

Wilmer Rohlwing, whose family was one of the first to settle in the Northwest suburbs, continued the family pioneering tradition by playing an important role in the development and growth of Huntley. A resident of the village for more than 40 years, Mr. Rohlwing watched it grow from a small farming town to a busy suburb. Mr. Rohlwing, 79, died Thursday, Sept. 4 of a heart attack in his Huntley home. Mr. Rohlwing's great-grandparents settled in the Schaumburg area in the middle of the 19th Century and Rohlwing Road is named after the family. "In those days the small roads were named after the big family that lived on that road," said his son David. Born and raised on the families Schaumburg farm, Mr. Rohlwing was the only one of eight siblings who stayed with his father and became a partner in the farm, where they raised cows, hogs and chickens and grew wheat, barley, hay and corn. "He loved working in the field, working with the animals, and he loved just keeping things right," his son said. There was no inferior management of his farm. He knew everything." Mr. Rohlwing was honored by the Jaycees in 1957 as an outstanding young farmer. In 1947, the farmer married Elizabeth Hillmer, who was from Forest Park, and brought her home to the farm, where they converted the second floor of the house into an apartment. According to his son, Mr. Rohlwing kept the farm in such good condition that film crews would often shoot movie scenes and commercials there. The couple lived at the farm until 1957, when Mr. Rohlwing and his father sold most of their 250 acre farm to the Cook County Forest Preserve District to develop Busse Woods. The rest of the farm – about 25 acres – was sold to the Woodfield Shopping Center developers about 10 years later. Mr. Rohlwing moved his family to Huntley. "It had 180 people the day we moved in. I remember the sign as we drove in," his son said. But Mr. Rohlwing saw opportunity in the town. He set up his farm there and became involved with the community. He served on the planning commission for 24 years, helping the village grow to a population of 12,000. According to his son, the town prided itself on being a "friendly village with county charm," and the Planning Commission tried to maintain that. "He had a vision. They wanted growth, but they wanted it orderly. They didn't want anything helter-skelter," his son said. A back injury in 1963 forced Mr. Rohlwing to give up farming, so he switched careers and became an insurance adjustor for the Aid Association for Lutherans, a national insurance company now known as Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. He retired in 1989 and devoted his time to the Planning Commission and his wife, who had cancer. She died in 1995. "They loved each other very much. It was just sad that my mom's life was shortened. They had planned to travel after he retired, but the plan didn't quite work out," his son said. The farms in Schaumburg and Huntley have long since been developed, and homes and shopping malls now sit where grain was grown. I go past the farm in Schaumburg, and I remember falling out of a tree right where Marshall Field's stands. I think it's really exciting to see things develop like that," his son said. Mr. Rohlwing is also survived by daughters Nancy Dvorak and Joyce Schmidt; brothers Arnold, John, Melvin and Elmer; sister Verona Hinrichs; eight grandchildren and one great-grandchild. A funeral service will be held at 11 AM Monday in Trinity Lutheran Church, 11008 N. Church St., Huntley.