



Berth Ness

October 6, 1908 - December 12, 2007

Berth C Ness, 99, died on Wednesday December 12, 2007 in Mesa, Arizona. The funeral will be held at 11:00 AM on Friday December 21 at the First Lutheran church in Mahanomen Minnesota with pastor Kristen Larson-Schmidt officiating. A visitation will be held on Thursday evening from 5:00 to 7:00 PM at the Anderson-Mattson Funeral Home in Mahanomen.

Berth was born on October 6, 1908 to Gilbert C and Petra (Betsy Nyhus) Ness in Hatton, North Dakota. He grew up and graduated from High School in Hatton and then attended Interstate Business College in Fargo where he met Louise Melgaard. The couple soon married and moved to Hunter North Dakota where Berth worked as a teller -- then as a cashier -- at the Hunter bank

Berth and Louise (Lulu) Ness later settled in Mahanomen Minnesota which they made their home and where Berth took a job as cashier at the bank. For a time, between the Hunter and Mahanomen banks, Berth was the youngest cashier in the United States who was authorized to sign and issue currency -- which he continued to do throughout the difficult years of the Great Depression.

In 1934, Berth started Ness Finance Co, from which, many other businesses formed and grew. Eventually, this led Berth into the insurance business and into car dealerships, then into real estate, implement dealerships, construction companies, hotels, apartments and many other businesses and investment ventures. Some of the most memorable of these include Wild Rice Motors and

Ness Construction Company, both of Mahanomen - as well as some of the early development of Apache Junction Arizona.

Deeply affected by the Great Depression, Berth lived a life that was committed to hard work and thrift. Although he earned successfully and invested wisely, he never had a desire to spend money on, or for, himself. He usually dressed sharply and always drove a nice car, but personal spending stopped there.

In spite of his spartan ways however, Berth C Ness had an incredible zest and appreciation for life. He frequently commented on how great he felt and on how wonderful it was to be alive -- and how he was going to live to be 100 because there were just so many interesting things going on.

He will be sadly missed and fondly remembered as "Dad", as "Grandpa", as "Pops", as "Bert" and as "B.C. Ness" -- one who had passionate views on conducting business, strong opinions about the state of our country, one who never gloated about success and never complained about failure, and one who always maintained a positive outlook on his personal life.

He is survived by his wife Percy of Mahanomen along with her children from her previous marriage, his former wife Sylvia of AZ, his sister Pearle of AZ, his daughter Beverly (Wayne) Thorson of MN, and his children from his second marriage, sons Wayne (Barbara) Ness of AZ, Brad (Bambi) Ness of MN, daughters Julie (Gregg) Cornille of AZ, and Krista (Scott) Ketchum of AZ -- and also numerous nieces, nephews, grandchildren and great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his parents, his first wife Louise, his brother Gilman, and his sisters Elvina, May and Bernice.

The B.C. Ness Mahanomen County Historical Museum has been set up as the recipient for any contributions that are offered in his remembrance. Any non-designated memorials will be given to the B.C. Ness Mahanomen County Historical Society in his remembrance