



## Robert Zosel

July 7, 1924 - August 21, 2011

Robert Campbell Zosel, family man, hardware man, and Wadena County historian passed away at his home on Sunday, August 21, 2011. He was born on July 7, 1924 to Robert Saunby and Shirley (Campbell) Zosel in Wadena, MN. With the exception of three and a half years of service in the Army Air Corps during World War II, he lived all of his life in Wadena. On March 5, 1948 he married Jeane Townsend and they enjoyed 63 years of marriage. From their marriage came six children, thirteen grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren. Bob was a successful hardware man as partner and owner of Zosel's Wadena Hardware store from 1946-1992. He served on many community boards including those of the Wadena Tri-County Hospital, the Wadena Library, and the Wadena State Bank. He also served on the Executive Board of the Our Own Hardware Company, with which his store was affiliated. Upon his retirement in 1992 with the sale of Zosel's Wadena Hardware Company, he became very involved with the Wadena County Historical Society, serving as president for many years. He loved researching, compiling and writing about the history of Wadena and Wadena County businesses, families and happenings. Being a self-effacing man, Bob was always pleased when residents told him how much they enjoyed his stories that appeared in the Wadena Pioneer Journal, the local newspaper. He was exceptionally proud of Wadena and proud to be a resident of his beloved hometown. Above all, Bob was a loyal and dedicated husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. He loved nothing more than taking his

children on hikes to Black's Grove and Itasca State Park, camping on the Partridge River, going deer hunting in Wyoming and in later years, cross-country skiing and traveling with his family and friends. He loved to plant trees; pines and maples at Black's Grove, and to groom ski trails for others to enjoy. Bob was preceded in death by his parents; a daughter Margaret Jeane in 1968, two grandchildren Anna and Benjamin Zosel Olson. He is survived by his devoted wife, Jeane; daughter Mary and her husband Ray Hawes of Savage, MN, Sara and her husband Carl Sawicki of Fredericksburg, TX, Robert S. of Wadena, Jean Zosel of Missoula, MT, and Molly Zosel of Fargo, ND. He also leaves behind thirteen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; sister Marian (Joe) DeMars of Battle Lake; and nephews John and Jim and their families. An evening of remembrance will be held on Friday, August 26, 2011 at the Johnson Memorial Home in Wadena from 4:00-8:00 p.m. A memorial service will be held Saturday, August 27, 2011 at 1:00 p.m. at the Wadena United Methodist Church in Wadena. The family suggests memorials be given to the Wadena County Historical Society and the Wadena Tri-County Home Health and Hospice.

# Tribute Wall



“ *Wadena has lost a good citizen who has helped us all remember the importance of history in our lives.* ”

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August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ Dear Zosel Family

*What a great man, father, community leader, and friend.*

*He was so nice to all who knew him. My dad Bill and Bob worked on a few local community organizations together. I even helped them when I was younger. Bob always made me feel like I was just a regular guy and part of the group. My late mother Joyce always enjoyed the time they spent with the Zosel Family too and my parents both really enjoyed having taught their kids in school.*

*Later in life I became more involved in collecting antiques and Bob and I shared a passion in this together. Bob even gave me his house tour showing me some of his collectibles and I was amazed of his vast collection of postcards.*

*He was one that will be forever remembered in Wadena as an honest true businessman. But more importantly a true person. I felt it an honor and a privilege as did most who met Bob, to have known him.*

*I think Bob taught us all that it's not what you do for work in life, nor is it about what all one has- no not at all- it's how you act in life and in your work and how you should treat others with respect and a smile. It's about giving and caring. This is the message and the lasting legacy of Bob Zosel.*

*May his memory live on. God Bless all of you.*

*from Mark Larson & the WM J Larson Family-Maren and Krista*

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**Mark Larson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DG

“ Bob had a quiet passion, gentle spirit and a way of bringing out the best in everyone. I'm so grateful to have known him. God be with you Jeane and family members.

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**Dee Goerge** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

DT

“ We wish to express our sympathy on behalf of our family who were all acquainted with Bob. Ralph, Birdie, Doug and Darwin Heern have all passed away in the last five years. As with us, they each had a lot of respect for Bob. He sent numerous cards to Doug while he was ill with Luekemia last year. Jean, Bob chose well in picking a wife. You are to be honored and respected as well. You and he raised a wonderful family. If our family were still here they would all say these same words. God bless your family with comfort and loving memories.

