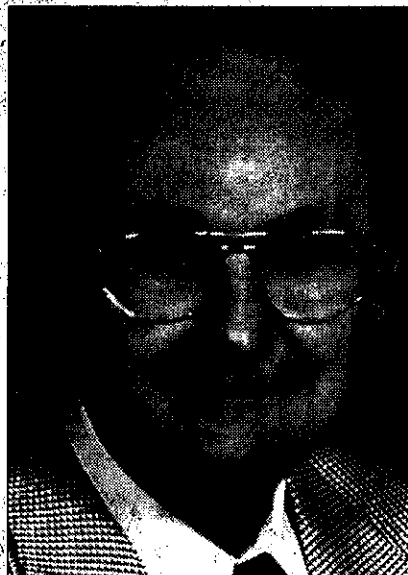


Ralph W. Schneider



Ralph W. Schneider, age 94, of Grinnell, Iowa, a Mayflower Community resident since 1989, died on Wednesday, January 18, 2012, at the Mayflower Community Health Care Center.

A funeral mass was held at 11:00 a.m., Monday, January 23, 2012 in the Carman Center of the Mayflower Community. Following the service, his body was donated to the University of Iowa College of Medicine for scientific purposes.

Memorials may be made in his name to the Mayflower Community Human Needs Fund, 616 Broad Street, Grinnell, Iowa 50112 or to St.

Mary's Parish Foundation, 1013 Broad Street, Grinnell, Iowa 50112. Memories and condolences may be shared on the Smith Funeral Home website at www.smithfh.com.

Ralph was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, on May 31, 1917, the only child of Edwin W. and Hildegard Klingberg Schneider. Ralph was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Grinnell and a Knight of Columbus. He was very active in the Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce.

Ralph was encouraged by his confessor, a Jesuit priest at Marquette University, to join the Dominican Order and study for the priesthood. He was very active in preaching the Word of God in the Chicago area. He was also secretary for several years to the Provincial of the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great. From secretary he became the librarian for the philosophy library at the Dominican House of Studies in River Forest, Illinois. He oversaw the building of a new library and then proceeded to increase funding for new books by promoting art shows exhibiting paintings by Chicago area artists. These exhibits were financially successful ventures.

Ralph was brought up under the strict rules and regulations of the Catholic Church and when Vatican II promulgated the relaxing of many of these regulations Ralph found these changes very stressful. Further stress was added to Ralph when his last living relative, his mother, died. He became very depressed and his doctor finally recommended that if he wished to survive he would have to leave the priesthood.

As a Dominican priest he had taken the vow of poverty giving up all his worldly possessions. At 52 and penniless, he started life over in 1969. His priestly training in philosophy and theology plus his master's degree in Library Science from Rosary College, now Dominican University in the Humanities Department of the Chicago Public Library. Later he headed the History Department.

He achieved his greatest success in the Chicago Public Library through his leadership in organizing library programs. The genealogy programs were unusually successful. He received the Federation of Genealogical Societies Director's Award for outstanding service to the genealogical community. The program "Noonline" patterned after Ted Koppel's "Nightline" brought him an award from the American Library Association for developing the most innovative public library program in the year of 1983. Ralph was the 'Ted Koppel' of "Noonline." Many in the Chicago Loop attended "Noonline" on their lunch break.

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