 3 grandchildren, and 2 great grandchildren.

Graveside services will be held on Friday, February 27, 2015 at 11:00am. at Riverside National Cemetery.

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Tribute Wall



“ *Mr. Melvin Richard Nelson*

October 05, 2023 at 09:38 PM



“ *Condolences to the Nelson family, so sorry for your loss.
With deep sympathy,
Sal & Lynn Bruno*

Lynn Bruno - March 03, 2015 at 12:00 AM



“ *So sorry for your loss. Melvin was such a nice man. Although I didn't get to know him as well as I would have liked since he was older than I am, I always had a warm feeling when we were together when I was young. I am sure he will be greatly missed. Dorthy and he were a wonderful couple. My prayers to all and your families.*

Carol Calderone Luetkehans - March 01, 2015 at 12:00 AM