

LaVerne G. "Vern" Eklund

1930 - 2018



LaVerne "Vern" G. Eklund 1930—2018

Vern Eklund passed away peacefully on November 3, 2018. He was born in Rockford on August 10, 1930, and was the only son of Frank W. Eklund and Martha I. (Nelson) Eklund. Graduating from East High School in 1949, he next attended [Purdue University](#), where he received a Bachelor of Science in Aeronautical Engineering in 1953. While there, he also earned his private pilot's license, and enjoyed flying for a number of years. He completed a Master of Science in Mechanical Engineering at the California Institute of Technology (CalTech) in 1954. Shortly afterwards, he was surprised to be drafted into the Army, and served from 1954-1956 at the 7737-7th Army Aviation Training Center in Stuttgart, Germany, where he learned to speak German, and made new friends.

When he returned, he began work as an engineer/manager for Pratt and Whitney Aircraft (later United Technologies), in East Hartford, Connecticut. He was proud to have worked on the Apollo space program, and on fuel cell development. Just after moving to CT, Vern married Phyllis on July 3, 1958, and together they raised two children in Vernon. Vern retired in 1986, and moved back to Rockford in 1997. Vern and Phyllis were able to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary this past July in the company of friends and relatives.

Vern had many hobbies including hunting, fishing, photography, antiques, watching the Cubs, and playing tennis. He was a member of various antique groups, the Swedish Historical Society of Rockford, the Rockford Model A Club, and was a regular attendee at the Civil War Round Table in Rockford. Mostly, he enjoyed having a good cup of coffee (and a cinnamon roll) with friends.

Vern was preceded in death by his parents, uncles Herbert and Bertil, and cousin Lee Eklund. He is survived by his wife, Phyllis, son Paul (Mary) Eklund of Mt. Airy, MD, and daughter Amy (John) Poehlman of Bloomington, IN, as well as two grandchildren and a nephew, many cousins and other relatives.

A memorial service is planned for November 19, 2018, at 11:00 a.m. at Grace Lutheran Church of Loves Park. Visitation will be from 10:00-11:00 a.m. The family requests that donations be made to [the Salvation Army](#), the Swedish Historical Society of Rockford, or the [charity of your choice](#).

Published in Rockford Register Star from Nov. 9 to Nov. 11, 2018