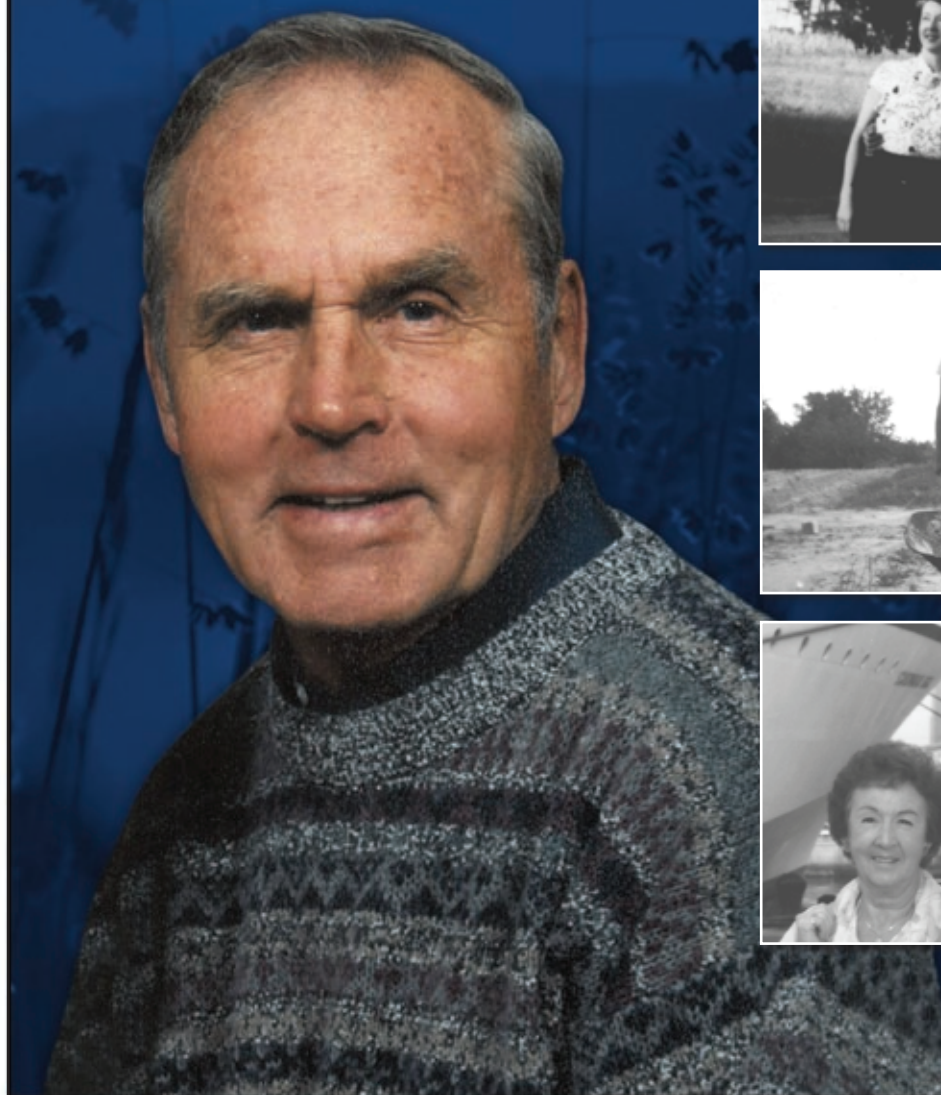


# Earl Lawson

October 14, 1925 - December 2, 2012





## Earl's Life Story

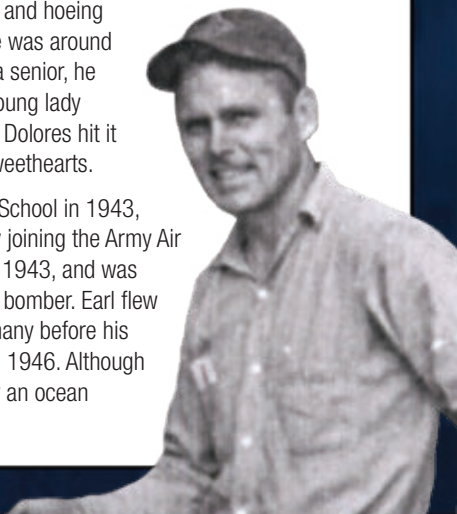
Earl Lawson was a man with a kind heart, an incredible work ethic, and a passion for helping others. Whether it was working with a customer at a gas station, rushing to put out a fire, or just helping out a friend, Earl always gave 100% effort. With his characteristic dry sense of humor, Earl often responded to an "I love you" with the words "I don't blame you!" Although Earl was speaking tongue-in-cheek, everyone who knew him realized the truth of those words: Earl was deeply loved, and he will be deeply missed. His big heart, friendly smile, and can-do attitude will live on in the hearts and memories of all those whose lives he touched.

Earl was born on October 14, 1925, to proud parents John O. and Gerda Lawson. John and Gerda were originally from Sweden, and had immigrated to Chicago, Illinois around the year 1910. John earned a living as an electrician, while Gerda stayed at home to raise the children. A year after Earl's birth, the family moved to Lawton, Michigan, the town where Earl would spend his entire life. They purchased a 15-acre farm east of town, complete with a two-story wooden house and rock wall basement. Growing up, Earl's chores included milking cows and working on the family's grape fields.

