



Olaf Blomquist

December 5, 2007

IRON MOUNTAIN - Olaf Blomquist, 96, of 115 N. Forest St. in Iron Mountain, died Wednesday, Dec. 5, 2007, at Freeman Nursing and Rehabilitation Community.

He was born on Aug. 24, 1911, in Metropolitan, the eleventh of 12 children born to the late John and Maria (Jacobson) Blomquist between 1894 and 1916.

Olaf attended grade school in Metropolitan and graduated from Felch High School in 1929. In 1934, he graduated magna cum laude from Augustana College in Rock Island, Ill. with a bachelor's degree in foreign languages and education. He did practice teaching at Ferris State Institute. In 1935, he graduated from the University of Illinois with a master's degree in foreign languages and education. He was inducted into the Alpha Chapter of Kappa Delta Pi, a national honor society in education.

Upon graduation during the Depression, he found that vacancies in foreign language were almost non-existent and those available required five years of teaching experience. He spent one year selling life insurance, then took two Civil Service examinations, one being for a vacancy in the local post office. He started working there in July 1936.

On June 29, 1939, he married Beatrice Lefebvre of Iron Mountain. They raised three daughters, Judith, Alene and Margo.

In 1946, Iron Mountain High School put Spanish in the curriculum and Olaf was hired to start the program on a part-time basis. This started a period of dual employment of teaching and the post office which would last for 20 years. In 1966, Spanish enrollment had grown to where a full-time teacher was needed. Olaf was hired for that position and retired from the post office where he had worked for 30 1/2 years. He continued teaching until 1974, when he retired from North Dickinson School, to which he had transferred a few years earlier. He retired with a total employment record of 51 years.

Olaf was a faithful, active member of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church where in earlier years he was a member of the church council, Sunday School teacher, and choir director. He sang in the church choir continuously from 1925 for more than 60 years, and also sang solos at funerals, weddings and special events. In the 1940s and 1950s, Olaf sang in Lion's Roar productions, Community Chorus, and Barbershop Chorus.

He loved his family and stood by them in every way. He enjoyed gardening, lawn work, crossword puzzles and watching football, basketball and baseball games. He was an avid fan of the Green Bay Packers and the Detroit Tigers. In former years, he enjoyed fishing and deer hunting. Olaf had a good sense of humor, including a collection of clever jokes and contributions to Reader's Digest humor section.

Olaf was a lifetime member of the Michigan Education Association (MEA); National Education Association (NEA); Michigan Association of Retired School Personnel (MARSP); National Association of Retired Federal Employees (NARFE); and Golden K, where he enjoyed singing with the Golden Throats at the VA Hospital, nursing homes and community events.

He is survived by his wife, Beatrice (Lefebvre); three daughters, Judith (Will) McIntosh of North Prairie, Wis., Margo (Stephen) Cousins of Marshfield, Wis., and Alene Blomquist of Ann Arbor, Mich.; seven grandchildren, Christina, Stephanie, Scott, Patrick, Corwin, Nathaniel and Amanda; six great-grandchildren, Christina, Samantha, Sabrina, Cody, Ashleigh and Lynaya; and many nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by six brothers, Iver, William, Edward, Rudolph, Carl and Bernard; five sisters, Mary (George) Nygard, Esther (Theodore) Anderson, Gerda (Edwin) Anderson, Ellen and Linnea. All died between 1920 and 1978.

Visitation will be Saturday from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Iron Mountain.

Funeral services will be Saturday at 11 a.m. at the church. Rev. Stephen Cowen will officiate.

Burial will follow at Cemetery Park in Iron Mountain.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Our Saviour's Lutheran Church Senior Choir Program or Dickinson Area Community Foundation at 427 S. Stephenson Ave., Iron Mountain, Mich. 49801 in care of the Blomquist Family Scholarship Fund for graduates of North Dickinson High School.

Condolences may be expressed to the family of Olaf Blomquist online at www.ernashfuneralhomes.com

The family has entrusted the Erickson-Rochon & Nash Funeral Home with the

funeral arrangements.

