

realize how much, or how much he'd be missed. The overwhelming pain we feel at his loss is a sharp reminder of how blessed we were to have him, especially for so long.

Harold received terrific medical care from his doctors at Via Christi Clinic in Wichita and UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles. The family wishes to thank the medical team at UCLA Santa Monica Hospital, and particularly the folks at Studio City Rehabilitation Center, whose dotting and loving care made his final days comfortable and pain free.



Harold & Ada, 13 May 1984

Preceding him in death were his wife of 45 years, Ada, his brother, Dallas, and sister, Mary Barnes, both of Howard, KS. He is survived by three sons — Myron (and wife, Elaine), of Lompoc, CA, Dallas (and wife, Diana), of Austin, TX, and Ron, of Toluca Lake, CA; granddaughters Angie (and husband, Paul) Hamlin and Cynthia Webster, of Lompoc, CA; a great granddaughter, Alyssa Hamlin, of Lompoc, CA; numerous nephews, nieces, and cousins; and countless friends in Kansas, California, and Texas, many of whom were regarded as family.

A memorial service was held October 13, 2011, at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Wichita, KS.

Please visit www.the-websters.org to reminisce or share your own memories of this incredible man.



Harold Webster,...



12 June 2011

...beloved husband and father, and devoted friend, passed away August 29, 2011, in Studio City, CA. He was 99 years young.

Born January 18, 1912, on a farm east of Howard, KS, Harold moved to Wichita in the 1930s. He worked in the city's budding civil aviation industry, first at Cessna, then for over 35 years at Beech Aircraft Corporation (1941–1977) as a Planner. Harold had the honor of being chosen as the employees' union representative for the Walter Beech Memorial in 1952. He was passionate about air travel, and even had a pilot's license in the early 1940s.

He was among the first to attend Woodlawn (Avenue) Baptist Church when it was built in 1953; he greatly enjoyed his church family and

found much comfort in his faith. Socially engaging by nature, he relished meeting new people, and was quick to greet new neighbors and welcome them to the neighborhood. He was such a lovely and endearing man, and ever childlike in his enjoyment of people. Anyone he met instantly became a friend for life.

After retirement, he occupied himself with travels to visit his family, and volunteering in service to seniors—first as a Meals on Wheels driver, and most recently serving meals every weekday to seniors (many of whom were considerably younger than he) at the Boston Park Recreation Center.

Having driven through much of the contiguous 48 states, “Poppy” (as Ron called him) had an uncannily accurate cognitive map of the U.S. highway system. Off the top of his head, he could tell you the most efficient route between nearly any two places in the U.S. At the age of 89, and based solely on his trips to Buffalo, NY, more than 20 years earlier, he provided a friend with the simplest route from LA to Boston (including landmarks), even though he had never actually been to Massachusetts!

He had a charming inattentiveness and simplicity of outlook whereby essential details frequently failed to register, especially in the abstract. As a result, he was often inadvertently funnier than the most renowned professional comedians.

For example, during one of his visits to California, the local tennis club was undergoing major construction. The clubhouse had been demolished, and during construction of a larger, more elaborate facility, a trailer was moved onto the property to serve as a temporary clubhouse.

Harold had been informed of all this in advance. Nevertheless, the first time he climbed the steps of the temporary clubhouse, he looked it over and asked, in total sincerity, “Wasn’t it better before?”

On another occasion, he was at a restaurant with Myron and Dallas. Taking his order, the waitress asked him if he wanted soup or salad, and he replied, “Super salad sounds good.”

He was generous, perhaps to a fault. He always remembered birthdays and anniversaries, ran errands for others, and once even gave his nearly new LCD television to a friend who was temporarily confined to a nursing home. But his generosity was contagious, and he was readily “adopted” by friends and strangers alike, who enthusiastically looked out for him.



Circa mid 1930s

Always vibrant and active, belying his age, he was still going strong at 99.

He survived kidney cancer, and the removal of a kidney, back in 1957. That alone would have made him remarkable.

He thrived for nearly 20 years after double-bypass surgery, and at the age of 98 was still living on his own, entirely independent, attending church events every week, going out with friends, running errands for others, visiting family and friends in the hospital or nursing homes, and volunteering daily in service to seniors. That alone would have made him remarkable.

In his 80s and 90s, he was still driving from Wichita to Los Angeles (approximately 1,400 miles) and back, by himself, every year, in two-and-a-half days each way, like clockwork. Amazing! His last solo drive to LA was in November 2010, just two months before his 99th birthday! That alone would have made him remarkable.

Even in his last few, failing, days, his mind remained sharp and his memory intact. He still had recall of places and dates, and remembered essential details about people, some of whom he hadn’t seen in years. Moreover, his quirky and endearing character was still evident—e.g., when a nurse asked him “How are you today?” he answered “Not good, or I wouldn’t be here.”

He won the hearts of his caregivers, some of whom took to calling him “Papa,” just in the brief time he was with them. They marveled that he looked much younger than his 99 years and was still mentally sharp.

His persevering youthfulness and mental clarity, even as sick as he was, alone would have made him remarkable.

But all of these in combination speak of a man who was beyond remarkable. Harold was an institution, a genuine icon. He was an inspiration to everyone who knew him even briefly. He showed us all how to live well during our “elder years”—indeed, he established a whole new and extraordinary standard for senior living.

It seemed he might well live forever. But now he’s gone, and our hearts are broken. He was deeply and thoroughly loved, and probably didn’t