



Mark Scarff

October 8, 1908 - September 17, 2004

Mark T. Scarff, 95, died September 17, 2004 in a local care center. A memorial service will be held at 2 PM Tuesday at McCabe United Methodist Church, Bismarck, with the Rev. Art Scanson and the Rev. Rick Fossum officiating. There will no visitation. Mark was born October 8, 1908 in Michigan, ND. Following his second grade of school, his father sold his hardware business and the family moved to Devils Lake. He and his younger sister, Maxine, graduated together from Devils Lake High School in 1927. For the last semester of high school, the following 15 months and summers during college, Mark worked in the neighborhood grocery store. He graduated from the University of North Dakota with a degree in electrical engineering in 1932. The following year he worked toward a master's degree. The last 3 years at the university he worked in the physics department shop making and repairing laboratory equipment. The next fall he traveled to Pittsburg and Schenectady attempting to obtain work with Westinghouse and General Electric, but work was unavailable. He then worked briefly at government make work programs. In the spring of 1934, he went to work for the local telephone company and helped build the first telephone line to Camp Grafton. He continued with the telephone company the balance of the year. In January 1935, he went to work in Williston, ND for what later became Montana Dakota Utilities Co. He started out reading meters and climbing poles. Later he moved into system operations and 38 years later retired as Vice President and Chief Electrical Engineer. His work took him from Williston to Glendive, MT, Bismarck and

Minneapolis and back to Bismarck. He met Janet M. Butler in Williston and they were married August 26, 1940. They had three children, Mark Edward, David and Nancy. Mark had a woodworking shop from boyhood and he built many items of furniture and devices for members of his family, his church, and the Open Door Community Center. He was always active in his church and was a member of McCabe United Methodist Church. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge. Mark was active in the Boy Scout program while his boys were of that age. He took the boys' troop to western Montana for a week and later helped take 13 scouts on a wilderness canoe trip out from Ely, MN. This was the beginning of his love for canoeing. He bought his own canoe in 1963 and over the next twenty years made one and two-week wilderness canoe trips to northern Minnesota, Ontario, northern Saskatchewan and Montana. Son, Mark, accompanied him on all of these trips and son, David, on four of the major trips. Mark also liked to hunt and fish and dabbled at gun smithing. In 1958, Mark built a luggage trailer and bought a tent and took the family on a one-week trial camping trip to Montana. The weather was prefect. Later summers the family camped to Alaska, the west Coast, and New York. Upon retirement, he rebuilt the trailer to a pop-up sleeping trailer and he and Mrs. Scarff went to Death Valley. They found the trailer pretty confining and bought a 20-foot recreational camper. Over the next 19 falls, they made long trips and saw most of the United States and Canada. The camping ended one day short of Mark's 85th birthday when on an icy road in Montana, it went off road and overturned. Mark was a strong believer in exercise and following retirement when there was ample time, he developed an exercise program and walked daily from their home in northeast Bismarck to the post office for the mail. A heart attack cut the walking to three miles a day. Later two trips to the hospital stopped all exercise but he worked back up to about 2/3 of a mile daily at Kirkwood Mall with the help of a walker. He was still walking at the mall until his hospitalization shortly before his death. Still living are his wife, Janet, of Bismarck; their three children, Mark E. and his wife, Annie of Helena, MT, David of Bismarck, and Nancy of Bismarck; his sister, Maxine Scarff of

Bismarck; Cathy Scarff; and four grandsons, Mark D., Dennis, Dana, and Cetan. He was preceded in death by his great grandson, Joshua Ine Scarff. In lieu of flowers, the family would prefer memorials to the McCabe United Methodist Church or the charity of your choice.