

Miller Motel Owner Killed Early Today

Richard Wayne Miller, 54, of 1124 Nuttman Ave., became the first traffic fatality in Decatur in more than three years, when he was killed in a one-car accident at Five Points just shortly after midnight this morning.

Miller, who is a co-owner and operator with his brother, True, and sister, Ireta, of Miller's Motel, on N. 13th st., was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident.

First Since 1959

The death was the first recorded in the city since June 27, 1959, when two children were killed in a car-truck crash on 13th street.

The victim was traveling south on Second street at what investigating officers termed a high rate of speed. His auto failed to make a complete turn onto Mercer Ave., and struck a light pole.

The pole was one of the new street lights erected in Decatur, and was the only new light on that side of the street. Miller's car failed to negotiate the curve and struck the pole, on the west side of the street, nearly head-on.

Dead At Scene

Miller was dead at the scene of the mishap of a crushed chest. He was the only person in the vehicle, and was pinned in the front seat by the force of the impact.

The accident occurred at 12:25 a.m., and was reported to the city immediately by Daniel Butcher, a Decatur high school student and a resident of 1062 Russel St.

Butcher was traveling a short distance behind Miller's auto and witnessed the crash.

Heavily Damaged

The well-known local man was operating his 1963 model car which suffered an estimated \$5,500 damages, and was considered a total loss. The car was heavily damaged from the crash into the light pole.

Oddly, the only damage to the pole was scratches to the paint as the light remained burning after the mishap.

The fatality ended the city's chances of obtaining a third consecutive award from the traffic safety foundation for a death-free traffic year.

City police officer Kenneth Jennings investigated the accident, assisted by Adams county coroner Elmer Winteregg, Jr.

Funeral Thursday

The accident victim was born in Decatur Nov. 17, 1907, a son of Elmer L. and Anna Mary Berrell-Miller, and was a lifelong resident of this area. He was married to Miss Geraldine Steele Oct. 8, 1939. His wife was suffocated in a fire at their home June 15, 1957.

Mr. Miller attended the Decatur schools and served in the nation's armed forces during World War II. A former custodian at the Elk's lodge, he also was co-owner of the Victory Bar in this city until building the Miller Motel 12 years ago.

Surviving are the brother, True L. Miller; the sister, Miss Ireta Miller, both of Decatur; a nephew, Robert Miller of Monmouth, and a niece, Mrs. Harry Hahn of Wichita, Kan.

Funeral services will be conducted at 1:30 p.m. Thursday at the Zwick funeral home, the Rev. Lawrence T. Norris officiating. Burial will be in the Decatur cemetery, with military rites by the American Legion. Friends may call at the funeral home after 7 p.m. Tuesday until time of the services.