

## **Benkelman, William**

William Donald Benkelman, 73, of Cass City died Tuesday, Aug. 6, 2002, at his home in Cass City. He was born Oct. 23, 1928, in Royal Oak to Harold and Isabel (Fletcher) Benkelman. He married Barbara Ell of New York on May 2, 1952, in East Lansing. She preceded him in death Feb. 1, 1995. Bill attended Michigan State College of Agriculture and Applied Science, now Michigan State University, where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1952. He was a captain in the U.S. Army and a veteran of the Korean War, where as a lieutenant he earned a bronze star of meritorious achievement for maintaining his unit in the highest state of readiness. In 1956, Bill joined Cadillac Plastics Co. as an outside salesman. Over the next three decades, he rose through the ranks of the company, becoming its chairman in 1984. When he retired from the company in 1988, Cadillac was the world's largest distributor of semi-finished plastic shapes. Bill also founded, developed, and built the Lodge & Spa at Breckenridge in Breckenridge, Colo. After retirement, he and Barbara moved to Cass City, where he lived on the Benkelman centennial farm on Schwegler Road. Bill is survived by his children, Jeffrey Robert David Benkelman and his wife, Marilyn, of North Palm Beach, Fla., James Ell Benkelman and his wife, Susan, of Breckenridge, Colo., Cynthia Benkelman Ryerson and her husband, Anthony, of Vail, Colo.; grandchildren: Bridget, Jeffrey, and Cody Benkelman of North Palm Beach, Fla., Josh Constas and his wife, Julie, of Breckenridge, Colo., Anthony Ryerson III and Sally Barbara Ryerson of Vail, Colo.; brother, Robert F. Benkelman and his wife, Lorraine, of Caseville; four nieces and one nephew. Funeral services will be 2 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 11, 2002, at Cass City First Presbyterian Church with the Rev. Mark Morningstar of Sandusky Presbyterian Church officiating. Interment is in Elkland Township Cemetery, Cass City. Military honors under the direction of Cass City VFW Post No. 3644. Visitation is 7 to 9 p.m. today, 2 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home, and 1 to 2 p.m. Sunday in church. Memorials may be made to Barbara Benkelman Hospice Endowment Fund or Michigan Parkinson's Foundation.