

Paul L. Gardiner of Pine River, MN was born July 14, 1918 in Ree Heights, South Dakota to Clarence V. Gardiner, the son of Joseph and Martha (Morrow) Gardiner and Leafy Pearl (Loveless) Gardiner, daughter of Frank and Laura Loveless of Gettysburg, SD. He passed on June 16th 2012 at the age of 93.

Paul was preceded in death by his parents, brother Kenneth and sister Della. He is survived by his wife of 69 years Marge (Robideau), son Gary (Janice), grandson Sean (Susan) and 3 granddaughters-- Synclair, Sayge and Scotlynn.

With a severe arm injury as a youth he was one of the Mayo Clinic's early patients. This prevented him from doing many things. At age 10 he surprised his father one day in the late 1920's by meeting him while driving a model A to chauffeur a cattle buyer across a South Dakota prairies 2 groove road.

Having visited this area of Minnesota in the early 30s on fishing trips as a teen with his family, it was not a surprise when his father purchased first a business in Brainerd and then in 1935 moved to Pine River and purchased a Gambles hardware store. Paul started working in the business part time and when he graduated in 1936 became a full time hardware man. In 1948 Paul and his brother Ken bought the business and were partners until Kens retirement in 1977. While Paul and Marge sold the business to their son Gary in 1996 he still worked in the store until 2008 when he officially retired due to health.

During his long business experience in Pine River he was privileged to be active in the Boy Scouts and to have 3 scouts become Eagles while scoutmaster. He was a long time member of the Chamber of Commerce, Past President and recipient of the Pine River Distinguished Service Award, member and on the board of the Pine River Methodist Church, former member of the volunteer fire department, and on the board of Directors for the Pine River State Bank. He was also once named the Cass Co Senior Citizen of the Year.

His greatest joys during his life were possibly the vacations in the 50's and 60's and summer camping trips to many places north with his wife and son. His commitment to work however was always evident and the many former customers who say he helped or gave a hand when no one else would were the satisfactions most prized.

During his life he and his wife ran Gardiner's Hardware Hank in Pine River. They survived the good and bad times and even rebuilt the business after a severe fire in 1974. Paul's ability to understand business and deal with people resulted in his being elected by United Hardware member dealers (the parent of Hardware Hank) to be on its board of directors for over 20 years and to be selected by that board as its president for 14 years. His nickname was "Hank". During this time the company acquired 2 other corporations, built a modern state of the art distribution warehouse and added many new dealers as well as expanding its Midwest service coverage to Montana, Colorado, Indiana and farther.

Services will be held 3 PM Saturday June 23rd at the First Luthern Church in Pine River.
Visitation will be Friday June 22nd from 5-7 at Kline Funeral Home Pine River.
Arrangements are with Kline Funeral Home, Pine River.

A special thanks goes to the caring employees at the Whispering Pines Good Samaritan Home in Pine River. He will be missed by many.