

Dixon Ladd Harper

Dix Harper of Hickory, NC slipped peacefully into the arms of his Savior at 12:12 PM on Sunday, July 22, 2012. He had been in the loving care of Hospice House of Catawba Valley since July 2, 2012. Born on November 29, 1922 in Ames, Iowa, he was the son of the late Harlan and Joan Harper.

Mr. Harper was preceded in death by his wife, Shirley Harper, brother Harlan Harper and brother-in-law, Rev. Gene Lackore. He is survived by his wife, Harriet Harper of Hickory; daughter and son-in-law Susan and George Ciesla; son and daughter-in-law, Tod and Barbara; grandchildren, Jon and Nat Ciesla, Megan and Josh Harper; great grandchildren, Emma and Logan Ciesla and Julian Ciesla. Also surviving are his stepchildren, Amy Webb, Marsha and Jeff Webb; stepgrandchildren, Ashley Smith, Haley and McKenna Webb, Jasmin and Jimmy Khatib; and step great grandchildren, Sean Dillon, Layla Harrington and Carley Barnett. Mr. Harper's surviving siblings are Dorothy Likely, Roger and Shirley Harper, Joseph and Phyllis Harper, Mary Lackore, Lowell and Marcia Harper, and Karel and Jerry Hedrick.

Mr. Harper was a member of St. Luke's United Methodist Church and active in the CORE Sunday School class, the Psalter Choir and in volunteer work in the church office.

Dix graduated from Milford Township Consolidated School in 1940 and completed his degree in agricultural education with a minor in journalism from Iowa State College in 1948, having served in the Army Air Corps in the interim.

Harper's broadcasting career began in 1946 as a student assistant at WOI at Iowa State and he became farm director at WIOU in Kokomo, IN, in 1948. Harper moved to Indianapolis, IN in 1951 where he started the farm department at WIBC. He became farm news director of WLS in Chicago, IL in 1953.

From 1956 to 1975 Harper answered the need of farm broadcasters for national advertising support by working with three different advertising agencies, becoming vice president of two of them. In 1975 Harper and his wife headed south to Raleigh, NC where he was first sales manager, then administrative vice president and later publisher and manager of specialized agricultural magazines throughout the Southeast.

In 1982, Harper returned to broadcasting as director of agricultural productions for Tobacco Radio Network and WRAL-TV, retiring in 1992. At that time listeners and friends established the Dix Harper Scholarship Endowment at North Carolina State University.

As a farm broadcaster, Dix Harper was considered to be a legend. His love and support of the National Association of Farm Broadcasting is evident in the many offices he held and the honors conferred upon him by the membership. He was awarded their Meritorious Service Award in 1959, and in 2006 the name was changed to the Dix Harper Meritorious Service Award. Harper was given the highest honor of the association when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1998.

Visitation will be at 10:00 AM on Saturday, July 28, 2012 at St. Luke's United Methodist Church followed by a service of celebration at 11:30 AM.

In lieu of flowers you are requested to contribute to one of the following: St. Luke's UMC, 52 16th Ave. NW, Hickory, NC 28601, or Palliative Care Center and Hospice of Catawba Valley, 3975 Robinson Rd., Newton, NC 28658, or NAFB Scholarship Foundation.

Bass-Smith Funeral Home, Hickory, NC is in charge of arrangements.