



DELAVAN - Michael Oliver Willette, 79, of Delavan, Minn., died at his home on Friday, March 20, 2009.

Visitation was at the Spencer-Owen Funeral Home in Winnebago Monday, March 23, from 4-7 p.m., with rosary and remembrances at 7 p.m.

A Mass of Christian burial was held Tuesday, March 24, at 11 a.m. at SS Peter and Paul Church in Blue Earth. Following a reception at the church, the burial took place in the afternoon at Calvary Cemetery in Prescott Township.

Mike was born March 18, 1930, in Winnebago, Minn., to Florence (Hynes) and Donald A. Willette. He graduated from Delavan High School and St. John's University, then joined the Navy and completed Officer Candidate School in Newport, R.I. He served on the USS Strong and stateside before returning home to farm with his father at the Willette Seed Farm. They were joined by brothers Pierre, Tom and Jan and continued the business until 2004. He was an active member of the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council and the American Soybean Association and past president of the Minnesota Crop Improvement Association. He traveled internationally to promote and market soybeans and was an initial board member of Corn Plus.



He married Joanne Heaton July 1, 1953, and settled in Prescott township in March 1956. He had been a lifelong member of Mater Dolorosa Catholic Church and the Faribault County DFL, and a strong supporter of the Delavan School through DHS Inc. He enjoyed his grandchildren's sporting events and his carpet garden, travel, Elderhostels, blackjack and Texas Hold'em, books on tape, photography, movies and his eclectic taste in music.

Mike is survived by his wife, Joie; children Kristin, Amy (Steve Firkins), Thomas (Rebecca Zurier), Kate (Darrel) Fuller, A. Melisse, Jonathan (Cathy), Molly (Joe) Reinemann, Megan (Larry) Kaduce, Allison (Paul Phifer); grandchildren Ezra, Kelly (Pawel Buda) and Michael

Firkins; April Stalker, Nathan and Aaron Willette; Stuart, Jacob, Kimberly and Walter Fuller; Jack Willette; Nolan and Katherine Brinkman; and Addison and Elliot Phifer. He is survived by his sister Mary Willette Hughes, and brothers DePaul (Judith), Pierre (Lorraine), Tomas (Nancy), and Jan (Linda), and cousins by the dozens. He is survived by his brother-in-law Russell (Lucille) Heaton, sisters-in-law Mary Gietzen, Neva (Phillip) Kurtz, and Virginia (Lloyd) Benz, all of North Dakota.

He is preceded in death by his parents and parents-in-law, sister-in-law Lois and brother-in-law William Gietzen, and many cousins, friends and colleagues.



*A man outstanding in his field*

*photo by Mike Willette*