

In Memory of Gustavus J. Esselen III

July 15, 2007

Dear Friends and Family,

Many of you may have already heard that our father, Gustavus John Esselen, III, 85, of Hobe Sound, Florida, and formerly of Darien, Connecticut, died on June 28, 2007, at Fairview Red Wing Medical Center, in Red Wing, Minnesota. Dad was a wonderful, loving, fun, and generous father, husband and friend.

Over the years, we had the great privilege of knowing his many friends including former classmates, business associates from all over the world, neighbors, golfing buddies, war time friends from the U. S. Army Air Transport Command (Pan Am), as well as friends made in just the past few years. The qualities of Dad's friends clearly reflected his own warmth, intelligence, integrity and joie de vivre. Our lives have been enriched by Dad's friends and we are especially grateful for the support we received from them over the last year of Dad's life.

Dad was born on April 5, 1922, in Swampscott, Massachusetts, the son of Dr. Gustavus John Esselen, Jr., and Henrietta W. Locke. We remember his New England accent – but in later years it showed up only occasionally.

After graduating from Phillips Exeter Academy in 1940, Gus attended Harvard College from 1940 – 1943. World War II interrupted his education, and he served in the U. S. Army Air Transport Command from 1943 – 1946. He completed his college degree, earning an S. B. (yes, back then it was an S. B. degree) in Engineering Sciences and Applied Physics from Harvard in 1947.

He married the light of his life, Marjorie Aline Boucher on June 24, 1944, in Coconut Grove Florida. Just prior to his death, Mom and Dad celebrated their 63rd wedding anniversary. Mom and Dad's love for each other is legendary and is a fundamental bond and inspiration for our entire family.

Gus' career in the chemical industry resulted in many relocations over the years. He worked for his father at Esselen Research Corporation in Boston beginning in 1947 until the company merged with U. S. Testing in 1950, when he transferred to New Jersey with responsibilities in sales. In 1953, Pittsburgh Coke & Chemical Co. recruited him for a sales position, and the family (then 5 in number) moved to Pittsburgh, staying until 1964, when he returned to New York to work for C. P. Steuber and Company. In 1968, he founded his own company, Esselen Associates, which dealt in the international marketing, trading, and transportation of industrial chemicals, bulk liquids, and gases. Gus was highly successful in his trade and was recognized throughout the industry as a man of honesty and integrity – one whose word was a promise, and whose confidence could always be trusted.

Family was very important to Gus, and he made it possible for all to gather on a regular basis – children, grandchildren and even aunts, uncles, and cousins assembled for celebrations, with Gus in charge of every last detail; somehow he always found time to be the consummate host!

Gus, with Marge beside him, loved travel – they had many adventures all over the world together, and while he tired of the endless cathedrals and museums, he eagerly anticipated mussels in Brussels, seafood in Venice and sumptuous dinners at wonderful hotels. Rumor has it that they managed to find the honeymoon suite wherever they were.

Gus' grandchildren, eight wonderful young adults now, all benefited from their Pops' sage advice... he was a role model, mentor, friend, fellow Wahoo fisherman, and golfing buddy. He was always interested in their doings, whether educational in nature, their prowess in athletic endeavors or their chosen careers. He was a very proud grandfather.

Dad was not only extraordinarily generous to his family, but he also established many ways to make important contributions to charity and education. Chief among these accomplishments are The Esselen Family Fund, and scholarship gifts to Harvard University and Hood College.

As many of you know, he also established the Gustavus John Esselen Award for Chemistry in the Public Interest in 1987 to honor his father. This is one of the most prestigious honors provided by the Northeastern Section of the American Chemical Society and has been granted now to twenty-one highly qualified chemists including two Nobel Prize winners.

Because of Dad's careful planning, all of these exemplary philanthropic programs will continue in his memory.

It was so sad to see his health deteriorate over the last year and a half, and to see him worry about how to shed his role as chief cook and bottle washer and primary caregiver for Mom, following her stroke in 2004. Even to the end he was concerned that Mom's needs were being met, and that we were paying the proper attention to all the details of his affairs. Today there is a hole in our lives as we assume the responsibilities he helped us learn, but he's there in our memories with the checklist to keep us on the straight and narrow path.

Thank you all for your support and friendship as we honor the life of our father.

*Sincerely,
Joan Foot, Jane Blocker, and Jack Esselen*