

David A. Doebler

Veteran

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The Express



David Arthur Doebler, a former president of the National Hay Association, died on Saturday, Oct. 20, 2012, at the VA Hospital in Minneapolis. He was 84 years old.

Mr. Doebler was born on Aug. 16, 1928 in Syracuse, N.Y., the third of five children to David A. Doebler Sr. and Ruth Williammee Doebler.

By the time he was 4, in the height of the Depression, he was traveling with his father making sales calls to sell fresh produce. These visits included CCC camps and small groceries along the northern tier of Pennsylvania. In those early days and under his father's influence, he fell in love with Pennsylvania and the art of selling.

Mr. Doebler was raised in Renovo, Avis and Jersey Shore, and was a 1945 graduate of Jersey Shore High School. He spent his summers on Kettle Creek.

At 17 and near the end of World War II, he enlisted in the Army. He was stationed with the Army Air Corps in the San Francisco Bay area and Alaska, both of which he recalled fondly over the years.

After the war, he attended Penn State University and was a member of the Delta Tau Delta Fraternity. Upon leaving Penn State, he worked for his father's and uncle's company, Doebler's Pennsylvania Hybrids, and began drilling for natural gas in Leidy Township, Pa., part of the Marcellus Shale area, among the largest natural gas holding areas in the nation.

In 1951, he married Yvonne Kissell, a native of the Nippenose Valley, south of Williamsport. Together they had four children.

In 1967, he moved the family to Minneapolis, Minn. where he became the Vice President of the Fruen Milling Company. From Minneapolis, he grew a career in the field of thoroughbred racehorse oats, working for ADM and ConAgra. In 1975, he became CEO and President of U.S. Grain, and in 1978 he founded and was CEO of Great Northern Grain. His grain was used by the U.S. Equestrian Team and top thoroughbred racehorses around the world.

Raised in a family with a deep Pennsylvania ties, upon retirement he immersed himself in his family history and Pennsylvania lore. In an era before the Internet, his extensive research in the libraries of Pennsylvania determined the family links from pre-Revolutionary War to the present and uncovered long-forgotten storytellers like Henry Shoemaker and his "Pennsylvania Tales."

He was known to be a great teller of tales, an expert map reader with deep knowledge of Pennsylvania geography, a natural in the woods, an experienced fly fisher and hunter, a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, who delighted and indulged his grandchildren with his tremendous imagination and sense of fun.

His wife, Yvonne Kissell Doebler, preceded him in death. He is survived by his children David A. Doebler III, Lura Shopteau, and Scot Doebler, all of Minneapolis, and daughter Jennifer Doebler of Berkeley, Calif, as well as seven grandchildren.

A private memorial service will be held in Pennsylvania in June.