

## Gerald P. 'Jerry' Hagen <sup>GH-R</sup> 2-3-2021



Gerald P. "Jerry" Hagen, 89, of Grinnell, peacefully passed away on January 31, 2022, at University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City.

A Celebration of Life service is scheduled for 11:00 a.m. Friday, February 4, at the Smith Funeral Home in Grinnell with the Rev. John Epperson officiating. Pallbearers will be Doug Cameron, Jim Dunne, John R. Smith, Rod Smith, Alexandra and Russell Tippy. Burial will be in Hazelwood Cemetery in Grinnell.

Visitation with the Hagen family present will be held from 9:30 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. at the funeral home.

Memorial contributions may be designated to the Grinnell-Newburg High School Booster Club.

Jerry was born December 3, 1932, to Philip and Mabel Applequist Hagen, in Grinnell. He was raised in Grinnell and was a 1951 graduate of Grinnell High School. He athletically played and lettered in football, basketball, baseball and track and field. Jerry was honored to attend a Chicago Cubs baseball try-out camp in 1948.

Jerry attended the University of Iowa from 1951 - 1952 and played on the Iowa Freshman Basketball team. He received his degree in physical education and teaching from Grinnell College in 1955 and later his MA degree in educational administration from Drake University in 1962.

Jerry was very active as a musician, playing the trumpet, throughout his high school and college career.

He started his teaching career in Barnes City High School in 1955 where he coached boys' and girls' basketball and baseball. He became elementary and Jr. High principle in 1958 while continuing to teach and coach at the Jr. High level. In 1965, he became an elementary principle in the Grinnell-Newburg School District, including Parker, Bailey Park, Fairview and Newburg. He retired in 1996 after 31 years in Grinnell and 41 years altogether in education.

Jerry had a young entrepreneurial spirit, starting Grinnell's first soft serve ice cream shop, The Frosted Palace, with a friend during their Senior year of high school. In 1961, with several friends, he opened JD's Restaurant, later selling the place to Bob Globus.

On February 9, 1963, Jerry was united in marriage to Jeananne Reisetter, at the Grinnell U.C.C. - Congregational Church. They raised two daughters in Grinnell, Heidi Smith and Carrie Hagen. The couple were later divorced in 1997.

Jerry ran the clock for Grinnell boys' football and basketball games for a number of years, always adorned in his orange sports jacket and tie. He also ran the clock at Iowa Boys State Basketball tournaments for 35 years, Drake Women's Basketball for 12 years, and the Des Moines Dragons Pro Basketball team for 5 years.

Jerry had a great love of storytelling and was very passionate about Grinnell history. He took many students and alumni groups on history tours of the city. He was honored to receive the Football Coaches of Iowa Achievement Award in 2006 from Kirk Ferentz. He will be remembered by his wicked joke telling, vast knowledge and love of anything Grinnell, and playing pitch with friends.

Left to mourn his loss are daughters, Heidi (Rod) Smith of Grinnell and Carrie Hagen of Marshalltown; grandchildren, Anthony Smith and Alex (Russell) Tippy; and great-grandson, Dean Tippy. He was preceded in death by his parents; and three siblings, Lorraine, Marguerite, and Willard.

64-R 2-7-2021

# My friend Jerry Hagen

by DOUG CAMERON

I recently found out that Jerry Hagen, former principal at Bailey Park (and Parker, Newburg and Fairview) died. This made me very upset and sad. Jerry Hagen (aka "Hagey") was my boss, my colleague and my friend. When Superintendent Janet Stutz asked me to help write an obituary for Jerry, I decided to ignore the usual litany of life events and rather talk mainly about one event that "Hagey" and I shared together that gets at the core of what the man was like.... at least to me.

The one event to which I am referring is my interview for a teaching job in Grinnell that took place 51 years ago. It was an interview where everything that could have gone wrong did and would have ended in disaster were it not for Jerry Hagen.

One could say the interview began when Jerry called me in Colorado Springs to see if I wanted to come to Grinnell for an interview. The call came at about 7 p.m. Mountain Time. I told Jerry I had already been offered a job in Leadville, Colo., and turned down his offer to come for an interview. I then stewed for three hours about turning down the interview because taking my soon-to-be bride to the highest city in the United States would not have been a smart move. At 11 p.m. Central Time, I called Jerry back and told him I had reconsidered. I am sure I woke him, but **Jerry was calm** and we agreed to a time and place.

I flew to Des Moines wherein I discovered that 23-year-olds are unable to rent cars. Another mode of transportation – a bus – was necessary, but that would make me an hour late for my interview. I called Jerry and explained my situation. **Again he was calm and helpful, qualities I saw in him over the many years I knew him.** He said he would contact the rest of the interview team and pick me up when I got to town.

During the interview, one of the interviewers accidentally tipped over in her chair and another asked me three questions: "Do you smoke; do you drink; do you go to church." My answers were: "no, very little and

sometimes." **Jerry remained calm even when the person accidentally fell out of her chair. His questions focused on educational issues.**

After the interview, "Hagey" took me on a tour of Grinnell during which I discovered it seemed that he knew everyone. We ended up at the Country Club where my answer to the earlier drinking question was put to the test when Jerry asked me what I wanted to drink. I must have looked worried because he said, "Don't worry the interview is over." **He seemed to have a sixth sense about my anxiety.**

And then came two of the most memorable moments of my life. Knowing that I had spent my money on bus fare and that I had not eaten since early morning, he invited me to his home for dinner with him and his wife, Jeananne. After dinner, he took me back to the airport in Des Moines. On the way he said, "Doug I looked at your transcripts and recommendations. You have the job if you want it teaching sixth-grade math and science at Bailey Park." I took a deep breath. He had my transcripts and knew about my less than stellar performance in both of those subjects in high school and in college. He then went on the say: "I see they are not your strong areas, but I am overlooking that because I think you will relate well to sixth graders who struggle." **Jerry Hagen was willing to give me a chance.**

Jerry also assisted in changing the course of my family in a positive way. One might say this was the greatest thing he did for all of the Camerons, not just me. In 1999, Ginny and I were thinking of adopting a ten-year-old child. We invited Jerry and another couple to our home and asked them to list some pros and cons of adopting, especially an "older" child. They had adopted children themselves. Jerry had no cons to list. He simply said, "Go for it. You won't regret it." So..... we did and he was right.

As I said earlier, Jerry Hagen was my boss, my colleague, and most important of all, he was my friend. I am glad I had a chance to work for him and with him. He changed *my* life by giving me a chance to share his love of Grinnell and allowing me to be a part of *his* life.