

Orville Frazier, 76

July 27, 1926 - April 12, 2003

GREEN VALLEY, AZ – Orville Parisho Frazier was born in Martensdale, July 27, 1926, to Arthur Carey Frazier, the village blacksmith, and Freedom Parisho Frazier, daughter of the president of Central College in Nebraska. Growing up in Martensdale, he was active in sports. As a starting pitcher his sophomore year, his small high school won the all-class state baseball championship in 1941. Graduating from Martensdale in 1944, he enrolled at Simpson College in Indianola, where he lettered in football, basketball and baseball. Most adept at baseball, he was offered contracts with the professional baseball organizations of both the Cardinals and the Reds. However, he chose instead to pursue his love of teaching and coaching upon his graduation from Simpson in 1948. He taught and coached in the Iowa communities of Dexter, Griswold, Coon Rapids and Guthrie Center. In Guthrie Center he took two girls basketball teams to the state tournament. He came to Harlan in 1962 and served there until 1988 – the last 24 years as Superintendent of Schools. He earned his Bachelor degree from Simpson, his Masters and Specialist degrees from Drake University and his doctorate from Pacific States University.

During Frazier's tenure in Harlan he oversaw the construction of West Ridge Elementary and Harlan Community High School. When three outlying parochial high schools closed in 1966, he facilitated their consolidation with Harlan High School. This had the effect of increasing the high school's enrollment by 75 percent in a single year. He served as president of the Superintendents of Iowa (IASA) in 1976. Elected to the Board of Directors of the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union, he served as Board president.

He was among the first to emphasize computer literacy in the Harlan schools, and Harlan was the first school district in Iowa to offer dual credit classes. Now a standard of quality in Iowa's high schools, dual credit allows a student to receive college credit for classes taken while still in high school. Honors include the 1976 Diplomate of the Academy for School Executives, the 1983 Iowa Educational Media Association Outstanding Service Award, and the 1986 Lyle T. Quinn Award of the Iowa High School Athletic Association. He was Harlan's Citizen of the Year in 1987. He was a licensed pilot. He died April 12, 2003, in Green Valley, AZ, finally succumbing in a 15 year battle with Parkinson's Disease at age 76.

He was preceded in death by his parents and his sisters, Zora Rose, Lillian and Rowena, and his brother-in-law, Colonel Phillip S. Larkin. He is survived by his wife, Patricia; his sister, Berline; his brother, Oliver; his children, Daniel and Diane; and four grandchildren. A memorial service is planned for Harlan, later this spring, and a graveside service will be held this summer in Hubbard, MN.

The family is requesting no flowers nor gifts; however, the family is suggesting contributions to the Orville Frazier Scholarship Fund c/o the Harlan Community School District, 2102 Durant Street, Harlan, Iowa 51537.

A memorial service will be held Saturday, May 31, at 2 p.m. in the Harlan High School Auditorium and a graveside service will be held later this summer in Hubbard, MN.