Funeral Friday for former area MP

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Funeral service for Lee Grills, former longtime MP for Belleville and much of Hastings County, will be held Friday.

Grills, 78, died Wednesday in Belleville General Hospital.

A one-time dairy farmer and city dairy operator, the folksy, burly Grills dubbed himself The Friendly Milkman MP to score repeated campaign successes--he was defeated only once while at Ottawa--for his Progressive Conservative party in area federal politics through the mid-1950s and early 1970s.

He entered politics by way of municipal affairs in his native Sidney Township--he was born there, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Grills, and for years ran a dairy farm in the township. As Sidney's reeve he served on county council, which elected him its warden in 1952.

In 1957 he first went to Ottawa when he scooped the old Hastings South riding--including Belleville, Trenton and southend Hastings--from the Liberals and added it to the first-time sweep of then prime-minister-to-be John Diefenbaker.

Grills lost the riding only once--in 1963 to the Liberals--regained it two years later and won again when the constituency was re-organized as Hastings to include most of the county.

He declined to seek his party's nomination for the 1972 election, and was succeeded by Jack Ellis, who now holds the area as Conservative MP for Prince Edward-Hastings.

In his community affiliations Grills was a life member of the Belleville Shrine Club, a Rotarian and a Mason in Eureka Lodge.

His first wife, Bernice, died about 10 years ago

and he is immediately survived by his second wife, Grace, and a daughter, Mrs. Betty Jane Ireland.

He also leaves a brother, Carmen, RR 5 Belleville, a sister, Mrs. Fred (Hazel) Ash, Peterborough, and a brother-in-law, Walker Jones, of Peterborough. He was predeceased by a sister, Irene, and a brother, Garnet.

The funeral service will be held at Bridge Street United Church, Friday at 11 a.m. with burial in Belleville Cemetery.

He is resting at the John R. Bush Funeral Home.