



Harvey "Hal" Harold Schmidt

May 5, 1935 - January 4, 2024

It isn't everyone who could grow up being able to watch dozens of Boeing B-29 Superfortresses fly overhead; those great, lumbering beasts cutting through the air in deafening formation on their way to their final destination in the Pacific for the war.

But that is exactly one of the scenes from the life of Harvey Harold "Hal" Schmidt. He was born on May 5, 1935 in the central Kansas town of Russell to Christine (Grasmick) and Frederick Schmidt. The Schmidts were members of the large population of Germans from Russia in central Kansas. These "Volga Germans," were invited to and later kicked out of Russia over the course of about 140 years. When Frederick and Christine immigrated to the United States at a very young age, they were unaware of each other and the life that they would eventually create together. This union resulted in seven sons and no daughters. Hal was the fourth of those seven sons; the middle child.

As did most who survived the Great Depression, Hal was accustomed to deprivation of sorts, especially being the son of farmers coming out of the dust bowl. Yet, the family was able to farm wheat and other crops, have cattle, pigs and chickens and provide food for growing boys who would work on the farm.

It was when Hal was 11 in 1948 that he became one of the many unlucky

children who fell victim to the Polio epidemic which ravaged young people, seemingly without rhyme or reason. Hal was forced into the hospital and underwent surgeries which were meant to fix some of the legion of problems caused by the disease, including a spinal fusion by an “army doctor.” His recovery meant that he could not attend school for a full year. After that year, he would walk with braces for years, and by the time he was in his early 20s, had healed to the point of no longer needing their support. However, he would walk with a limp for years; a limp which prevented him from military service and other physical activities that young men enjoyed.

With some options cut off from him, he chose one of the many remaining. Education was important in the Schmidt household, and Hal chose the life of a teacher as a profession, intentionally or unintentionally mirroring that of his older brother, Paul Schmidt. He attended Ft. Hays State for two years, after which he was issued a provisional teaching license and started on his career in 1956.

Hal was a person who took on jobs both willingly and sometimes unwillingly with the same amount of dedication and effort. Part of the stipulation of his first hiring as a teacher was that he was to be a coach for the middle school boys sports teams. Knowing nothing about coaching, he threw himself into learning the role, reading every book that he could about coaching, asking many questions of experts. He made himself to be what he wasn't before. Because of his diligence, his boys were able to achieve championship status! Not bad for a job that he didn't expect.

While Hal was living teaching in Bird City, Kansas, he met Melita Crissman, also from a small central Kansas town, St. John. The two of them met in the boarding house they both lived in. Melita helped grade middle school papers and the romance blossomed. They were married on August 21, 1960.

During the first three years of their relationship, Hal taught 7th and 8th grade inclusive. Melita was a registered nurse. Four years went by quickly, and their time in Kansas came to an end, beginning with a new adventure in another state. Hal felt a desire to advance in his career. After interviewing with both Orange County, California and Portland, Oregon school districts, the two of them made the decision for Hal to take the job with Portland Public Schools. They chose Portland mainly because they had a friend who lived in the Portland area and they wouldn't go in completely alone. They truly lucked out with that decision.

Oregon was good to them. Hal taught at several middle schools while Melita was a nurse at Emmanuel Hospital in Portland. They moved into a house on Hillview Ct in Tigard, Oregon, and welcomed their first son, David, into the family in 1964.

In 1969 and 1970, Hal, Melita, and David temporarily moved to Eugene, Oregon where Hal was able to complete his Masters Degree in Special Education. While living there, the family made friends who they would value for many years. After moving back to Tigard, their second son, Darin, was born in 1972.

In 1978, Hal and Melita built their dream house in the country near Sherwood, Oregon on 4 ½ acres of wooded property. They had a place where they could have a more substantial garden and be able to have more freedom than they could in the city.

Hal was not only a teacher but an assistant principal in the North Portland neighborhood of St Johns. George School (later George Middle School) was where he had his longest tenure, and was eventually where he retired from after 37 years in education.

After a short time of retirement, Hal felt the call to get back into education. He was hired by Concordia University to be an advisor to student teachers, observing them and helping them to be successful. Hal greatly enjoyed this as well as his work with the Lake Oswego Lions Club and the Oregon Fuchsia Society where he and Melita were very active.

Hal and Melita moved to the Friendsview community in Newberg, Oregon in 2004. While there, they made many friends and engaged in a variety of activities. Everyone knew Hal. He enjoyed chess with his son Darin, negotiating a great deal, encouraging his Friendsview helpers to pursue their dreams, and eating tasty Russian German food.

Hal passed away on Thursday, January 04, 2024, at the Providence Newberg Hospital. Surviving family include his wife, Melita Gail Schmidt of Newberg, Oregon, sons David Wayne Schmidt of Beaverton, Oregon and Darin Harold Schmidt of Stayton, Oregon, and brother Sam of Russell, Kansas. Grandchildren are Sarah Helen Schmidt, Sean David Schmidt and Hannah Christine Grace Schmidt (preceded in death). He was loved and will be missed by all.

A memorial service will be held at Joyful Servant on Saturday March 23, 2024, at 11:00 AM. Hal's remains will be both retained by Friends Community Cemetery of Newberg, Oregon and some scattered on the old farm outside of Russell, Kansas. In lieu of flowers one can donate to Joyful Servant OR for the Employee Appreciation fund at Friendsview care of the Business Office. Condolences may be sent to Melita Schmidt c/o Friendsview Retirement Community, 1301 E Fulton Street, Room 203, Newberg, OR 97132.

