



Einar Dahl, Jr., 92, passed away Wednesday, September 4, 2024 at Methodist West Hospital in West Des Moines, Iowa.

Einar was born March 1, 1932 at the family home in the Spring Creek Township of McKenzie County, North Dakota to Einar Dahl and Martha Johnson Dahl. Einar Sr. immigrated to America from Norway in 1904, as a teenager, and homesteaded in Spring Creek in 1910. Martha Johnson was born in Hillsboro, ND and traveled to the western part of the state to homestead her land in 1911. Einar Sr. and Martha met and were married in 1913. Einar Jr. was incredibly proud of his pioneer parents and their hard work and perseverance to establish a new life on the Dakota prairie.

The youngest of seven children, Einar enjoyed growing up on the family farm and ranch at the edge of the scenic badlands. As a child he enjoyed hunting, fishing, horseback riding, dog ownership, learning about and tinkering with machinery, helping with farming and ranching chores and cooking with his mother until he was deemed old enough to drive a tractor and begin farming, at about age ten or eleven. On the farm he developed a strong work ethic from the example set by his parents, siblings and neighboring homesteaders. He also witnessed the struggles of families affected by the Great Depression and World War II and learned the importance of saving, sharing and not wasting any materials or resources. He developed a strong appreciation for the beauty of all things in nature that remained with him throughout his life.

As a boy, Einar attended both “country” and “town” schools. During the spring planting and fall harvesting seasons he attended the one-room Shaw School, which was located near their family farm. In the winter, he and his parents moved to Watford City and he attended town school, where his favorite subject was math.

Einar graduated from Watford City High School in 1950, where he excelled in sports on the football, basketball and track teams. After graduation, he attended Dickinson State Teachers College (Dickinson, ND) where he played on the basketball team. After one year at college, Einar had the opportunity to return to the family farm and take over the farming operation.

Einar married his high school sweetheart, Avonne Lofthus, on March 19, 1954 and they were happy to celebrate their 70th wedding anniversary this past March. They were true partners throughout their 70-year marriage with Einar focusing on running their businesses and Avonne raising their family and running the household. Their union was blessed with two daughters, Tracy and Leslie, and from day one Einar always enjoyed, and said he preferred, being a “girl dad”.

In the fall of 1954, Einar joined the US Army and was stationed in Stuttgart, Germany and Augusta, Georgia. He then attended the University of North Dakota on the GI Bill, graduating in 1960 with a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering.

After graduation, Einar accepted a position with Johnson Controls, as a Sales Engineer, and he and Avonne moved their young family to Des Moines, Iowa. Einar spent the next five years at Johnson working to develop control designs for HVAC systems. He spent much of his time on jobsites helping to get HVAC systems up and running.

With five years of industry experience under his belt, Einar and Avonne created and incorporated Dahl Air Conditioning and Heating Company as a residential and light commercial HVAC company in 1965. As Avonne set-up the bookkeeping and accounting system for the company and ran their household, Einar put in long, hard hours estimating jobs and running the company during the day and fabricating sheet metal at night and on the weekends for his crew to install the next day. With his mechanical engineering background, Einar decided to enter the commercial field exclusively in 1968. Dahl Air Conditioning and Heating Company, now led by the company's third owner, continues to thrive today and still employs a handful of the people Einar hired in the 1970's and 1980's. Einar always attributed his business success to the fact that he hired some excellent employees.

Ever the entrepreneur, Einar established Systems Management and Balancing, Inc., in 1968, to provide management and systems balancing service to building owners, architects, engineers and contractors. In 1972, he purchased Christians Corporation, a sheet metal fabrication firm in Spencer, Iowa. He also formed Dallas Construction Corporation, an architectural and specialty sheet metal company, in 1978 as an affiliate company. To facilitate his business dealings, Einar became an instrument-rated airplane pilot.

As Einar had been mentored and coached early in his career by established contractors who recognized his work ethic and potential, he too became a mentor and leader to many different individuals in the HVAC industry.

Einar was an active member of and served as Iowa chapter president for the following professional organizations: American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Iowa Chapter, Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) of Iowa and Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) Iowa Chapter.

Einar's associations and memberships, in addition to his professional organizations, include: 64-year charter member of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church; University of North Dakota Alumni Association; University of Iowa Foundation's Presidents Club; Des Moines Golf and Country Club and The American Legion.

Throughout his life, Einar loved to cook (and eat!) and was a loving dog owner. After moving to Des Moines, Einar became a huge Drake men's basketball supporter during the 1960's- 1980's and an Iowa Hawkeye sports fan, weekly betting with son-in-law Greg on various Iowa football and basketball games—Einar always chose the Hawkeyes!

In the early 1980's, for a few years, Einar returned to his family's North Dakota farm to actively farm the

land himself, to the delight of his older siblings who were happy to have their little brother working the homeplace land again.

He was extremely proud of his Norwegian heritage and North Dakota upbringing and enjoyed traveling to Norway twice to see his father's birthplace and meet relatives. Einar and Avonne refurbished her parents' house in Watford City and they enjoyed spending time there for many years in the spring, summer and fall to visit family, friends and check on their farmland. In addition to traveling to Norway, Einar and Avonne also took other trips to Europe to visit France, England, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

Einar restored two cars that were of significant importance to him: the Model T car he drove as a teenager and young adult and a 1966 Ford Falcon, which was his first company car. Einar enjoyed playing all types of card games and he and Avonne would travel to Las Vegas every few years to play blackjack and poker. They played poker with good friends most Friday nights for many years.

Einar enjoyed playing golf and, in retirement, he made golf clubs for himself, family and friends. For 25 years, he and Avonne spent their winters in Mesa, AZ, golfing several times per week. They enjoyed connecting with North Dakota family and friends in Arizona and also meeting and making new friends with other 'snow birds' from around the country.

Einar is survived by his loving wife of 70 years, Avonne Dahl; daughter, Leslie Dahl Knudson; son-in-law, Greg Knudson; and many nieces, nephews and their families.

Einar was preceded in death by his eldest daughter, Tracy Dahl in 1986; his parents; his six siblings, Henry (Harriette) Dahl, Edwin (Jane) Dahl, Julia (Marvin) Knutson, Olga (John) Anderson, Constance (Bruce) Quale, and Mathias (Violet) Dahl; and two nephews.

The family is greatly appreciative of the care Einar received, at home, over the past several years from his Angels in the Home caregivers.

Memorial services will be held on Saturday, November 2, 2024 at 11:00 AM at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Des Moines, Iowa. Visitation with family will take place at 10:00 AM that day. A luncheon will be held in the church Fellowship Hall following the service. Interment will take place at Schafer Cemetery (Watford City, ND) at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be directed to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2600 East Euclid Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50317 or a charity of your choice.