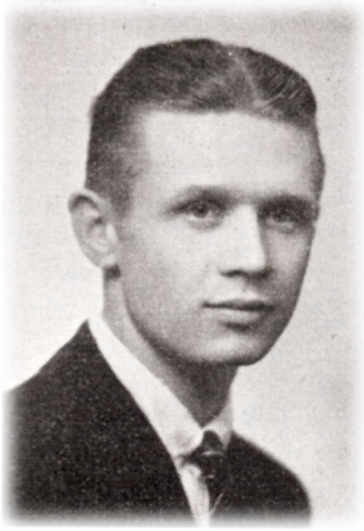


Francis Huffman

July 18, 1928 – November 29, 2019

Francis Huffman, a longtime residence of riverside and La Grange, IL, died April 23 at MacNeal Hospital in Berwyn. He was 87 years old at the time of his death.

Huffman was born and raised on a farm in Onida, S.D. He received his education at the South Dakoat School for the Deaf (SDSD). He was a member of the 1938 graduating class with 11 other classmates. After high school, attended and from Gallaudet College (now Gallaudet University) in Washington, D.C. where he was enshrined into Gallaudet Athletic Hall of Fame, for his prowess in cross-country and track.

He could have been a hero in the Deaflympics except that he competed during the World War II years when international events for the deaf were suspended. And when Deaflympics was revived in 1949, he was already too old to do a comeback. The amazing thing is he never took part in cross-country and track prior to enrollment at Gallaudet. SDSD did not have cross-country and track as a sport when Huffman was a student.



These bright attractive little folks were beginning pupils in 1926. They are now doing Seventh or Eighth grade work. They have made excellent progress in speech and lip-reading as well as in written English. Their names from left to right are Doris Wood, of Marion, Oma McClaflin, now in the Washington State School, Francis Huffman, of Onida, and Berneta Borghorst, of Reliance.

Huffman worked as a linotype operator for the Chicago Tribune for 25 years. He was active in several organizations for the deaf in Chicago and Illinois. He was an avid chess player and tournament organizer and a ten year volunteer with the La Grange meals on Wheels.

Huffman had a reputation as someone who was always cheerful humble, acceptijg and made friends everywhere. He was a devoted husband and honored father of three and grandfather of seven boys. Many SDAD members remember hin attending the biennial SDAD conferences over theyears. His last attended the 2005 SDAD conference at Camp Lakodia and certainly was missed at the 2007 conference.

A funeral service for Huffman was held on Saturday, April 28 at the Wiliams-Kampp Funeral Home in Wheton, IL.





1937-38 SDSD Boys Basketball team
Front row L to R: Harry Pischek, Glen Ziegler, Lester Kukuk, and Leonard Heater.
Back row L to R: Coach Albert Krohn, Frances Huffman, Joe Strandell, Raymond Schmitz, Palmer Larson, Carroll Christianson, Royce Knapp, Orville Rust, and Ivan Curtis, Athlete Manager.