Tribute Wall

DJ

“ I use to go over to your house and play with Margo, back in the 60's. Margo and I were in Camp Fire Girls together and I went to school with her until we moved to Quinnebec then to Kingsford. I a very sorry to see Olaf has passed away. He was a very good person and I can remember him from going to your home. He was always very nice to us kids that would go over to your home.

Denise Jacobson - December 11, 2007 at 12:00 AM

AR

“ Dear Bea and family, I had Senor Blomquist for Spanish and he was one of my favorite teachers in High School. He made learning fun, yet relevant. His joy of music was evident in his use of that medium to teach the Spanish language. We became reacquainted later when my father, Jack Brosio, and Olaf sang together in Golden K. They were the same age and the same size and stood together as they sang. They developed a friendship based on their love of music. I share your sadness and sense of loss. The world has lost a fine man, but heaven has gained another singer. My prayers are with you all. Alice (Brosio) Reed

Alice Reed - December 10, 2007 at 12:00 AM

GA

“ Myself and my five brothers and sisters all took Spanish from Mr. Blomquist, as well as attending Our Saviour's Lutheran Church with him and his family. I will always remember his friendliness and sincerity. Gary Aho, Bettendorf, Iowa

Gary Aho - December 09, 2007 at 12:00 AM

VK

“ I took Spanish from Mr Bloomquist starting in 1963, I think, when I was in 7th grade. I still remember parts of the songs he taught and have used what little Spanish I remember a lot since I now live in Arizona. Seeing his picture sure brings back memories! My thoughts and prayers are with you in your time of loss.

Vicki Kral - December 08, 2007 at 12:00 AM

PM

“ I graduated from Iron Mountain High in 1969, and was fortunate enough to have Mr. Blomquist as my Spanish teacher. I still remember his always greeting us in the hallways, speaking Spanish and expecting us to reply likewise. To this day, when I try to recall my Spanish, I always think of Mr. Blomquist's smile and genuine exuberance as both a teacher and a friend. My condolences to his family. To Mr. Blomquist I say "Adios mi amigo, vaya con Dios"
Sincerely,
Paul Marlow

Paul Marlow - December 07, 2007 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ We both enjoyed Mr. Blomquist as our Spanish teacher in the late '50s. He also sang at our wedding in 1963. He was a wonderful man and had love and respect from his students. May your wonderful memories of his life sustain you in your loss. Sincerely, Martha and Bob Schinderle

Martha and Bob Schinderle - December 07, 2007 at 12:00 AM

GG

“ Our sincere sympathy and condolences to Bea and the rest of your fine family. We always enjoyed listening to Olaf sing at Our Saviours Lutheran Church during our visits with family in Iron Mountain, as well as speaking with him at other Church events or when he/Bea were out about town. GOD has a superb "new" member of HIS Heavenly choir adding to the joyous worship to our LORD in preparation for us to join him.

Gary, Naomi, Scott, Ben, and Emily Greene/ Scottsdale, Arizona

Gary and Naomi Greene - December 07, 2007 at 12:00 AM

KL

“ TY41P To Bea and Daughters. My heartfelt condolences on the loss of a truly great person. I was a student of his at IMHS back in 1952. Because of his influence, I chose Spanish as one of my majors in college and spend 36 years in the education field. His teaching methods served as an inspiration to me. He was an outstanding member of his church as well as the community utilizing his musical talents. I had the pleasure of working with him at North Dickinson where he put in many hours organizing the school library. He will be missed but never forgotten.

Ken Lindstrom - December 07, 2007 at 12:00 AM

KK

“ My sincere condolences to Mr Blomquist's family. I was in his last class at IMHS in 1967 (I think). Of all my classes that year, I always looked forward to Spanish. There was always something interesting and entertaining. He has been a model for me in my teaching career.

Vaya con Dios, Profesor"

Kenneth Kral

Kenneth Kral - December 07, 2007 at 12:00 AM