



Kenneth M. Merrill

Community Service

A native of Sioux Falls, born on July 23, 1940, Kenneth Marvin Merrill attended the South Dakota School for the (SDSD) at the age of four. He graduated from the school in 1959, fifteen years later and ever since then he always considered the SDSD as his home- away-from home.

"I would not be what I am today if not for my wonderful education and family life at SDSD" he had often mentioned to his many friends in and around Sioux Falls. Following graduation from SDSD, Merrill attended Southern State College in Springfield and earned a diploma in drafting in 1961. After a brief stint as an employee at the Department of Transportation in Pierre, South Dakota, he moved to California and worked for the March Air Force Base in Riverside, CA. There, he met and married his lifelong love, Billie Lee Stout, on August 1, 1964, in Los Angeles, CA. Together, they raised a close-knit family, a daughter, Kathryn Dorsett, currently a resident in Rochester, Minnesota; and three sons, Marvin, John and Benjamin, all of them residing in Sioux Falls today.

Merrill and his family eventually moved to several cities, to Cheyenne, Wyoming where he worked for the F.E. Warren Air Force Base; the Reese Air Force Base in Lubbock, Texas; and Bountiful, Utah for a job with the United States Geological Survey in Salt Lake City. In 1995, they returned to his beloved home state of South Dakota where Merrill was employed by the Communication Service for the Deaf (CSD) in various capacities.

Community Service and volunteerism were second nature for Merrill throughout his adult life. He was always an active volunteer and always encouraged and supported others to try and make a difference. Nothing, he would insist, is more rewarding than helping someone or a good cause. He knew that there were many opportunities in our community to make a difference and he would take the initiative, alone or with others, to make them happen, as can be evidenced by a close friend who remembered him saying this, in his own words: "there are no words to describe the satisfaction of seeing a deaf child smile when his dream is filled." Such a caring person he was, with a sense of responsibility for the success of others, especially the deaf children in their formative years.

He was a lifelong member of the Chicago Cubs Diehard Fan Club. He loved all sports and played them as often as he could, especially golf, bowling and softball, the three most popular activities of the deaf and Herd community of Sioux Falls.

Merrill passed away at the age 65 on February 22, 2006 at the Avera McKennan Medical Center with his beloved family by his side.