



Mäletame / Remembering

*Kallis isa, vanaisa, vana vanaisa, sõber
Dear father, grandfather, great grandfather, friend*

BORN: JULY 9, 1932 IN SAAREMAA, ESTONIA

DIED: APRIL 29, 2025 IN FISHKILL, NEW YORK

Memorial Service • August 2, 2025

McHoul Funeral Home, Hopewell Jct, NY

Welcome and Prayer: Anne Hardy

Hymn: *How Great Thou Art*: Congregation

Scripture: Psalm 23: Erika Bajars

Harry's Story: His children Deborah Klepp, Peter Klepp,
David Klepp, and Jeannette Riverso

Memories: Reflections from Harry's Grandchildren and Friends

Video: *Ta Lendab Mesipuu Poole*: from 2025 Estonian Song Festival

Eulogy: Doug Hardy

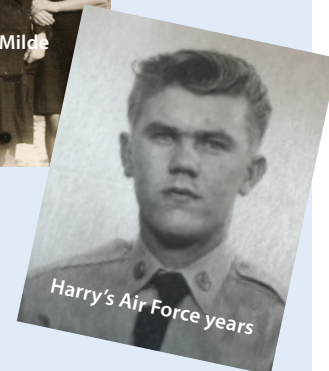
Military Honors ceremony: Flag presentation and *Taps*

Hymn: *Pass It On*: Congregation, accompanied
by Doug Hardy on guitar

Benediction: Doug Hardy

Invitation to Reception

5:00-9:00 at Germania, 37 Old Degarmo Rd, Poughkeepsie, NY





In a word of a Nat King Cole song he loved, Harry Klepp was unforgettable. Estonian by birth, and American by choice, Harry was a visionary electrical engineer and inventor, devoted father, grandfather, great grandfather, husband, brother, uncle, and friend. He loved giving “kallikallis” (hugs) (and often Hershey’s kisses) to all those he met, walking in the woods marveling at “God’s creation,” having deep conversations, and fixing broken things. His friends called him a “people magnet.” After an eventful, productive life, he passed away on April 29, 2025 at the age of 92. He is deeply missed.

The son of Peeter and Triin Klepp, Harry was born in 1932 on the Estonian island of Saaremaa. The brother of sisters Milde (Robert Green) and Maie (Aadu Raudsepp), he spent his childhood in a small village on Sõrve Peninsula tending sheep, taking apart mechanical devices to figure out how they worked, and teasing his older sisters. As invading Soviet and Nazi forces battled over Sõrve, he and his family were forced in November 1944 to leave Estonia and work on a farm in Nazi-annexed Sudetenland (today’s Czech Republic). Soviet forces overran the area, taking his father as the family tried to reach the American Zone. He, his mother, and sisters lived for four years in displaced persons camps in Germany before Seabrook Farms in Upper Deerfield Township, New Jersey, sponsored them in 1949 as refugee workers. There, Harry learned to fix radios and televisions, learned English, and graduated from high school in 1951.

Harry served in the U.S. Air Force 1952-1956 as a Sergeant, working as a radio and radar repairman, including maintaining microwave communication links for NATO in France during the Korean War. In Buffalo, New York, he worked for Wurlitzer and Bell Aircraft in the X-15 program building telemetry electronics and attended night school at University of Buffalo. He transferred to Tri-State University in Angola, Indiana, earning his engineering degree in 1960, after which he worked in Buffalo at GTE-Sylvania until 1962 on the B-58 Hustler and RB-69 bomber electronic countermeasures radar systems. In 1962, he started working at IBM in Poughkeepsie, from which

he retired in 1989 after submitting 20 patent applications. In 1990, he went back to newly re-independent Estonia, first as part of the International Executive Service Corps to teach at Tallinn Technical University and many times thereafter. He worked as an electronics consultant until his death because he could “feel” electricity and work to him felt like play.

He married Beverly (Ellis) in 1963, with whom he had four children, Deborah, Peter (Nathalie), David, and Jeannette (Louis Riverso), whom he called his “biggest blessings.” He was devoted to his ten grandchildren: Sarah, Matthew (Carmen Lechler), Jennifer, Connor, Joseph, Ava, Nathan, Michelle, Lucas, and Caroline, each of whom he took to Estonia to appreciate their heritage. He delighted in his three great grandchildren: Cadence, Maeve and Silas, and great grandson Slevin, who predeceased him. He also loved his nieces and nephews: Anne (Douglas Hardy), Paul Raudsepp (Jennifer), Eva (Alar Ruutopold), Sandra Rice, Erika Bajars (Marty Coyne), and their families. The day he moved to Poughkeepsie in 1962, Valdar and Milja Sellendi, the Presidents of the Mid-Hudson Estonian Association, “adopted” him, giving him “sisters” Leen (Stephen Gould) and Katri McEwen, and “children” Rob McEwen and Aileen (Birkitt) and their families. In 1997, he married the late Helle Rakfeldt Leetmaa, gaining stepsons: Andres, Matti, and Ivo, and her parents Ilmar and Miralda Rakfeldt, sister Tiia (James Hughes), and brother Jaak (Kristi) and their families. He also played an important role in the lives of his godchildren, including Altti Piirsoo, and his children’s friends.

Harry had a sparkle about him where he made everyone feel special. His greatest legacy will be his humor, charm, and faith in Jesus, the source of the love he gave all those around him. Now that Harry is no longer with us in person, but in Spirit, he would want us to receive His love directly. In the words of “Pass It On,” another favorite song, “That’s how it is with God’s love, Once you’ve experienced it, You spread His love to ev’ryone, You want to pass it on.” Kalli-Kalli to all who knew and loved him.



How Great Thou Art

O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder,
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made!
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed!

*Chorus: Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!*

When through the woods and forest glades I wander
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;
When I look down from lofty mountain grandeur
And hear the brook and feel the gentle breeze;

Chorus

And when I think that God, His Son not sparing,
Sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in;
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

Chorus

When Christ shall come, with shouts of acclamation
To take me home, what joy shall fill my heart!
Then I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim: my God how great Thou art!

Music and Lyrics: Stuart K. Hine, 1953.





Ta lendab mesipuu poole

Video from Estonian Song Festival 2025

Music and Lyrics by Juhan Liiv / Peep Sarapik

The Bee Flies Towards the Beehive

English Translation modified

by Deborah Klepp

The bee flies from flower to flower,
then to its honeytree hive,
as thunderclouds rise higher,
the bee heads toward its hive.

Though along the way thousands fall,
Still thousands more reach home,
Enduring hardship and trials,
They all fly toward the beehive.

Soul, oh soul, at difficult times –
how you yearn for your homeland;
whether you're at home or in a foreign land –
how you long for your homeland!

And should a wind of death blow at you
and a lethal bullet head towards you,
You forget death and worries
and race toward your homeland!

Soul, oh soul, at difficult times –
how you yearn for your homeland;
whether you're at home or in a foreign land –
how you still long for your homeland!
How you still long for your homeland!

Pass It On

Lyrics: Kurt Kaiser, 1969.

It only takes a spark
To get a fire going
And soon all those around
Can warm up in its glowing

*Chorus: That's how it is with God's love
Once you've experienced it
You spread His love to ev'ryone
You want to pass it on*

What a wondrous time is spring
When all the trees are budding
The birds begin to sing
The flowers start their blooming

Chorus
I wish for you my friend
This happiness that I've found
You can depend on Him
It matters not where you're bound
I'll shout it from the mountain top
I want my world to know
The Lord of love has come to me
I want to pass it on