



# LeRoy Patterson

JAN 19, 1922 - APR 5, 2008



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## **LeRoy Patterson**

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**L**eRoy Benjamin (Ben) Patterson, 86, was the second son born to William D. Patterson and Hilda Vera (Stauf) Patterson in Marysville, Kansas, on January 19, 1922.

A willing worker even as a child, he helped with the family garden, sold magazines and had a paper route. During high school, he worked at the Triangle Drug Store as soda jerk, stock boy, and clerk. For nearly all of his school years, as his older brother played "Taps" at local veterans' funerals, Ben played the echo from farther out. He graduated from Marysville High School in 1940.

That fall, Ben entered Kansas State College in Chemical Engineering, enlisted in ROTC, and pledged Theta Xi fraternity. The following year he met his future wife, Jean Nickerson of Bushton, Kansas, in an English literature class.

His ROTC class was drafted in June 1943, shipped to Camp Callan, California, and assigned to the Coast Artillery. On October 17, 1944, Ben graduated as a Second Lieutenant from Ft. Benning, Georgia, and on October 19 married Jean in St. Louis, Missouri. They had four months together at Ft. Monroe in Anniston, Alabama, before he was shipped out to fight in Germany (78th Division, 311th Company E) as an infantry platoon leader. He saw his first combat shortly after they crossed the Rhine River at Remagen, Germany. Promoted to First Lieutenant, he saw another eighteen months' service in occupation near Bremerhaven, Germany.

After Ben was discharged from active service in July 1946, he and Jean returned to Kansas State to finish their degrees. Ben graduated with a BS in Chemical Engineering in September 1947.

He started his professional career with Chemical Solvents at Terre Haute, Indiana, the following month and was transferred to their plant at Sterlington, Louisiana in 1950.

Hired in September, 1954, by Atlas Chemical Company, he worked at their Joplin, Missouri, ammonium nitrate plant for six months; was transferred to headquarters in Wilmington,



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Delaware, for six years developing and designing their expanding Joplin plant; then returned to Carthage, Missouri, for the start-up of their new fertilizer plant. In 1961, Atlas Chemical sent Ben and another young engineer to study the Dutch States Mine Urea process so that the two of them could write the Operations Manual.

In April, 1963, Ben went to work for the new Hawkeye Chemical Company in Clinton, Iowa. He was responsible for hiring supervisors and overseeing production start up. He retired as Production Vice President after 22 years of service.

Ben's volunteer activities have centered around his church and other related organizations. He has served the Diaconate Board of First Congregational Church in Clinton and was an Elder of Presbyterian churches in Elsmere, Delaware; Carthage, Missouri; Monroe, Louisiana; and Clinton, Iowa. Drawing on his fund raising skills, Ben helped to add to two church school buildings, to pave a church parking lot, and to build the new Salvation Army Citadel on First Avenue in Clinton. Even though he had two daughters and no sons, he worked with the Boy Scout district management team, serving three years as District Chairman. He was awarded the highest honor in Boy Scouting---a Silver Beaver? in 1976.

Reading has been his first and most constant hobby. Photography and an early dark room run a close second; as do gardening in nearly every place that he and Jean called home and being a do-it-yourself home remodeler.

Ben's love of travel was whetted by the railroad passes his Dad got by clerking for Union Pacific. Ben's working in many locations made it possible to enjoy family trips by car all over the United States, plus a trip to Puerto Rico. He arranged many tours to overseas destinations, including Spain, England, Belgium, Finland, Greece, Egypt, China, Russia, France and Italy. As members of Friendship Force, he and Jean visited New Zealand and Australia, Russia, and Austria, and Ben led an exchange group of 46 to Japan. As members of the Plus 60 Club, they took bus tours of France and Ireland and cruised the Carribean, the Panama Canal, and the Inland Waterway to Alaska. Ben and Jean researched family history in the United States plus Scotland, Germany, and Wales.

Once Ben retired, he had time to be an active Shrine member---playing in the Shrine Oriental Band, selling fund-raising onions, and being their long-time treasurer. He was active in Masonic Hi-12, holding several offices before being elected President. He was also active in the Masonic Booster Breakfast Club, where he was program chairman for many years before becoming



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President. Ben enjoyed his daily four-mile round trip walk to join a group of retired business men for morning coffee for more than twenty years.

In 2004, he and Jean moved into the Regency and enjoyed 3½ good years before he succumbed to his multiple health problems at Eagle Point Nursing & Rehabilitation Center on April 5, 2008.

He is survived by daughters Patty (Loren) Mellendorf of Scottsdale, Arizona, and Peggy (Bill) Munson of Goldendale, Washington; four grandchildren, Peggy (Steve) Gawron, of Plainfield, Illinois, John and Jennifer Munson of Portland, Oregon, and Karen Munson of Seattle-Tacoma, Washington; and three step-great-grandchildren, Jacob, Ian, and Sophia Gawron.

He was preceded in death by his parents, his brother David, sisters-in-law Mavis Patterson and Christine Patterson, and brother-in-law Don Nickerson.

Funeral Services and a Masonic Rose Criox Service will be 10:30am, Thursday, April 10, 2008 at the First Congregational Church, Clinton. Visitation will be Wednesday from 4:00-7:00pm at the Clinton Chapel Snell-Zornig Funeral Home and Crematory. Burial will be Friday at the Marysville Cemetery in Marysville, Kansas.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorials be made to the First Congregational Church, to the Shrine Children's Hospital in Chicago, to the Alzheimers Association, or to the charity of the giver's choice.



## Tribute Wall

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**Ruth Fatchett** posted:

My thoughts and prayers are with you all--I know Mr. Patterson loved and was proud of his family. He was a wonderful boss and I was honored to know him.

April 4 at 7:00 PM



## **Memories only last if you share them**

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



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