Full Thursday refresh with photo

THEODORE “TED” MERLE JACOBSON

Racine

Theodore Merle, 84, passed away peacefully on Sunday, February 16, 2014. He was born in Devils Lake, North Dakota on June 23, 1929, the son of the late Theodore and Martha (nee: Wickum) Jacobson.

Ted received his bachelor’s degree in Physical Education from U.W. La Crosse. He then used his teaching skills in the U.S. Army in South Carolina where he became a highly respected trainer. After leaving the Army he taught physical education in South Carolina for four years.

On November 27, 1957, in La Crosse, he was united in marriage to the love of his life, the former Elizabeth “E.J.” Weber. They were fortunate to share 55 loving years together.

He and E.J. then moved to Racine where he established an educational career and leadership role as a teacher and principal. He was one of the first assistant principals for Starbuck Middle School (1962-1965) and later principal of Washington Junior High (1965-1974), the first principal of Gilmore Middle School (1974-1982), involved in all phases of its planning and construction, and Mitchell Middle School (1982-1987), retiring in 1987.

Many in the area will remember his positive influence, strong work ethic, and continual involvement in every aspect of the schools he led. He was an innovator who initiated and championed many new ideas and programs designed to enhance students’ education and personal development. He encouraged and supported others as well, to positively develop and guide students.

In addition, his dedication to professional associations and community service was endless. His leadership roles included: President of the Racine Administrators Association, President of the then newly formed Association of Wisconsin Secondary School Administrators, first Chairman of AWSA’s Past-Presidents Council, a three year term on the National Association of Secondary School Principals’ Committee on Middle Level Education and Council President of the then newly formed Lutheran Church of the Resurrection during design and construction of their new location on Ohio Street.

Together with Elizabeth, Ted was a very active member of the Kiwanis Club of West Racine where he took several leadership roles, specifically as President, establishing and leading the “Baby Book Project”, spearheading the Case Picnic service project, InterClub activities and the annual Kiwanis Raffle for many years, and participating in many other community projects. For all his hard work Ted received several awards from Kiwanis, including the coveted Hixson Award and the Legion of Honor. He also received distinguished service awards from AWSA and its predecessor, the Wisconsin Secondary School Administrators Association.

He enjoyed spending time with family and friends and specifically loved his relationships with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren. He took a constant interest in every part of their lives and supported them by attending musical events, soccer games, etc. His eyes would light up every time the children were around. Ted enjoyed gardening, woodworking, bridge club, men’s card club, and his longtime college Lutheran Student Association friends, the Nutty Buddies. Ted and Elizabeth enjoyed family and friends in Fort Myers, Florida, including his Florida Kiwanians and serving in their Thrift Shop.

Surviving are his children, Frederic (Lynette) Jacobson, of Racine, Steven (Dawn) Jacobson, of Franksville, grandchildren, Emily Jacobson, Ryan Jacobson, Adam (Jennifer) Keszler, and Heather Keszler, great grandchildren, Alexandra Strand, Audrey, Zachariah, and Elliot Keszler, sister, Janice (Bill) Antholz, of Burnsville, MN, and sister-in-law, Lorraine Weber, of Ft. Meyers, FL. His nieces, nephews, other relatives and a host of friends also survive him. He was preceded in death by his parents, an infant brother, Harvey Jerome, and his beloved E.J.

Funeral services honoring his life will be held at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, February, 22nd at Lutheran Church of the Resurrection, 322 Ohio St., with Rev. Roger Black and Janice Navarro A.I.M. officiating. Visitation will be in the funeral home on Friday, from 5:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., and in the church on Saturday from 10:00 a.m. until the time of the service. The family has suggested memorials to the Lutheran Church of the Resurrection or Kiwanis Club of West Racine Scholarship Fund.

DRAEGER-LANGENDORF FUNERAL HOME AND CREMATORY

4600 County Line Rd.

552-9000