



Elkin "Ike" Isaac

September 14, 1922 - August 13, 2013

Elkin Ray "Ike" Isaac passed away in Fort Myers, Florida on August 13, 2013 after a full life of nearly 91 years devoted to the education of young adults and children. Ike was born in Chicago on September 14, 1922 to Ukrainian immigrant parents, Sol, a tailor, and Mary Fishman Isaac, a milliner. He grew up playing on the neighborhood streets of Chicago and Nashville, Tennessee, with his older brother, Moe, and friends of all nationalities whom he never forgot. His talents as an athlete and his love of play and physical activity as a purposeful pursuit for people of all ages resulted in a lifetime passion and vocation as a physical educator.

Ike graduated from Chicago's Lane Technical High School in 1937 where, as a 15-year old, he was a starter on a state championship basketball team. Encouraged to attend Albion College (Michigan) by coaches visiting Lane Tech, Ike worked at the local iron factory while pursuing his studies and participating in athletics. As for many of his generation, all was interrupted when he volunteered for military service in World War II. As a pilot with the U.S. Army Air Force (314th squadron), Ike and his co-pilot transported wounded soldiers from battlefields in France and Germany to field hospitals in England. Ike's is another untold story of the legendary Greatest Generation, for fortune had it that a young Army nurse, 2nd Lt. Edith Amos, whom he had met earlier at the Albion Hospital, was assigned to one of those U.S. field hospitals. Ike and Edie were married in uniform in a thatched-roof English chapel in 1944, devoted to each other for 64 years until Edie's death in 2009.

After graduating from Albion College in 1948, Ike taught history and coached in the public schools of Albion, Eaton Rapids and Charlotte, Michigan before returning to his alma mater in 1952. For over two decades at Albion College he coached football, basketball, track and cross country and taught in the physical education department where he became Chair and Athletic Director. A true citizen of the city of Albion and its college community, in 1968 Ike designed "Earn, Learn and Play," a summer playground program that gained national recognition from the White House and was instrumental in Albion's designation as an "All-American City" in 1974. In 1975, Ike accepted a position at the University of the Pacific (California) where he became Director of Athletics until his retirement in 1984.

Throughout his life, Ike created positive play experiences for people of all ages. He designed exemplary summer camp programs for children and created a valuable "Stretch and Tone" exercise program for senior citizens. Together, he and Edie hosted countless open-fire cookouts and pancake breakfasts that regularly reunited their many treasured friends and wide family circle. Ike loved engaging conversation, good humor, sports for the art of the game, gardening, a dance floor with Big Band music, and the American democratic process. Never forgetting his roots, he yearned and worked for greater social justice. But above all, he and Edie were dedicated to the childhoods of their grandchildren, all four of whom lived near their grandparents as youngsters in Kalamazoo, Michigan and Libertyville, Illinois. Ike was preceded in death by his cherished wife and by their son, Dr. Ronald Isaac. He is survived by their daughter Sue (Manu) Dubois, daughter-in-law Amy Isaac (John) Perlick, granddaughters Natalie (Michael Hornish) Dubois and Brigitte Dubois, grandsons Elliott and Jonathan Isaac, great-grandson Nicholas Hornish, as well as four generations of nieces and nephews who have remained close over a lifetime.

The family will gather at Lakeville Lakeside Cemetery, 500 W. Lake Street, Libertyville, for a graveside ceremony of military honors on Saturday, August 31st at 1pm. Friends will be welcomed for visitation at 2pm at the Burnett-

Dane Funeral Home, 120 W. Park Avenue, Libertyville, followed by a celebration of life at 2:30pm.

Future remembrances are planned for family and friends in Fort Myers, Florida and Albion, Michigan.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that memorials be sent to Albion College, 611 E. Porter St., Albion, MI 49224 or to Hope Hospice, 9470 Health Park Circle, Fort Myers, FL 33908. For Info: 847-362-3009.

Tribute Wall



“ I was a camper, CILT, and Counselor at Friendly Pines Camp. Ike was one of the heroes there as he brought to camp our weekly Council Fire and traditions. He was loved by the Browns and Mays. He also was the Athletic Director at The University of the Pacific where I attended. I remember visiting him in his office and front and center on the wall behind his desk were photos of Friendly Pines. We had great conversations and when I stumbled over this tribute page, I felt I should acknowledge how much Friendly Pines was positively impacted by this man, as well as generations of campers and employees since. Thank you Ike!

Stephen Cole - November 12, 2024 at 04:45 PM

MI

“ ALWAYS TO BE REMEMBERED NEVER TO BE FORGOTTEN BY MANY COUSIN "PUTCH"

MORRIS ISAAC - April 27, 2018 at 06:21 AM

Jl

“ I enjoyed the phone calls and what little time I spent with Ike on the Isaac family tree project. I only regret not starting it sooner. An amazing beautiful soul inside and out. He was a warm, inviting and ever so kind. I was amazed at the things he had been through and the stories he shared of the family. He is an inspiration to many others as well as myself. Nothing ever seemed to stop him or get him down. I'm honored he be a member of his family.

Julie Isaac-Zea - April 27, 2018 at 06:21 AM

GG

“ We offer our prayers for Mr. Isaac and his family. May he rest in peace. - Woodlands Academy of the Sacred Heart

Gerald Grossman - April 27, 2018 at 06:21 AM

DP

“ Ike and Edie were our next-door neighbors on Springbrook Avenue. They were always so friendly and took special interest in us and our children, Adam, Marissa and Amanda. Their yard was like a park, and we always seemed to be apologizing when we couldn't keep up with our own yard. Ike would always say, "That's OK. You have another job. We're retired, and this is our job." No matter what was going on, you always felt better after having a neighborly talk with Ike.

Dave and Larie Person - August 30, 2013 at 12:00 AM