



Arnold William Blomquist

November 10, 1936 - August 10, 2015

Arnold William Blomquist 78, of Felch MI, Niceville FL, and Bloomington MN passed away on August 10, 2015. Arne was born on November 10, 1936 in Metropolitan, Michigan, the son of the late William and Ellen (Johnson) Blomquist. Known for his strength of character and physical constitution, Arne used his extraordinary intelligence and bold leadership to spearheaded many projects. His long, successful life spanned diverse accomplishments from hands-on farming to PhD-level academia, being an Air Force captain to an entrepreneurial businessman. He had deep family roots, a 55-year marriage, involvement in business and home construction, local and international Lutheran church development, and helping design, launch, and administer Tumaini University in Iringa, Tanzania.

He is survived by wife Mary, daughters Katherine (Mike Eaton) Blomquist of Minnesota and Christina (Brian Lincoln) Blomquist of California, brother Roger (Trish) Blomquist of Minnesota, sister Rose Marie Siegler of Michigan and many nieces and nephews.

Arne was raised on the family farm outside Felch, Michigan. He was valedictorian of his high school class in 1954 and earned his college tuition by raising potatoes on the family farm. In 1953, at age 17, he was listed by the faculty of Agronomy at Michigan State University as achieving the highest per acre yield of any potato farmer in Michigan for that year. In 1954 he began his college education at Michigan State University and received his Bachelor of Science in 1958, studying Agricultural Education and Engineering. Arne

earned his master's degree in Plant Genetics at the University of Minnesota in 1960 and began working on his PhD in the same field.

He and Mary Osborn, a fellow student he met in a graduate-level statistics class, were married on June 26, 1960 in Dexter, Iowa. Both Arne and Mary went on to complete PhDs at the U of M. Arne then entered the US Air Force where he served as a project engineer until being honorably discharged as a Captain at the end of 1965. The next year, he began working as a biomedical engineer for Litton Industries, where he developed several patents for medical instrumentation. In 1970 Arne started an environmental engineering laboratory and planning company, National Biocentric, Inc, which he headed until 1985 when he left to serve as the Director of Agribusiness Development for the State of Minnesota. Following his term as director, he led a group of Minnesota farmers working toward the development of a co-op to produce high fructose corn syrup. Arne was elected president of the Minnesota Association of Environmental Professionals in 1977 and of the National Association of Environmental Professionals in 1978.

Active in the Lutheran church all of his life, Arne was elected to the first national Board of Directors for the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA). In the mid-1980s he headed the first Companion Synod Relationship of the ELCA formed with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania (ELCT), and led many groups to that country. As a result of this successful companion relationship, the ELCA has sponsored similar relationships between each synod of the United States and countries around the world.

At the invitation of Bishop Owdenberg Mdegella of Iringa, Tanzania, Arne and his wife Mary developed plans to build a Lutheran seminary in Tanzania, East Africa, involving both Tanzanians and Americans in the planning. He and Mary became ELCA developmental missionaries and moved to Tanzania in 1993 to make the seminary become a reality. After recognizing the need for increased university-level education in Tanzania, the Tanzanian Parliament invited Arne and Bishop Mdegella to speak in support of changing legislation to enable the development of private universities. Until that time, only the government of

Tanzania had been allowed to provide university-level education and, with meager resources, could produce only an extremely small number of university-educated Tanzanians. Subsequent to the successful passing of this legislation, Tumauni University in Iringa, Tanzania was founded by Bishop Owdenberg Mdegella, Dr. Arnold Blomquist, and Dr. Mary Blomquist. As the first Provost of Tumauni University in Iringa, Arne was responsible for raising funds, designing the campus, securing faculty, developing curriculum, and recruiting students. During the (nine) years that Arne and Mary lived in Tanzania, Arne also raised funds for and supported the building of churches, schools, orphanages and other social institutions.

In 2001, Arne was recognized as an outstanding alumnus by the University of Minnesota for his work in Tanzania. Presently there are about 15,000 students studying at the six campuses of Tumauni University. Arne retired as Provost in 2001 but returned to Africa annually for many years. After his retirement, he served as an advisor to the university Board of Directors.

The achievement of which Arne was perhaps most proud was that the university continues to impact countless lives under completely African leadership.

Arne believed in the importance of family, community, and history. He organized many large family reunions in the Felch area where he grew up, acted as the family genealogist, and taught the history of his Swede-Finn heritage. He and his family built a cabin on a property near where he grew up and maintained a strong connection to the area throughout his life.

