



Dr. John J. Procknow

JAN 1, 1753 - OCT 1, 2012



Scan to Visit

PFISS & BILLS
POKLASNY
FUNERAL HOME

Table of Contents

Obituary	Page 3
-----------------------	--------



Dr. John J. Procknow

JAN 1, 1753 - OCT 1, 2012

John J. Procknow, passed on into eternity on Thursday evening, September 27, 2012 at Eden Meadows Rehabilitation Center. He was born on Dec. 9, 1916 in Oshkosh a son of the late George and Rosamond (Freda) Procknow. He is survived by his nieces, nephews and their spouses, Barbara and Donald Mand, Mary and Brad Wing, Barbara and John Nelson, Christine Nelson, and Paula Hayes; and their children and grandchildren, as well as his close friend Darren Vass. He was preceded in death by sisters, Jane Nelson and Ann Gronowski; a brother, George "Bud" Procknow. An Oshkosh native, he enrolled in the then Wisconsin State Teacher's College after graduating high school, but quit when he felt he wasn't ready for it. He worked for his brother at Campbell's Retail Store on Main Street, later commuted by train to an Appleton job, and then, still in his teens, worked retail for six months down in the Chicago Loop. With the encouragement from his brother he went back to college, earned a BS in Secondary Education and signed his first teaching contract (\$8000.00) in 1941 at Shawano High School. However, his draft number came up and the job was cancelled. He put off starting his teaching career, joined the US Air Force Ferrying Command, supplying British troops in Burma and elsewhere. At the time of Pearl Harbor, John's orders took him to North Africa and the Middle East attached to various commands as weather chief. He never got back to the states for further training, spending the entire war in the Middle East theatre at numerous US heavy bomber bases. He worked a long time at the now International Airport in Cairo, when Rommel was knocking at the door of Alexandria, and spent time in the Libyan desert, Palestine, Iraq and Iran. When the war ended, John decided in favor of becoming a doctor. He studied medicine at the University of Chicago Medical School. He completed his internship, residency and a fellowship at Chicago, eventually becoming Chief of the Department of Preventative Medicine and Infectious Diseases. He did a lot of research on myocological and viral respiratory



diseases. In the late sixties he was hired by the University of Southern California Medical School as a full professor and medical director of a respiratory disease hospital. John was also a medical consultant for four Los Angeles psychiatric hospitals. In 1980 he retired to Costa Rica, and built a lovely retreat on the Pacific Ocean. It was as if a dream had come true. A pool, servants, leisure - or so he thought! He soon found that retiring into the tropics, and doing very little, had its limitations. Socializing, drinking, swimming, and entertaining so many guests was not what he needed full time. While gardening interested him - sculpted a world-class lawn -- he found himself antsy to travel and to see more of the world. He took to traveling with a passion, returning to his Costa Rica home for a few months before taking off again. But steady leisure was not his way. He had been on safaris in Africa, taken trips down the Nile, been to Australia, New Zealand, Tahiti, China, Mongolia, Tibet, Kashmir, Cambodia to mention a few places. When John ran out of countries to visit, having traveled extensively on all continents, he felt another shift coming in his life. "It was part impulse," he said, "part fancy, and I knew I needed to move on." He sold most all of his belongings -- and his tropical home. With two suitcases full of valuables and a few momentos of his travels, a retired physician returned to Oshkosh. He took residence on the Paine riverfront property, got involved as a Paine Arboretum docent, did hospice work, earned Master Gardener status and for six years chaired a project creating "enabling gardens" at Parkview Health Center. While auditing select courses at UW Oshkosh on topics he now had time to pursue, a feeler flyer came to him with the proposal of a new lifelong learning program for the community. He had been on a dozen Elderhostel trips and appreciated the value and the opportunity of continued learning. John was one of the founding fathers of the Learning in Retirement organization and its first curriculum chair. John was coordinator of many symphony sessions, a series on religion, and Willam Waters. His taste in books leaned to history and biography. He was an opera buff, attending as often as he could the Madison Opera House and the Lyric Opera House in Chicago where as a young man he saw Callas, Tibaldi and other notable early opera stars perform when the Lyric fires reopened. He attended many symphony events yearly in Madison, Chicago, Milwaukee and at the PAC in Appleton. And he made good classical music,



Obituary

Dr. John J. Procknow

JAN 1, 1753 - OCT 1, 2012

Broadway fare, as well as certain jazz parts of his musical enjoyment. The only tip John had for those on the cusp of retiring was to simply stay involved. He was a walking witness that keeping your brain and limbs active could stave off the effects of aging. "Constant learning," he advised, "seems almost necessary. Crossword puzzles help you to remember, and keep those neuro transmitters honest, working, and stretching." John led a full life and now has gone on to join his God.

A Memorial Mass celebrating his life will be held on Monday, October 1, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. in Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, St. Peter Catholic Church, 435 High Ave. in Oshkosh with the Rev. Fr. James Jugenheimer as celebrant. A time of visitation will be held at the church on Monday from 1:00 p.m. until the time of Mass. Inurnment will be in Riverside Catholic Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, a memorial fund will be established. Fiss & Bills-Poklasny Funeral Home and Crematory 920-235-1170 www.fissbillspoklasny.com



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring John by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



Scan to Visit