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# William K. Durr

Obituary > Condolences



William K. Durr Haslett William Kirtley Durr, age 85, passed away on March 13, 2009. He was born on February 5, 1924, near Independence, Kentucky, and lived in Haslett since 1955. He was the only child of Robert K. and Viola (Klein) Durr. Surviving are his wife of 58 years, Shirley, their three sons and their wives: John and Teresa, Bill and Ellen, and Jim and Cathy; and nine grandchildren: Mary and her husband, Dustin Derrick, Simone and her husband, Gary Adams, and Joel, Fynn, Adam, Rory, Sean, Tyler, and Jason Durr; one great-grandchild, Deacon Derrick. Also surviving is an extended family of Vicki and Rod Marinez and their children Katie, Mike and Joe. In 1943 he joined the U.S. Army Air Corps, became a fighter pilot, and flew sorties in a P51 Mustang between Iwo Jima and Japan. After World War II he was an Information-Education Officer for the Seventh Fighter Command on Iwo Jima, Saipan, and Guam. He left the Air Force in 1946 as a First Lieutenant and attended the University of Kentucky before transferring to Butler University. He received a B.A. Degree in Elementary Education in 1949 and taught third grade in Indianapolis for two years. While there he met Shirley Melvin and they were married in 1950. He completed his M.A. Degree in Elementary School Administration at Butler in 1951, moved to St. Joseph, Illinois, as Elementary Superintendent of Schools, and enrolled in the graduate program at the University of Illinois. In 1955 he received his doctorate in education and entered the professional ranks at Michigan State University. He prepared reading teachers and elementary teachers before retiring from Michigan State in 1981. During his tenure at Michigan State he was also the senior author of the Houghton Mifflin Reading Program. This series of reading textbooks for grades kindergarten through grade eight helped teachers develop students' reading abilities. It was a basal reading program in Lansing and Detroit and was one of the most widely used reading programs in the United States. In 1964-65 he was the president of the Michigan Reading Association. In 1972-73 he was president of the International Reading Association. This is a professional organization of over eighty thousand educators dedicated to the improvement of literacy throughout the world. He was a member of the Reading Hall



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of Fame and a past-president of that group. During his career he was a member of the Usage Panel of the American Heritage Dictionary. He authored two professional books, contributed chapters to others, and was published widely in professional journals. In addition, he gave professional speeches to educators in each of the fifty states and on five continents. Services will be held on Wednesday, March 18, at 2:00 p.m. at the Haslett Community Church, 1427 Haslett Rd, Haslett with the Rev. Kurt Kirchoff officiating. Entombment will be at the Chapel Hill Memorial Gardens. The family will receive friends at Gorsline Runciman Funeral Homes, 1730 E. Grand River Ave, East Lansing, on Tuesday, March 17, from 2-4 and 6-8. In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the Haslett Community Church in his memory.

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## REMEMBER

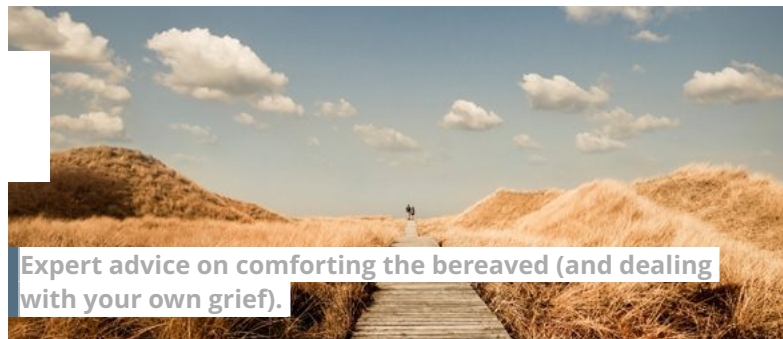
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## RESOURCES

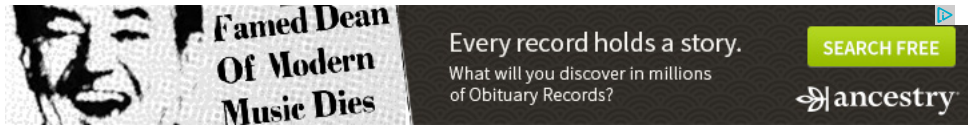
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