

Engineering Pioneer, Hawkeye Comm. College Founder Harold Brock Dies

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Posted: Monday, January 3, 2011 6:13 am



WATERLOO, Iowa --- A pioneer has passed.

Harold Brock of Waterloo, tractor designer and a founder of Hawkeye Institute of Technology and Junior Achievement, died at home Sunday morning at Landmark Commons, according to his son, Bob. He was 96.

Bob Brock said funeral arrangements are being handled by Locke Funeral Home and a service will be later this month.

Harold Brock was honored last summer as one of the Courier's inaugural 8 over 80 --- eight people more than 80 years old who provided a lasting legacy in the community. He was unanimous pick by the selection committee for the breadth of his impact.

"My life's been one of production, productive activities," Brock told the Courier last spring.

As a 15-year-old in 1929 in Michigan, Brock attended the Ford Trade and Apprentice School, founded by Henry Ford, and he learned various skills needed on the factory floor.

After graduating, Brock wanted to pursue the design aspect of the manufacturing process. As a result, he worked with Henry Ford

as an engineering apprentice and he became close to the company founder. Ford also introduced Brock to famed inventors such as Thomas Edison and George Washington Carver.

After working for Ford Motor for 20 years, Brock was hired by John Deere Waterloo Works in 1959 and served as Deere's first worldwide director of tractor engineering. He led the effort to design a new generation of tractors. Brock helped design the Ford 9N and John Deere 4020, considered two classic tractors.

The work allowed him also to reach into the community.

Inspired by Ford, Brock focused his efforts on helping teens get on career paths. In 1965, he was instrumental in founding the Hawkeye Institute of Technology, now Hawkeye Community College.

Brock said he took out the first \$500 loan to launch the college's operations. In 1973, Gates Business College, which began operating in downtown Waterloo in 1884, closed and its business curriculum merged into Hawkeye.

"I can tell you, without his vision and dedication, Hawkeye would not be what it is today," said Kathy Flynn, vice president of advancement, during an earlier interview.

In the early 1970s, Brock was one of the organizers of Junior Achievement of Black Hawk Land.

Brock was the recipient of numerous awards for accomplishments in his field. Among them are one of the most prestigious awards given by the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers for Brock's leadership in defining the modern agricultural tractor and for his lifelong support of technical education.

Though he retired from John Deere in 1985 when he was 70 years old, Brock remained active in the community, serving on the boards of the Hawkeye Foundation and Grout Museum.