



HERMAN 'WINKS' GUNDLACH

HOUGHTON — "Doctor" Herman "Winks" Gundlach, lifelong Houghton resident and past owner of Herman Gundlach, Inc. building construction, died unexpectedly, but gracefully, on Thursday, May 5, 2005, at St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minn.

After bidding farewell to dinner guests on Sunday, Winks suffered a stroke and was flown to the Mayo Clinic where he was conscious until his final farewell and was never left alone. His assistant of 47 years, Marie B. Savella, accompanied him and awaited the arrival of daughters, Julie and Martha; granddaughter, Michelle Rivet, and Betty McCaw. Pastor Dave Weber and physical therapist, Mr. Kelly Hrbinski, made the trek from Houghton and back on Tuesday; and Bill Verrette of Gundlach-Champion arrived just in time at the bedside vigil. Many friends, relatives and colleagues phoned and/or tried so hard to get through, in support of Winks' last spirited effort.

The obituary of his father before him, Herman Sr., who died 60 years ago, could serve for Winks, a "Chip Off the Old Block." Construction and community projects may at times differ in specifics but are similar in place and spirit.

(June 1945) "Hearts are heavy today for Mr. Gundlach Sr.'s passing has brought genuine sorrow to all who knew and loved him. He was a type of citizen it is so hard to lose and his death is a severe blow to the community and to the district. In all respects, he was an exemplar of the best ideals of good citizenship. His irreplaceable life, his many friendships, his sympathetic understanding, his genial companionship, and his earnest effort for the furtherance of any worthy cause provide a better eulogy than any friend, however deep his (or her) respect, could put into words.

"All of this was recognized and appreciated by those in association with him and to them his passing has come with shocking pain. He was so kindly, so friendly, so cooperative in all he was called upon to do that the highest encomium that can be paid to him is that he was a fine, upright citizen of the highest integrity who took

seriously his duties, both in his business and community life. "As a building contractor throughout all the years of his adult life, Mr. Gundlach Sr. built many school, college and business structures. He gave personal supervision to all details and scrupulously rendered the best of service in workmanship and materials.

A large number of the Copper Country's outstanding buildings were built under Mr. Gundlach Sr.'s supervision. In addition to structures at the college, they include the Houghton Masonic Temple, the Painesdale High School and Gymnasium, the South Range and Tapiola Schools, the Dee buildings, the Douglass House, the Suomi College Auditorium, and the modern new home office building of Detroit and Northern Michigan Building and Loan Association in Hancock." (Note: Remember that this is from the obituary of Winks' dad!)

"Mr. Gundlach Sr. was a director and president of the Douglass Hotel Company and part-owner of the Huron building. He took a prominent part in many civic enterprises and at the time of his passing was a member of district draft-board No. 1... (He) was instrumental in the organization of relief in Portage Township during the depression days and was president of this group.

For a number of years Mr. Gundlach Sr. was chairman of the annual drive of the Houghton County Chapter of the American Red Cross and his work in this endeavor was crowned with outstanding success.

He took charge of the direction of the campaign with enthusiasm and zeal and, in addition to obtaining large contributions himself, was instrumental in inspiring his community chairman to great effort.

"As a member of the Houghton Rotary Club and a past president, Mr. Gundlach Sr. was deeply interested in all its activities and served on numerous committees and as a director.

He took keen pleasure in his association with his friends in the club and each year was host at the annual picnic at his summer home at Stonington, a gathering to which all looked forward with the greatest of anticipation.

"Mr. Gundlach Sr. was a member of the board of directors of the Good Will Farm and for many years, chairman of the finance committee. In this capacity, he gave valuable ser-

vice, devoting a great deal of his time to the affairs of the institution. He had a deep and abiding interest in the home and a warm affection for its boys and girls. In this and in other affairs to which he gave personal attention, he was most generous and thoughtful. His deeds were but the manifestations of a great and understanding heart.

Whatever he undertook to do, Mr. Gundlach Sr. always carried out his mission with thoroughness and finality. In many ways, as a citizen and leader, he will be difficult to replace.

Among other local and distant mentors was his beloved mother, Elvira A. Zenner Gundlach. For half a century he carried with him a note from her which read: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matt. 5:16." Her own obituary describes the maternal influence of Winks' Mrs. Gundlach Sr. was a devout member and ardent worker for the SS Peter and Paul Lutheran Church. She was an active member of the Dorcas Society and the church's Altar Guild.

