



Obituary for Merle Arden Grass

Merle Arden Grass, 84 of Belfast, passed away on July 15, 2017. He was born in Mars Hill, Maine on July 4, 1933 to Doreen and Merle Grass. He was predeceased by his brother Dean Grass, his sisters Merlene and Patricia, and his nephew Dan Grass. He is survived by his wife Barbara Grass, his daughter Carol Kelley, son-in-law John Kelley of Waldo, son Troy Grass, daughter-in-law Stephanie Grass of Eddington, daughter Ardette Spear and son-in-law David Spear of Bar Harbor, stepdaughter Susan Lessard and her husband Dan Bartlett and her family of Belfast, and stepdaughter Jane Brown and her husband Chuck Brown of Hull, TX. He dearly loved and was very proud of all of his grandchildren, Jennifer Kelley Fogg and her husband Howard of Belfast, Michael Kelley, Matthew Kelley both of Waldo, Korren Grass of Portland, and Nicholas Grass of Orlando, Florida. Merle is also survived by nephews Jeff Grass, Anthony Grass, Steven Grass, Kevin Grass, Greg Grass and nieces Dena Grass and Sandra Grass as well as cousin Pearl Nicklas and her family and other relatives in Northern Maine. Merle's extended family included several close friends including Kyle Skinner and family, and Wilma Moses. The last several years of his life were spent at Tall Pines both in skilled care and assisted living, and he was blessed with the caring support of wonderful caregivers in both facilities. Merle and his family moved to Thorndike in 1937, and he attended school in Thorndike and Brooks. After graduation he was drafted into the Army and served in South Korea. He was proud of his military service. Upon return home in 1955, Merle worked as a feed truck driver for a time. He then embarked on a 60+ year career as a chicken farmer initially raising broilers for Penobscot Poultry, then egg laying hens for DeCoster, and finally raising organic laying hens for Pete & Gerry's. Over the course of his life, Merle raised more than 26 million chickens. At the time of his death, Merle was still raising chickens at his farm in Waldo. He was featured in a Bangor Daily News article in 2010 called 'The Last of the Chicken Farmers' by Abigail Curtis, and also in a video documentary in 2013 called 'The Last Chicken Farmer' by Belfast Community Media. Merle was known for the quality of the birds that he raised as well as his encyclopedic knowledge of the subject of chicken farming. Merle loved his work and was able to keep raising chickens long after most other commercial operations in Maine had ceased. The two main loves of Merle's life were his family and chicken farming, and he devoted his life to doing his best to take care of both. Although Merle had few hobbies, he was a devoted fan of Boston sports teams, loved a good political debate, and prided himself on staying abreast of current events. His conservative views were well known and campaign seasons often found Republican candidate signs at his property on Route 3.

Grass Roots, the home farm for Merle and his family, was the first farm Merle purchased and remained as his home for his entire life until illness required that he move to Tall Pines in May of 2016. A graveside service will be held for Merle at 2 pm on July 20, 2017 at Grove Cemetery in Belfast. Those who wish may make memorial contributions in his memory to the The Residences at Tallpines Activities Dept. 24 Martin Lane Belfast, ME. Memories and condolences may be offered to the family at www.ripostafh.com. Arrangements are under the care of Riposta Funeral Home Belfast, ME.

To send flowers or a remembrance gift to the family of Merle Arden Grass, please visit our Tribute Store.