*Donna Heern Trana and Wanda Heern Marquardt and our families.*

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**Donna (Heern) Trana** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MB

“ Bob was one of the greatest people I have ever known. He was so kind and giving and caring. what a great example he was for all of us.

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**marie bendix** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RH

“ What can I say about this gracious man who was loved by all. I am so blessed to have been able to be a part of his life and to be included in his family. I will surely miss his hugs, kisses and laughter. It is a sad day for Wadena and a great loss to our community.

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**ROSE HAMMES** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CD

“ Although I never personally met Bob, he did family research for my Webb family, who were some of the first settlers in Wadena. He even informed me of the stained-glass windows in the Wadena Methodist Church dedicated to my g-g-grandparents, William & Sophia Webb. I cannot tell you how much these discoveries mean to me and my family.

*I am coming to Wadena in two weeks for the first time and in an email that he sent me last year he wrote, "Just let me know when you are coming and we'll get out the citizen's band for a welcome."*

*My thoughts and prayers are with his family.*

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**Carol Dove** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TA

“ My deepest sympathy to the Zosel family. Mr. Zosel was a wonderful man and a proud son of Wadena. May he rest in peace and may the family take comfort in God's Blessings.

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**Terry H. Addison** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

AM

“ Bob represented the best of what Wadena had to offer. He gave more to his community than most will ever know, yet he asked for nothing. The world was a better place with his humility, grace and humor. We are blessed to have known him.

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**Anita Meyer** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

RT

“ We are so sorry for your loss. Bob was such a wonderful person and such a great part of our community. We came to him for information - He knew this community and the people who lived here. Of course, we enjoyed doing business with him when he owned Zosel's Hardware and it is so nice that the family name is still on the building. Words to express Bob's life do not come easy, but we will miss him a lot.

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**Rich and Carol Taggart** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

MK

“ Our thoughts are with you and your family. He is comfortable now. Sending prayers.

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**Mary and Max Knutson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LS

“ We will most surely miss Bob's presence at the library. He never failed to make us smile--even on the most frantic and hectic of days.

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**Laura Spilman** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

VW

“ Mary & Ray ,  
Our prayers and thoughts are with you. May time's passing somehow help to ease your loss and sorrow.  
With deepest sympathy.

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**Vernon & Rita Winfield** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

TG

“ *The video of your father was such a nice tribute to his lifes journey.  
Thank you so much for sharing.  
My most sincere thoughts are with you all at this time.  
Tammy Garlitz*

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**Tammy Garlitz** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LT

“ *Was greatly saddened to hear of the passing of friend Bob.  
It is a privilege and a blessing to have known him.  
He was THE hardware man for so many of us, for so many years.  
His knowledge and memory of Wadena history was just amazing.  
He worked very hard for Wadena and I know he loved every minute  
of it.  
I enjoyed also his great sense of humor and the mostly corny emails  
we exchanged over the last few years.  
We are so glad we got to pay a short visit and a hello to Bob on  
Aug.12th  
Gods Blessings to Jeane and all the family.  
  
Leonard and Phyllis*

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**Leonard Thompson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CG

“ *Dear Molly and family,  
Our thoughts and prayers are with you.  
  
Cheri*

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**Cheri Gunvalson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ *Wish I had been with you all tonight. New Jersey is so far away sometimes. I am so grateful to have been able to share the story of my life with Bob. He gave the best hugs and had the brightest twinkle in his eye whenever I stopped by on my summer visits. He was one the ties that bound my heart to Wadena and my dear friend Margaret for all these years. Zosel family one and all thank you for being such a good part of my growing up years. So glad I was able to give his hand one last squeeze.*

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**Susie Pearsall** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CJ

“ *Dick and I were sad to hear of Bob's passing, and extend our sympathy to Jeane and the family...From buying appliances at the store to seeing him often at the Library for the 20 years I worked there, he was a friend....I have memories of Bob and me trying to put toner in the copy machine and neither of us having a clue as to what we were doing!! His answer always was: " I had Bill Breid to do all my stuff!"*  
*After the Library days, I enjoyed his witty e-mails and the jokes he would forward to me...*  
*Good memories to hold always.... God Bless you and comfort you in the days ahead.*

