



## Earon E. Barker

December 23, 1913 - December 11, 2012

Earon Elton Barker departed this life Friday morning, 11 December 2012, at his home in Carthage, Missouri. Earon began his life's journey on 23 December 1913 in Marshall, Arkansas, the first-born of James and Lula Belle (Lane) Barker. Shortly thereafter, the family moved to Seneca, Missouri, where his brother Franch and sister Hazel were born. In 1919, when Earon was only five, his mother and baby sister died of the Spanish flu. Together with other Lane and Barker families, James and his boys moved from Missouri, to Oklahoma, and to California where James remarried and had four daughters. Earon completed the 10th grade at Covina High School then went to work to help support the family. They returned to Seneca in 1931 and James died there the next year leaving six children aged from nineteen to ten months. Earon's sisters moved back to California. He would see them once in the 1940s then not again until 2002 when he and his brother would reunite with the two surviving.

In 1940, Earon began courting Mildred Brown whom he had first seen in Seneca in 1932 when she was only eleven. He recounted thinking she was a "pretty little girl;" she remembered him as the tallest boy she'd ever seen. That and his dark curly hair, blue eyes, and guitar evidently won her over. They eloped to Columbus, Kansas, on 9 April 1941 and returned to Seneca to live on the farm where Earon had worked since 1931. He made extra money working as a carpenter's assistant in the building of Fort Crowder in Neosho. After daughter Patricia's arrival, he traded farm work for a job at Pet Milk in

Neosho. Patricia was three months old in January 1943 when Earon left for Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for induction into the Army. From June 1943 until October 1945, Earon served in New Guinea and the Philippines as a radar operator with the 583rd Signal Air Warning Battalion, US Army Air Force. He was "Lum" to his buddies there who thought him much like the character from his favorite radio show "Lum and Abner."

Upon returning home from the service, Earon was hospitalized, having typhoid and malaria at the same time. When he recovered, Earon and Mildred (and now 3-year-old Patricia) started a home in Joplin where Mildred had lived and worked during the war. Two more daughters, Carolin and Rose Mary, were born. Earon worked first as an auto mechanic at Rayl-Stanley Motors then went over to Rayl-Stanley Tractor and Implement to the start of a life-long career as a tractor mechanic. The family lived briefly in Neosho, where Earon worked for Hailey Brother's Tractor Company. Then in 1952, they moved to Carthage, where Earon had been offered a job with Rhodes Implement. Leaving there he worked at General Irrigation and then at Murrell Equipment before retiring in 1982. He found work most rewarding when teaching his trade to new mechanics or when he could diagnose and repair a problem others had given up on. He had a long list of loyal customers and was proud to be known as the best Ford tractor mechanic in Jasper County.

In 1955, the family moved to what would be home for fifty-two years. The eight-acre farm just two blocks off a main street was perfect for the whole family and for the many dogs and cats that would live out their lives there. Earon was most pleased that he now had a reason to buy a tractor. It would be a 1948 8N Ford. The girls were disappointed only that they never got a horse. Improvement of the property was an ongoing project including a home remodel and the building of a large shop. Earon worked on tractors in this shop until in his late seventies when woodworking and repairing lawnmowers replaced tractor work. When grandchildren and great-grandchildren came along, Earon and Mildred kept busy attending events ranging from Little Theater to football and hosting most holiday gatherings, birthday parties,

and cookouts. Earon made his grandkids wooden toys and go-carts he fashioned out of de-commissioned riding lawn mowers. Earon and Mildred downsized their property, bought an RV, and traveled to Arkansas, Arizona, California, and the World's Fair in Tennessee. An annual summer highlight was attending the Barker/Lane reunion and seeing cousins who were as close as siblings. When Mildred's health failed, Earon became her caregiver and took on the inside work along with the outside. For over six years after her death in 2001, he continued to live on and maintain the property. In 2007, he moved to a small home which better met his needs and satisfied his wants of a big shed, a garage workshop, yard enough to do some gardening, and a place to park his 1948 8N Ford.

As a young man Earon's pastimes included reading Zane Grey, playing baseball, square dancing, fishing and hunting. In Carthage, Earon was a member of Bible Baptist Church where he taught the young adults' Sunday School class. He served jury duty when called, volunteered at the polls, and voted in every presidential election since he turned twenty-one (twenty elections from 1936 to 2012). Most recently, when not outside "playing in the dirt," Earon could be found inside cooking, doing crossword puzzles, reading, or watching an old western or a Kansas City Chiefs' game on t.v. Any number of books would come and go from chairside and bedside tables; but, two were always there – The Bible and The Old Farmer's Almanac. When Earon spoke of his life, it was with kind acceptance of it all, the sweet and the bitter. It was plain and simple, he loved the earth and was grateful for every day that God gave him to walk upon it. In addition to his parents, his sister, and his wife, he was preceded in death by his brother Franch E. Barker and his wife Lucille; his sisters Dorothy L. Goldstein, Thelma L. Morais, and Eva P. Blythe; his son-in-law Robert J. Thranert; all his aunts and uncles, three nephews, and most of his dear cousins. He leaves a legacy of love, laughter, and life-affirming joy to those who survive him: sister Ola Mae Storer and her husband Jay of Apple Valley, CA; daughters Patricia Thranert of Joplin, Carolin Hixon and husband

Bill of Springfield, and Rose Pyle and husband Robert D. of Carthage; grandchildren: Rebecca Pickering and husband Victor, Deborah Kelley and husband Joseph, Christine Smiley and husband Kenneth, Robert E. Pyle and wife Tina, Lisa Pyle, and Aaron Pyle; foster grandchild Erin Bradley; great-grandchildren: Steven Pickering, Pheobe and Domenic Burke, Audrey Kelley, Nolan and Trevor Smiley, Justin Pyle and wife Billie Jo, Joshua and Jarrett Pyle, Jessica and Jeffrey Pugh, Kory and Lynzy Pyle; great-great-grandchildren: Myla Pyle, Brianna and, Rylan Pyle; numerous nieces and nephews; several cousins, and friends. Earon was a man of quiet strength. He was frugal but generous, donating hundreds of dollars a year to charity two or three dollars at a time. He was an optimist, renewing his driver's license for six years when he was 93 (because that was cheaper). He was self-educated and very well-educated. He kept up with current events and was always open to a discussion which he would start by saying, "What do you think about. He was slow to anger, though he could get worked up over excess, greed, and wastefulness. He was quick-witted and enjoyed good-natured teasing, but never made a joke at someone else's expense.

Services will be held 2:00 p.m. Saturday, December 15, 2012, at Ulmer Funeral Home with family visitation from 1:00 to 1:45 PM. Burial will follow in Sparlin-Gallemore Cemetery near Seneca, Missouri. Memorial contributions may be made to Sparlin-Gallemore Cemetery, 4612 Leroy Ave., Seneca, MO 64865. Online condolences can be made to [www.ulmerfh.com](http://www.ulmerfh.com). Arrangements are under the direction of Ulmer Funeral Home.

# Tribute Wall

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“ *Our Deepest Sympathy goes out to You and the Whole Family. We Mourn Your loss, and will keep All of You in Our Prayers. We Love You All, Each and Everyone. May God Bless.*

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**William and Jeanne Kelley and Family** - December 15, 2012 at 07:59 PM