Earl grew up with six siblings, and was closest in age to his brother, Iver (Ike). Earl and Ike were usually together when not in school, and even got complementary Christmas gifts: two pairs of boxing gloves, a Ping-Pong set, and bobsleds. Earl was an active and outgoing boy, who loved playing baseball, basketball, and swimming. In the evenings, he enjoyed listening to Red Skelton, Ed Sullivan, Jackie Gleason, the Lone Ranger, and Jack Benny on the TV or radio.

When Earl was in high school, his favorite subject was manual arts (shop class). He kept busy, and in addition to his classes worked picking asparagus, pickling pickles, and hoeing grapes - at that time, the going rate was around 15 cents per hour! When Earl was a senior, he was set up on a blind date with a young lady named Dolores Ann Weed. Earl and Dolores hit it off right away, and soon became sweethearts.

After graduating from Lawton High School in 1943, Earl decided to serve his country by joining the Army Air Corp. He enlisted on November 24, 1943, and was trained as a waist gunner on a B17 bomber. Earl flew a total of seven missions over Germany before his honorable discharge on February 9, 1946. Although Earl and Dolores were separated by an ocean







during Earl's time in the military, they remained close by writing letters to each other.

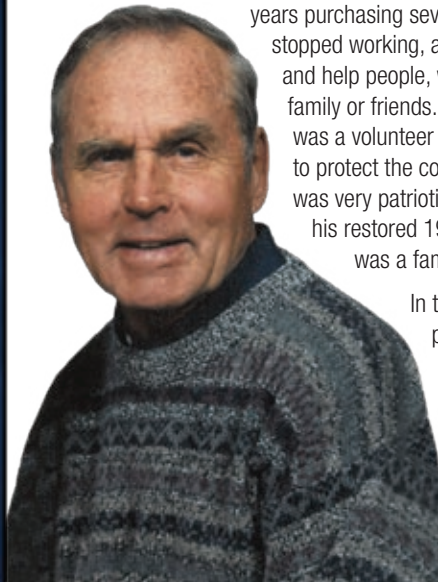
Safely back home in the States, Earl and Dolores picked up the threads of their romance. The happy couple was married on October 27, 1948, at Bethany Reformed church of Kalamazoo, Michigan. The newlyweds settled down in Lawton, where Earl found a job in construction. Later, he would go on to work at the post office, at the same time moonlighting as a gas and oil delivery truck driver.

As the years went by, Earl and Dolores were blessed with four children: Ken, Nancy, Bob, and Connie. Earl was a devoted father, and very proud of his children's achievements. For many years, the family lived in a house Earl had built himself, at 1014 Third Street in Lawton. In the early 1960s, they moved to a house nearer downtown and Earl installed a pool in the backyard - they were one of the first families in Lawton to have their own pool. Earl taught many neighborhood kids how to swim over the years, and was a hero to many youth in Lawton. His door was

always open to friends and neighbors - anyone who wanted to swim did need to have clean feet, however!

In 1960, Earl left the post office and started working full-time in the oil business. Four years later, in 1964, he started his own company: the Lawson Oil Company. He was quite successful, over the next few years purchasing seven gas stations. Earl rarely stopped working, and was always ready to step in and help people, whether customers, employees, family or friends. In addition to his work, Earl was a volunteer firefighter, and risked his life to protect the community for over 40 years. He was very patriotic, and the sight of Earl driving his restored 1931 fire truck in holiday parades was a familiar one to Lawton citizens.

In the 1980s, Earl and Dolores purchased a family cottage on Cedar Lake, south of Lawton. Earl enjoyed boating and swimming, and loved having the kids and grandkids out to the cottage. He made sure everyone was safe and





having fun, and that each grandkid had a turn driving the boat. All of Earl's children had stayed in the area, and Earl loved being so close to his extended family.

Earl's business continued to thrive, and in 1994 he sold the company to his son Ken and his son-in-law Jim McCorry. Although he had technically retired, Earl remained active in the business, lending a helping hand whenever it was needed. Earl and Dolores purchased a condo in Longboat Key, Florida, where they escaped from the chilly Michigan winters every year. They also were avid travelers, and made many trips to both the East and West coasts to visit relatives.

A few years ago, Earl was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. He began to need more support, especially after his beloved wife Dolores passed away in 2008, and spent his final years being cared for at Amber Way.

Hardworking, big-hearted, and always willing to help others, Earl was a dedicated husband, a loving father and grandfather, and a loyal friend. He will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by his many friends and family members.

Mr. Earl Lawson died on December 2, 2012, at the age of 87. Earl's family includes his 4 children, Ken (Judy) Lawson, Nancy McCorry, Bob (Debbie) Lawson, and Connie Knapp; 11 grandchildren; 12 great-grandchildren; his siblings, Pete (Bobbie) Lawson, Lorraine Whitmore, and Nita Daddato; and many nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife, Dolores, on December 30, 2008; his siblings, Violet, Mae and Iver; and his sons-in-law, Jim McCorry and Al Knapp.

Learn more about Earl, view his Life Story film, and share in some refreshments with his family and friends on Thursday from 5 to 8 p.m. at the Life Story Funeral Home, Betzler & Thompson - Paw Paw; 60900 M-40, 657-3870, where services will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday. Burial will take place at Oak Grove, Lawton. Memorial donations may be directed to Lawton Fire Department or Lawton Downtown Development Authority. Please visit Earl's personal memory page at [www.lifestorynet.com](http://www.lifestorynet.com), where you can learn more about his life, share a favorite memory or photo, and sign the online guestbook.



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