

Father Ed Grimes dies at 91

The Reverend Edward D. Grimes, 91, died on April 9, 2008, at his home in Tavares, Florida, attended by Eloise, his wife of nearly 67 years. Born January 6, 1917 in Oak Park, Illinois, he knew Chicago in the days of home ice deliveries and when children fed apples to the horses pulling milk carts. His comfortable childhood ended, as it did for so many others, in 1929 on Black Thursday. At Austin High School, he particularly enjoyed ROTC and was commissioned a second lieutenant, Infantry Reserve, US Army, following graduation from the University of Illinois at Champaign in June, 1938, later attaining the rank of colonel.

In 1941 he married Eloise McTaggart of Auburn, Illinois. After their first date at the original Steak 'n Shake in Bloomington, they quickly agreed to marry, but waited so that Eloise could complete her first year of teaching -- married teachers not being permitted at the time. They had a full military wedding at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, walking an arch of crossed sabers. Soon a Liberty ship delivered Ed for military service to India. Arriving shortly after the huge Fort Stikine explosion in Bombay, Grimes served as port historian for that naval disaster before being transferred to Calcutta to work with the Transportation Corps.

After the war, he resumed activities with the Illinois Central Railroad. He and Eloise adopted two children, Dean and Mary Ellen, and fostered Ann Elizabeth, whom they adopted many years later as an adult in 1982. The couple made their home in Springfield and chose to remain there because of the fellowship they found at Christ Episcopal Church. The hard earned lessons of the depression years served Ed well as a husband and father who provided well for his family. His retirement from the Illinois Central after 31 years permitted Ed and Eloise to travel extensively in Europe and throughout the US, wearing out four motor homes and enjoying many cruises.

His retirement from both the railroad and the military also allowed him to fulfill a dream, to study to be ordained a priest in 1973. Assisting at Christ Church and serving as a supply priest in the Diocese of Springfield, always on a non-stipendiary basis, Fr. Grimes exhibited a very special strength over a 35-year ministry by focusing on the care of the sick. He faithfully visited hospitals and nursing homes to help the infirm with their spiritual needs while extending a hand in friendship. His ministry led him to become a Chaplain for the Order of St. Luke. He celebrated a weekly healing service at Christ Episcopal Church for over twenty-five years. After moving full time to Brooksville, Florida, Fr. Grimes began a Wednesday morning healing service at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Spring Hill. He considered himself blessed still to be serving in that capacity until after he turned 90 years old. He was very moved by the church's celebrations in recognition of his 90th birthday and 65th wedding anniversary, and delighted in the spirit of fellowship he continued to find at St. Andrew's Church. A memorial service was held for him there on April 27th.

Ed and Eloise had recently moved to their new home in Tavares to be near their son. There Ed was diligently cared for by his family, and was much loved and well respected. His ashes will be interred later in Auburn, Illinois, where his wife's family is buried.