



Lester A. Hoogland

January 23, 1930 - August 8, 2024

Former Zeeland Mayor Lester A. Hoogland, who loved his hometown and faithfully served it for three decades, died Thursday, Aug. 8, 2024. He was 94.

His 22-year mayoral tenure was the longest in Zeeland's history, ending in 2011 when he retired from the office at age 81. He successfully ran for re-election 10 times. Before being elected mayor in 1989, he was a city councilman for eight years, and over the decades he also served in many other city and regional leadership roles. Les' father, Frank Hoogland, had been mayor of Zeeland for 12 years beginning in the 1960s.

As mayor, Les had a hometown touch. He had the keys to Frank's diner on Main Street and arrived in the wee morning hours to put the coffee on and start the griddle before the staff and his buddies arrived. He saluted his fellow veterans at hundreds of funerals over the decades as a member of the local American Legion honor guard. He had a ready smile and was quick with a quip, with "I'm not as dumb as I look" being a favorite. He made friends easily and kept them for a lifetime.

Les' driving force was leading a city he loved. He was most proud of spearheading efforts to build a new public library in Zeeland, raising millions for the Howard Miller Public Library and Community Center to open in 1995. He was keen on supporting a robust industrial and business base and keeping

the city's enviable tax base strong. He championed reinvigorating the downtown district and worked long hours to recruit restaurants and businesses. He promoted and preserved the community's Dutch heritage by developing and maintaining ties to the province of Zeeland in the Netherlands and to the Roosevelt Institute's Four Freedoms ceremonies. He championed development of the local history museum, Dekker Huis, and raised funds for many other community causes, such as the new Zeeland hospital and the local Salvation Army, where he was a long-time board member. He was also active on the West Michigan Regional Airport board, involved in the Holland-Zeeland Community Foundation, the Zeeland Chamber of Commerce, the American Legion, and other causes and boards.

He was a long-time business owner on West Main, operating the West End Garage, a diesel truck mechanic shop that fixed the fleets of many local businesses and farms. The business had been started by his father, in 1925.

Les was born in 1930 to Frank and Margaret Hoogland and would proudly note that he was the first Cesarean-born baby in Zeeland at the original Huizenga hospital on Central Avenue. (Cost: \$1,000). He grew up on Central Avenue, and as a boy, with his friends and three siblings, Les explored every corner of the city, played in the old Veneklasan brickyard on the west hill, set pins at the downtown bowling alley, and as he finally admitted when he turned 90, he once tossed tomatoes at passing cars on West Chicago Drive.

After his schooling at Holland Christian High, he joined the other mechanics at his dad's garage, the same men who when Les was a boy playfully sent him on seemingly important errands to get them "a bucket of steam" or "a four-foot yardstick".

After two years in the U.S. Army (1951-53) during the Korean War, stationed at Fort Bragg as a military police officer, he returned to Zeeland and his dad's

shop, taking over the business in 1964. He retired from that career in 1986 and turned his full-time attention to civic life. He also traveled extensively with family and friends, including many trips to the Netherlands. He spent fall Saturdays with the family in Ann Arbor as a Michigan football season ticket holder for 50 years. And on Friday nights in Zeeland, you'd find him rooting on the Dux, sitting high in the bleachers smack dab on the 50-yard-line.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 59 years, Vivian (Voorhorst), his brother John (Esther) Hoogland, his sister Eleanor (Bud) Borr, and his brother-in-law Martin Dykstra.

He is survived by his sister, Arlene Dykstra, son Todd (Beth) Hoogland, daughter Julie (Tim) Taylor, son Gregg Hoogland, daughter Jane (Ken) Jipping, 10 grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

The Hoogland family would like to thank the staff of Riley's Grove Assisted Living Center as well as Hospice for their compassionate care of Les.

The visitation will be 2:30-4:30 pm and 6-8 pm Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at Yntema Funeral Home, 251 South State Street, Zeeland. The funeral service to honor Les will be held at 1 pm Thursday, August 15, 2024, at Third Christian Reformed Church, 10 West Central Avenue, Zeeland. Committal with military honors will be held at Zeeland Cemetery.

Donations in memory of Les Hoogland are suggested to local causes he championed:

- The Howard Miller Library endowment fund at the Community Foundation of the Holland/Zeeland Area.
- The Zeeland Historical Society where they will be reserved into the Lester Hoogland Fund and used to enhance exhibits at Dekker Huis Museum.

Please specify if your gift is in memory of Les Hoogland and mail cash or checks to Zeeland Historical Society, PO Box 165, Zeeland, MI 49464, or online donations can be made at [<https://www.zeelandhistory.org/ways-to-help/>]

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 14. 2:30 PM - 4:30 PM (ET)

Yntema Funeral Home
251 South State Street
Zeeland, MI 49464

Visitation

AUG 14. 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM (ET)

Yntema Funeral Home
251 South State Street
Zeeland, MI 49464

Funeral Service

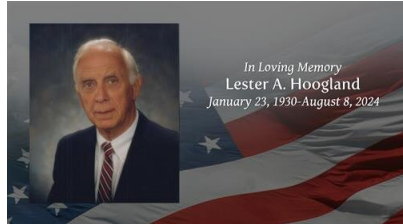
AUG 15. 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM (ET)

Third Christian Reformed Church
10 West Central Ave.
Zeeland, MI 49464

Tribute Wall



“ *Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes created a Tribute Video in memory of Lester A. Hoogland*



Langeland-Sterenberg Yntema Funeral Homes - August 13, 2024 at 01:48 PM

KS

“ *My deepest sympathy to your family.I took care of Les at the Atrium and he was a joy to talk to. His family was also a beautiful caring loving family. May God hold you close with all your beautiful memories*❤️

Kathy Smith - August 12, 2024 at 06:03 PM

FH

“ *what a great guy he will be missed*

fred M hamilton - August 10, 2024 at 04:43 PM

JN

“ *My sincere condolences to Todd, Julie, Gregg and Jane on the passing of your Dad, a great man, a consummate leader, and a man I was proud to call a friend,
May he rest in peace and rise in glory,*

John Norden

John Norden - August 09, 2024 at 08:08 PM