"The passing of Mrs. Gundlach Sr. takes from the community a beloved matron whose cheerful, benevolent, motherly presence was welcomed by all who were privileged to know her. She contributed willingly and generously of her time to all community and neighborhood affairs."

Winks' main influence and confidante for half a century was Barbara Kettle Gundlach. "Gunny" began pursuing "Bobbie" in 1933 at Harvard where she became "Kets". Upon her death on Mother's Day, May 8, 1983, her Gunny donated the funds for the Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter House in Calumet. Pastor Sam Oliver gave us a flavor of Barbara's impact on Winks:

"She was an able, even brilliant woman, one whose competence covered a broad range of interests: music, art, literature, religion, social ethics, philosophy—so much more;

and it was not just an interest but a knowledge of these things, an understanding of them, that gave her the ability to speak with some authority—she had the unique ability to affirm and lift up those around her, to inspire them, to move them, to give them a vision.

Some have said that in many things she was ahead of her time, that the things she was thinking about, and the causes that commanded her attention, were sometimes issues that most of us were not ready to address—at least, not yet."

Winks' hometown, university, state and other communities faithfully chronicled his lifetime activities and contributions; and for those who may have interest in a few little-known facts (which Winks would say are "trivial"), a summary will appear separately in the Gazette. At the Memorial Service in July 2005, old and new stories will surely continue to be shared by all.

Here, may it suffice to say that Herman Walter Gundlach was born July 16, 1913, at the house his father built on Douglass Avenue in Houghton. Area fun and games for Winkie started in the sandlot, street and neighborhood clubhouse, and it never stopped until he left for Worcester Academy in Massachusetts.

After Harvard and work with Sinclair Refining Company, he married Barbara Jane Kettle in 1938 and started a family. Upon the untimely death of his dad, Herman Sr., and returning from Europe at the end of WW II, Winks assembled a team, including his sisters, to rekindle his dad's construction company in Houghton and to try his best to be a good husband, dad, brother, cousin and friend.

As he said at a Houghton High School Commencement, he believed in "the collective efforts of all of us" to resolve conflicts, "to live and act with a social conscience, according to a rigorous affirmation of the rights of all to an improved quality of life." He concluded, "Go for it. Go for that."

Herman "Winks" "Herms" "Gunny" "Sta Dads" Gundlach

was preceded in death by his parents; sisters, Henriette, Doratheia and Elvira; wife, Barbara; grandson, Gil Marc Rivet; paternal (Blum-Gundlach) aunt, uncles and cousins; maternal (Trommer-Zenner) aunts, uncles and cousins, especially Alice, Bobby and William "Butch" Zenner and Mary Lou Zenner Reynolds; and many of his old buddies.

Surviving are all four daughters, Gretchen, who is helping to raise her granddaughter, Hannah Powell, in Logan, Utah; Martha and her husband, Andre Bellamy, who live in Milolii, Hawaii, next door to Janna (Of Milolii Farms) and lifelong Gundlach friends, Pat Sinclair (of Pat's Hawaii Avocados) and Frank Fasana (a landscaper formerly of Houghton); and Julie and her husband, Charles Woods, the architect in Northeast Pennsylvania. Surviving their "Nice Grampa" are Julie Rivet of Richmond, Utah and her daughter, (again, Hannah Powell); Jillian Rivet of Amarillo, Texas; and Michelle Rivet of New York City. First cousins, Barb, Martha, Fred and Louis Zenner also survive, along with the extended Zenner-Stone-Reynolds family. Last, but certainly not least, others just as sorry to see Winks go are special friends, Marie "Mil" Savella, Betty J. McCaw, (Mrs. Preemption) of Preemption, Illinois; Carl and Irene Lefebvre ("Units 1 and 2") and legions of "best" friends and distant but beloved relatives.

Cremation took place in Rochester, Minn., and the ashes will be buried next to Barbara's at Forest Hill Cemetery in Houghton. In deference to Winks' wish, there will be no funeral, but his daughters are planning a memorial celebration on July 16, 2005. Pastor Dave Weber will participate. Of course, Winks' favorite charity is the Barbara Kettle Gundlach Shelter House in Calumet. "Go for it," Winks!

AARP Michigan Louis E. LaGrand Ph.D. Grief Specialist & Author Exploring the Extraordinary Experiences of the Bereaved Finlandia University Finnish American Heritage Center Monday May 16 1-4 & 7-9 p.m.

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