Arne was noted for his dedication, determination, and effectiveness in promoting the many causes he embraced. As one ELCA Lutheran Pastor recently stated, "It wasn't but 5 minutes after I met Arne that he had secured my promise that our church would support the building of the new seminary and university in Tanzania. And that was as good a move for our church here in the USA as it was for the mission in Africa." Many thousands of people, including supporters and volunteers who traveled to Iringa from other parts of

the world, as well as Tanzanian students and families, have thanked Arne for “changing their lives”. Changing lives is what he was about.

Visitation will be on Saturday, August 15th from 9:00-11:00am at Zion Lutheran Church in Metropolitan, MI Funeral services will follow at 11:00am on Saturday at the church. Rev. Lori Liverance will officiate.

A memorial service will also be held at the University of Iringa in Iringa, Tanzania

Burial will be in the Felch Cemetery. A burial spot is also reserved for him on the campus of the University of Iringa (formerly Tumbani University) in Tanzania.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made in his memory to, Family Ties Adult Day Care, 800 Crystal Lake Blvd. Iron Mountain, MI 49801.

Condolences to the family of Arnold Blomquist may be expressed online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home with the arrangements.

Cemetery Details

Felch Cemetery

Felch, MI

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 15. 9:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church
W4703 Metropolitan Rd.
Felch, MI 49831

Funeral Service

AUG 15. 11:00 AM (CT)

Zion Lutheran Church
W4703 Metropolitan Rd.
Felch, MI 49831

Tribute Wall



“ I know for certain that we never lose the people we love, even to death. They continue to participate in every act, thought and decision we make. Their love leaves an indelible imprint in our memories. We find comfort in knowing that our lives have been enriched by having shared their love.

Mary and Family, May God give you strength to go on....knowing that Arne is resting in peace among the Angels.

David Muwowo (First met the Blomquist family in 1993 in Iringa Tanzania)

Kapondo Muwowo - September 14, 2015 at 04:59 AM

DD

“ *Mary, Rose and Roger, Our deepest Sympathies to all of your families. Our hearts reach out to you in thought and our prayers are for all of you. We thank God for His promises to all of His children who believe on Him as Lord and Savior and we celebrate that we will all be together again one day.*

Aly and Deb Dixon and Girls

Debra Dixon - August 25, 2015 at 06:42 PM

EB

“ Dear Mary!

We were neighbors a few years, and long time has passed, and now we live far apart on the globe, but you will stay close in our hearts and minds always. We know family and friends supporting you in this moment surround you. Please count us in also, invisible, but out there somewhere, sharing your loss, and some of your rich memories.

Erik & Marianne Berglund, Bollebygd, Sweden

Erik & Marianne Berglund - August 25, 2015 at 05:24 AM

NP

“ *Mary, I feel privileged to have met and stayed with you and Arne in Tanzania. I have enjoyed those connections since then and cherish the memories at your homes in Ipogoro. My deepest condolences to you and your entire family.*

I loved Arne's laugh and his willingness to share his thoughts and teaching of life and philosophy in Tanzania. Blessings and love to you.

Nancy Peterson

Nancy Peterson - August 24, 2015 at 02:37 PM

RL

“ *Dear Roger and Rosie,*

I didn't know Arne very well, but what a life he led! Sorry to hear about his passing.

Sincerely,

Randy LaLonde

Randall LaLonde - August 17, 2015 at 10:35 AM

RW

“ I remember when Ps Chuck Claus brought Arne and Mary to St. Paul, Davenport. What great examples of the christian life. He created the model for missionary outreach by guiding the Tanzanians in creating the university
My thoughts and prayers to Mary and the rest of the family.
Peace be with you always.

Rick Withycombe - August 13, 2015 at 09:38 PM

MJ

“ We thank God for the opportunity to know Arne and to have shared special times with him during our time in Felch. He faithfully carried out his call from our Lord to share the gospel no matter in what venue he found himself. We carry memories of our conversations over coffee and meals. Our sympathies to Mary and the family.

Pr Bill and Melzee Jacobson

Melzee Jacobson - August 13, 2015 at 06:14 PM

DW

“ Mary, I feel so privileged to have had the opportunity to get to know Arne and you. Although I only became acquainted with you both in the last months it was always apparent that you were very, very special people. What great contributions both you and Arne have made through the years touched the lives of so many, many people. His was a life well lived - take comfort in the many memories, your friends, your family along with God's blessings. lots of love, Darlene Wilkes

Darlene Wilkes - August 12, 2015 at 04:31 PM