



Francis Henry McMahan

March 9, 2016

Francis H. McMahan, died March 9th, 2016.

"All I ever wanted to be was a coach." He was that and so much more: son, brother, athlete, soldier, husband, father, grandfather, educator, friend. . .

The journey began for Francis H. McMahan on September 18, 1923, in Saginaw, Michigan. He was the first born of 6 children (Barbara, Kathleen, John, James, William) to Linda (Echerdt) and Frank McMahan. Of the original family only the youngest William is still living. Baby Francis H. McMahan was soon transplanted to Michigan's Upper Peninsula. By junior high school, he knew his future included coaching as he enjoyed an array of sports. He graduated from Baraga High School in 1941. He went to Northern Michigan University in 1941-1942 to play football and basketball. He had already signed up with the Marines for a delayed entry on April 3, 1943. While in the Marines, he was involved in the Battle of Okinawa and the Occupation of Japan. He refused the Purple Heart as he didn't want his mother to be more worried about him. During his time in the service, he nearly circled the globe. In 1946 he was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps as a Staff Sergeant.

On December 31, 1941, he met his heart's love, Jeanne Fugere of Iron Mountain, MI. They were married on August 24, 1946. During the 1950s they had 5 children: Lynne Witham, Lorna, Brian, Patrick, and Laurie. Two

grandsons, Eric and Stephen Witham, completed the family. Brian died in 1952; Jeanne and Lynne in 2000. Family was always important to him.

Coach McMahon graduated from Northern Michigan University in 1950 with a BS degree in Physical Education. During his four years he participated in football (co-captain his senior year.) He was employed by the Mackinaw City Public Schools from 1950-1957 where his duties included coaching, teaching and administration. From 1957-1963 he was counselor and coach at Pellston Public Schools. He returned to Mackinaw City Public Schools in 1963 as Superintendent with coaching responsibilities. He retired in 1983. Many memories were made within the walls and playing fields of both schools, as well as life lessons learned.

Game statistics, as well as life statistics, are superficial. There is more depth to the game and to the man. He was a humble man with great respect for others, and that respect was returned to him. His was a good life-lived longer than he ever thought would be possible. Okinawa taught him to value each day as a treasure. Although dementia took his mind, it also allowed his spirit to shine more clearly. The competitive edge, the humor and the kindness remained strong until the end. He was a truly good man.

His ashes will be mingled with Jeanne's, and they will once again be together in Baraga, Michigan, where they met on a blind date on New Year's Eve so many years ago, a fairy tale love blended with a good dose of reality. He wished not to have a funeral service or any public ceremony to commemorate his life. If you knew him, please take a moment to remember. And if you wish, please make a contribution to Hospice of the Straits. Their assistance eased his journey and helped the family immensely. But just the memory would be enough for him as he knew how hard life could be and also how wonderful. Although his journey on earth ended on March 9, 2016, his legacy lives on within those who knew and admired him.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations in our Father's honor to:
Vital Care/Hospice of the Straits, 726 LaFayette Street, Cheboygan MI

Arrangements were handled by Dodson Funeral Home, St. Ignace.

Tribute Wall



“ Francis Henry McMahon

October 05, 2023 at 09:54 AM



“ Francis Henry McMahon

October 02, 2023 at 10:14 PM



“ Francis Henry McMahon

September 01, 2022 at 07:49 PM



“ *May the love of family and friends carry you through your grief, as you find strength in the hearer of prayer. Lean on one another when the days ahead are to hard to bear alone. We hope that the many hugs,cards,kind words,and loving prayers embrace your hearts during this difficult time.*

Roderick&Desiree Sigler - March 18, 2016 at 05:19 AM



“ *Thank you for your kind expressions in remembrance of our Father. He was loved and admired by many. God's Speed*

Laurie Ann, Patrick John & Lorna Jeanne McMahon - March 15, 2016 at 09:55 AM

DM

“ He didn't have to tell you, all he had to do was look at you and it didn't take long to figure out. I was glad to be at our School the night that the Gym was dedicated to him and also to be present and to nominate Coach McMahon to the Mackinaw City hall of fame this year. What a great man, and he will be surely missed.

Dexter McNamara - March 12, 2016 at 04:53 PM

LH

“ He was a great superintendent during my years at Mackinaw City High school. A man that showed you if you worked hard towards your goals you could reach them. He always showed great interest in all you did. My father was principal during his tenure. My condolences in your time of loss.

Lynn (ZIELINSKI) Hansen - March 10, 2016 at 01:54 PM