

CROSSED THE BAR

Robert R. Ware, Jr. of Oak Park, IL, an *emeritus* member of the Belvedere Club, died peacefully at his Oak Park Arms residence on April 19, 2006. He was 93. A memorial service is planned for later this summer in the Chicago suburb.

Bob was born on March 18, 1913, in Chicago, IL, the first child of Robert Rea Ware and Elizabeth (“Bessie”) Dickerson Ware. His paternal grandparents, Elisha Clark Ware and Minnie A. Hanna Ware, were among the earliest to visit the Charlevoix Summer Resort Association, later the Belvedere Club; five generations of Wares have enjoyed ‘The Cottage’ (#212) at Charlevoix since their forebears first arrived in 1883.

In 1919, when young Bob was six, the growing family moved to Oak Park. Here he attended William Beye Elementary School, where he was to meet his future wife, Betty Craig. He graduated from Oak Park-River Forest High School and attended the University of Chicago, where he majored in business and was a proud member of Skull & Crescent honorary society as well as Alpha Delta Phi fraternity.

On June 22, 1940, he married his childhood sweetheart in Oak Park. He was employed in the family firm founded by his father and uncles, Ware Brothers Manufacturing/Chicago Roller Skate Co. Learning the business from the ground up, “Robert Junior,” as he was known at the plant, eventually rose to the rank of Executive Vice President, a position he held until his retirement in 1983.

As a young man Ware excelled in a number of individual sports such as swimming, wrestling, target shooting, archery, hunting and fishing. His favorite pastime, however, was sailing – a skill developed under the expert tutelage of his uncles and father (nickname “Skipper”) while summering in northern Michigan. One of his greatest thrills was crewing during a Mackinac race aboard Bill Witherspoon’s *Bangalore*. For many years he sailed his own boats out of Chicago Yacht Club’s Monroe Street harbor.

An avid reader, Ware knew long passages of poetry by heart and could recite everything from the soaring Latin verse of Vergil’s *Aeneid* to the bawdiest rhymes and bar room ballads. B. Ware was also a harmonica player extraordinaire and until recently could be seen blowing his ‘harp’ in the company of the Oak Park Farmers’ Market Musicians.

All of his adult life Bob was active in the various churches to which he and his family belonged, participating as a Sunday school teacher, choir member, bell ringer, usher, youth chaperone on mission study tours, deacon and elder. At the time of his death, Ware was a member of First United Church of Oak Park, a merged congregation (UCC and Presbyterian) housed in the former First Congregational Church, his boyhood church home.

Preceded in death by Elizabeth, his wife of nearly 42 years, Ware is survived by one brother, Ralph C. (“Mike”) of San Antonio TX; a daughter, Jean W. Hanson of Cleveland Heights OH; two grandsons, Robert and James Hanson; two great-grandchildren, Miles and Andrew; and numerous nieces and nephews.

The family suggests that memorial donations be made to any of the following: American Heart Association; American Indian College Fund; Charlevoix Area Hospital Foundation; The Nature Conservancy; Sail Chicago or a charity of your choice.