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## Smokejumper Obituary: Yoder, Carroll Eugene "Gene" (Missoula 1945)

National Smokejumper Association

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# Smokejumper Obituary

## Yoder, Carroll Eugene "Gene" (Missoula 1945)

Gene died February 6, 2020, in Hesston, Kansas, at age 93. He was born on June 29, 1926, a few miles away near McPherson, Kansas and grew up helping his parents farm in the area. He registered for the WWII draft on his 18th birthday and was drafted into the Civilian Public Service (CPS) as a conscientious objector in October 1944.

Gene was assigned to CPS camps based in Lincoln, Nebraska, Colorado Springs, Colorado and the Forest Service Camp 31 near Camino California on the Eldorado National Forest where he gained experience in forest fire suppression. Like many CPS draftee's, he was verbally abused by locals and accused of cowardice for his religion based opposition to military service, especially while at Camp 31. His daughter Beth stated in an August 2020 interview that Gene told her he volunteered for the smokejumper CPS camp at Missoula as a way to prove his bravery. He jumped there during the busy 1945 season and fire records indicate he made at least one jump on the Nez Perce National Forest in Idaho.

After his release from the CPS, Gene returned to Kansas and married Dorothy Miller in 1949. Together they raised three children in the Hesston area. He was self-employed and owned/operated a successful floor covering business before retiring.

Gene is remembered by family and friends as a loving family man with an intense work ethic and who was everyone's friend. He was an avid fisherman. Even in his last years when confined to a wheelchair, Gene loved to fish at a pond near his care facility. He was also a master hobby carpenter building hundreds of birdhouses that still grace many homes in Hesston.

Gene was extremely proud of his time as a smokejumper. In 2010, a Ford Trimotor was touring Kansas and daughter Beth bought him a ride in it. Gene said afterwards through a broad smile that he had never landed in a Ford until that day, only taken off.

*(end of excerpt)*