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**Cicely Johnson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ *Bob Zosel was one of Wadena's great resources for family and local history. He was unfailingly generous with his information and his time. By his death, Wadena has lost a great treasure but the legacy he preserved will live on forever as will his memory in the hearts and minds of those who knew him.*  
*Lina Belar, Executive Director and Friends and Staff of the History Museum of East Otter Tail County*

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**Lina Belar** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

CV

“ Bob will be missed as a friend to our family in years gone by. My dad, Wes Johnson, was in business south of the hardware store in the '40's, 50's and 60's and worked with Bob on many community related issues. They also worked the scorers table at many a H.S. basketball game during those same years. He was a true gentleman and my family is glad to have known him. Our heartfelt sympathy and condolences.

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**Carl Villwock** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GJ

“ How lucky I was to meet Sally at church camp in Park Rapids many years ago, as I got to know her family, too. Bob was someone who always made you feel important. Anytime I would be in Wadena and in the hardware store, he always had time to visit with me. As the years went on, I would see Bob and Jean around Wadena, or at the Methodist Church in Wadena. What a wonderful legacy, Bob leaves behind. His wonderful wife and family. I will keep you in my thoughts and prayers. Bob is now walking streets of gold. Barb

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**GARY AND SARAH JOHNSON** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SR

“ Bob was a great friend and true historian of Wadena area history. He enjoyed sharing stories of the early years of law enforcement to present time. He would stop by and chat with us in keeping an updated listing of chiefs from 1879. We will remember his contagious smile and happy outlook on life.

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**Sharon Roberts** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

SP

“ Bob is the most humble man I have ever known and so giving of himself whether the subject was history or personal. He learned well on his life journey. He has a wonderful wife and the most caring and giving children. Like his daughter Jeane said "They had a good leader" I feel very blessed to have been working at the historical society and Bob helping with the research. As Bob would say "We made a good team". It's nice to have their son Bobby Zosel as Vice President on the Wadena County Historial Society board and even grandson Peter Zosel helping with obituary input into the database just as Bob used to do. They have much to offer in the name of their Dad and grandfather. I will miss Bob more than words can describe. Blessings to ya all Sandi

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**Sandi Pratt** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

LB

“ Dear Zosel Family  
A Zosel icon has passed on but not before he left a mark on his community, church and friends. He leaves a legacy and will always be remembered. My thoughts and prayers go with your family.

Linda

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**Linda Schiller Busing** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GA

“ What wonderful man who always gave of himself to others. He will long be remembered for his friendly caring ways and especially for his contribution to the history of our great city of Wadena. Thank you Mr. Zosel for your many years of service to our community.

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**Gwen Anderson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ My sympathies to Jeane and family.. Seems as though Bob was a constant presence on Bryant Ave.. I remember seeing him working in the yard as I walked by or in the hardware store.. always with a smile. He will be greatly missed by many..  
Joyce Crozier

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**Joyce Lundell Crozier** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JB

“ It was a sad day when I heard Bob had passed away. He was my boss and mentor during the time I worked with him at the Wadena County Historical Society.  
His sense of humor was always welcome. His common sense was appreciated even more. His outlook on life and any of the "ups and downs" involved was so positive, he could make me feel all was right-with-the-world. Not everyone is blessed to have the disposition Bob had. I was privileged to have been on the receiving end of his kind and generous spirit. Thoughts are with you Jean and family.  
Joyce Bock

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**Joyce Peavey Bock** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

JM

“ We can offer no better words to honour Bob than those chosen from Ralph Waldo Emerson and printed in the funeral program.  
He was generous and kind in the Wm King family history search which brought us from Australia to Wadena on two occasions.  
We extend to Jeane and family our condolences.

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**Jan & David Munzberg** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM

GN

“ *Bravo, Bob Zosel; a life well lived. Thank you for teaching me lessons that have served my life..also,for teaching me how to trap gophers and letting this neighbor kid trap those gophers with your daughter.*

*Georgie*

*And thanks for being such good friends to my mom and dad.*

*Marilyn*

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**George Roes/Marilyn Nelson** - August 21, 2011 at 12:00 AM