A person wearing glasses

Description automatically generated with low confidenceLowell Arthur Gess, age 100, passed away June 21, 2022 in his Alexandria, Minnesota home. Dr. Gess was preceded in death by wife Ruth Adabelle (Bradley) Gess, parents Arthur and Frances Gess and sister, June Malin. He is survived by children Tim (Joanne) Gess, Mary (Steve) Boehlke, Elizabeth (Robert) Hopkins, John (Ruth) Gess, Paul (Arlet) Gess and Andrew (Carrie) Gess, 16 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Dr. Gess was born July 13, 1921 in Paynesville, Minnesota. He attended Macalester College, St. Paul Minnesota, Evangelical Theological (Garrett) Seminary in Naperville, Illinois, and Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis, Missouri. An ophthalmology residency was completed at University of Minnesota under Dr. John Harris.

At a very early age Dr. Gess believed God called him to be a medical missionary. Unsure if that was what he wanted, he studied to become a pastor and served congregations in rural Minnesota. But, unable to shake his sense of calling, he yielded his life and ministry to the Lord. And that made all the difference. He met and married the woman of his dreams who also shared a similar call to medical mission work and, together, they served in West Africa as medical missionaries for over 50 years.

Beginning in 1952 Dr. Gess and wife Ruth began their service in Bambur, Nigeria. They then moved to Sierra Leone serving in the towns of Rotifunk, Taiama, Bo and Freetown. In Freetown (Kissy), the Gesses established one of the best eye clinics in Sierra Leone which is still flourishing to this day. In addition to quality eye care offered there, Kissy has also become a center for research related to the Ebola outbreak led by Dr. Steven Yeh formerly of Emory University and now at the University of Nebraska.

Many of his experiences have been documented in the seven books he has written including: Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory (2002), Glorious Witnesses for Africa (2011), Be a Medical Missionary (2012), Ebola’s Den (2015), Tender Moments in Scripture (2018) and Tender Moments in Ministry (2018) and Grateful for the Holy Spirit and Angels (2022).

Among his many honors Dr. Gess received Sierra Leone’s highest civilian award, the Order of the Rokel, in 1991 as well as the Charles J. Turck Global Citizen Award from Macalester College, the Helen Keller Sight Award from the Minnesota Lions Club, the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award from the Alexandria Lions Club, and the 2020 Chang Humanitarian Award from the ASCRS Foundation.

Known for his deep commitment to the Lord, his love and concern for the welfare of others, his excellent skills as a medical doctor and surgeon, and his remarkable humility, Dr. Gess leaves a legacy that will carry on long after his “graduation” to eternal life with the Lord.

A celebration of life service is scheduled for 3 p.m. July 17, 2022, at the Alexandria Evangelical Covenant Church. Memorials to Central Global Vision Fund.