



Boris Benkovich, 95, Roscoe, IL, died at home surrounded by his family on Wednesday morning, April 11, 2012. He was born on July 15, 1916, in Bridgeport, CT, the son of Ivan and Marie (Anger) Benkovich.

At the age of 2, Boris's father, an artist working in Chicago, became a victim of the 1918 Spanish flu epidemic. His mother took Boris

and his brother John back to her home town of Samobor, Croatia only to learn a few years later that she had terminal cancer. Orphaned at a young age, the boys lived with aunts and uncles in Croatia and Austria.

In was in late fall in 1930 when the young teenage brothers boarded a train in Zagreb and began their 6,000 mile journey back to America. After a week layover in Paris and they continued on to Cherbourg on the French coast where they set sail for Bridgeport, Connecticut. They stayed with an aunt in Bridgeport for a few months and then left for Rockton early spring in 1931. They lived with their relatives on Green St., enrolled at Hononegah High School, where Boris graduated in 1934.

Boris married Virginia Goss of Rockton, IL on Christmas Day, December 25th of 1940. He, his brother and wives moved to San Diego, California during World War II where they both were involved in the design of the B-24 and other aircraft. After the war, they moved back to the Rockton/Beloit area to raise their families. Boris retired in 1983 after 34 years with the Beloit Corporation as the engineering supervisor in the Research Department of the paper machine manufacturing company.

Dad could fix practically anything around the house and his cars. Boris kept busy after his retirement building a wood strip canoe, kayak and a wherry row boat. His carpentry skills were put to use when he helped his son build two houses.

Boris helped found Rockton's first Little League Baseball Team and was instrumental in building the Boy Scout building next to the Race. He and Virginia were regulars at the Macktown Golf Course, and in the winter, Boris brought the family there to ski and sled. In the summertime, the station wagon was filled with the kids every Sunday for an afternoon of swimming at Fontana beach on Lake Geneva. Another tradition of over 40 years was summer vacation in Minong, Wisconsin on Lake Horseshoe. He loved sailing in "old green", swimming, blueberry picking, fishing and napping in his hammock.

The family moved from Rockton to their new house in the Ledges in 1964 where Dad continued to lead an active life of golfing, swimming, skating and cross country skiing which lasted until two years ago. He particularly enjoyed his time

spent at the Ledges pool where kids of all ages affectionately called him 'Boris'. He was a lap swimmer and was also known for his signature handstand dive off the high dive. Keeping the filters and pumps operating smoothly was a hobby he took pride in and passed along system operating nuances to the various pool managers over the years.

He and Virginia especially enjoyed taking trips out west to visit three daughters and their families. At the age of 90, he and daughter Julie traveled back to Croatia to reunite with family and to see for the first time his father's works of art displayed in the National Art Museum in Zagreb, Croatia.

Boris was dedicated family man, and took great delight in being part of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren's lives.

His wife Virginia predeceased him on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

He will be lovingly remembered by: daughter Mary Benkovich (Roscoe); son Jim (Mavis) Benkovich (Roscoe), grandchildren: Jim (Laura) Benkovich (Shirland) great-grandchildren: Tasha, Jim, William, Zachary, and Nicholas Benkovich; Mike (Debbie) Benkovich (Chanhassen, MN) great-grandchildren: Brooke and Kathryn; Aaron (Cari) Benkovich, great-grandchildren Evan and Collin; daughter Jeanne (Marcus) Carlson (Kalispell, MT) grandchildren: Ture (Lauren), Evan, Eric, and Annie Carlson; daughter Julie (Tom) Benkovich (Puyallup, WA); daughter Alice (Jay) Shilhanek (Bellingham, WA) grandchildren: Kelly and Karl Shilhanek. Nephew Jack (Harriet) Benkovich (Lewisberry, PA), great niece and nephews. Boris was predeceased by his parents, and brother John Benkovich of Beloit, WI.

The Benkovich family would like to extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to the whole OSF Hospice staff for their guidance and care of Boris in the last month of his life. In addition, the family is also grateful for Donna Navikiene who provided skilled and loving care during this time.

Dad was a humble man and said little about his many accomplishments. He led by example that inspired us throughout our lives.

Visitation will be held on Sunday, April 22, from 4:00 to 7:00pm at McCorkle's Funeral Home, Rockton IL. Funeral services will be at 11:00am on Monday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012 at McCorkle's Funeral Home, Rockton, IL. Burial will be at Rockton Township Cemetery.