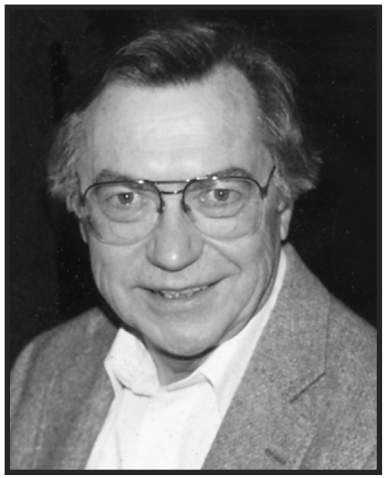
Jay Van Zoeren

July 10, 1924 - October 29, 2005

Jay Van Zoeren was born on July 10, 1924 on a farm in Vriesland, Michigan, to George and Dora Van Zoeren. As a boy he worked in the farm fields and attended school at the nearby one-room schoolhouse. He graduated from Hope College and proceeded to the University of Michigan Medical School, where he graduated in 1948.

Following his service in the US Navy from 1952-1954, he studied at the Western Psychiatric Institute in Pittsburgh, PA. He was the Assistant Medical Director at the Haven Hospital in Rochester, MI from 1954-1960, after which he established a private practice in Birmingham, Michigan. During thirty years of practice, he became the Chief of Psychiatry at William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, where he also served as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Psychiatry for the Michigan State University School of Medicine. He served as the Medical Director of the Maple Clinic in Birmingham for fifteen years. He was elected a Life Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association in 1986. He was a consultant to the Michigan State Psychiatric Ethics Committee, and served as Chair of the committee from 1986 to 1994.



Jay was an active and engaged member of the community. He was a charter member of Northminster Presbyterian Church in Troy. The Northminster community remained a central part of his life for the next fifty years. He was also a committed volunteer with several community service agencies in the Detroit area, including Habitat for Humanity, and Respond. He served as Board President at the Oakland Child Guidance Center, which provided mental health services to at-risk adolescents.

He married Betty Kathleen DeKorne in 1947. Together, they enjoyed forty years of marriage and raised four sons. Following Betty's death in 1987, he married Carolyn Lewitt, adding a daughter to his family. Carolyn and Jay enjoyed traveling throughout the United States to view nature, especially birds. He was a lifelong summer resident of Leelanau County, Michigan, where he celebrated his birthday at Glen Lake with extended family every July. He thoroughly enjoyed his seven grandchildren and took pride in the differing paths taken by his four sons.

Jay Van Zoeren was respected for his professionalism, his humanity, and his humility. He believed in the value of all people and worked for justice throughout his life. He was a natural leader, yet led quietly through the example he set for others.

He died on October 29 at his home in Bloomfield Hills following a one year illness. He is survived by his wife Carolyn Van Zoeren; by four sons, Steven (Pei-shan), Thomas (Alice), Michael, and Douglas (Patricia); and by a daughter, Janice Lewitt Pope. He is also survived by his seven grandchildren Eli, Janet, Allison, Nicholas, Ian, Samantha and Nathaniel.

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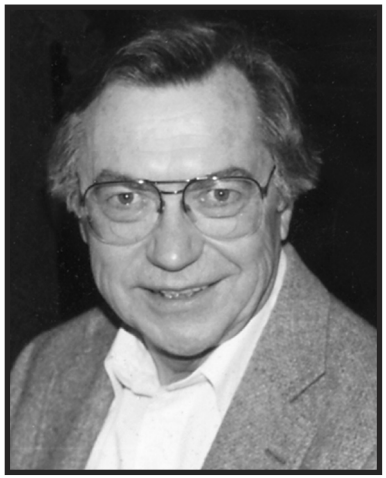

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