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAR **23**. 11:00 AM (PT)

Joyful Servant Lutheran Church
1716 N. Villa Road
Newberg, OR 97132

Tribute Wall

BR

“ I met Hal and Melita as Lake Oswego Lions. Hal was the Treasurer and Webmaster. I served as our club Secretary, and we worked very closely keeping the website full of photos and stories of what the club was up to. He was as sharp as a tack and a delight to know! He and Melita were a team we all enjoyed. On August 19, 2016, when he sent the photo he described as "a picture of the 2 or us on the new Foot Bridge over Hess Creek Canyon which spans the main campus of George Fox Univ. to the new Commons. We had a temp of 102 today and tomorrow it is to be the same. This will be considered our 56th Anniversary Picture." I immediately broke into song, "Stand by Your Man" Melita, you always have and you and Hal will always be one of the sweetest couples I have ever known. God keep you surrounded by love, sustained by faith and encouraged by hope day by day.

Love and blessings always,
Lion Bonnie Roeder



Bonnie Roeder - March 18, 2024 at 04:18 AM

CR

“ 2 files added to the album Brooklyn Elementary School 1964-65 from Capi & Sheryl



Capitola Evelyn Reed - February 13, 2024 at 08:44 PM

CR

Mr. Schmidt - Harvey "Hal" Harold Schmidt (our 7th grade teacher at Brooklyn Grade School, Portland, Oregon in the 1963/1964 school year) has died. Both Sheryl Mansfield and I are struggling with the inaction on our parts, to get ourselves out to Friendsview in Newberg, to visit him before he died.

Mr. Schmidt was one of those teachers you simply love. We were lucky enough to have him cross our paths as a new teacher with the Brooklyn kids "grade school rumor mill was" declaring that Mr. Schmidt was coming to Brooklyn having been a former pastor - we were pretty sure we could drive him out!

Rumors ran rampant with Brooklyn kids linked together from K thru 8 grades, a melting pot of nationalities, most families with one car, working dads - or no car at all – time for us to "plot" and "connive" and spread misinformation. My educator parents, Edward and Dorothy Elliott, were good friends with Mr. Schmidt, inviting him to dinner at our home on SE Rhone St, when I had to be on my best behavior, and never confirmed or condoned any our rumors, but that didn't stop us from trying out lots of theories for all the teachers.

Sheryl and I delighted in activities in our safe 7th grade class such as:

- copying answers from the "key" at the back of our math book;*
- escaping from class to take attendance to the office & lunch count to the cafeteria;*
- "hiding" out in the auditorium rows upon rows of chairs, arranged theatre style in the school auditorium, huge velvet curtains on the stage – at times forcing Mr. Schmidt to come search for us – he coming in the front doors of the auditorium and we zoomed out the back doors – and then we wondered if he actually "saw us";*
- and taking the most circuitous routes we could find, around the entire building, when sent to collect & distribute library books.*

Those were the days. And Mr. Schmidt's responses to our antics and ongoing chatter seemed always to be upbeat and cheerful, admonishments delivered with smiling eyes and sometimes slight tugs on our pony tails.

From the handwritten Christmas card he and Melita sent just over a month ago: "We are so happy to know that we have former students on our friend's list. Sheryl and you are two I will not forget."

We gave Mr. Schmidt a run for his money, for sure! And yes, he did invite us to call him "Hal" but it just never seemed dignified enough for our always punctual, dressed in a suit and tie, 7th grade teacher.

*Well done good and faithful servant, you are missed.
Love Capi (Elliott) Reed and Sheryl (Hampton) Mansfield*

Capitola Evelyn Reed - February 13, 2024 at 08:46 PM



“ A sympathy card was purchased for the family of Harvey "Hal" Harold Schmidt.



February 13, 2024 at 03:03 PM

JL

“ While working on my nursing degree at George Fox University, I got a job working as a caregiver/med tech at Friendsview in the wing that Hal lived in. I worked most of my days caring for his assigned group, and we got close rather quickly. I worked there almost 2 years. Hal loved to talk about his childhood in Kansas, life with Melita and all his kids and grandkids, and loved asking about my life and family. My dad owned a rock quarry, so Hal would always ask how “the chiseler” was. He had the best sense of humor. Despite everything he had gone through, he always had a smile on his face and did his best to make those around him laugh. My best friend, Sydney, worked there in the same group caring for Hal, and he would call us two of his favorites. Even after we parted ways with Friendsview, we visited Hal several times before he passed away. We could tell it meant a lot to him and speaking for us both, we are so glad we got to see him extra before his passing. For us Hal wasn’t just a resident, but a great friend and he will be incredibly missed.

I love the story of this picture of Hal and I, it wasn’t long after I stopped working at Friendsview. I was really missing all my residents and coworkers, when I was driving by the dentist office off Villa rd with my mom visiting me, and saw Hal sitting outside. I cranked it and flew into that parking lot and ran to give him a hug. He was startled, but very excited to see me jump out of the car. He was excited to meet my mom and I’m so thankful she took this picture of us. He loved talking about that story when we visited him.



Jessi Loper - January 30, 2024 at 08:18 AM

DS

Sorry Jessi. Dad had a way of connecting to others

David Schmidt - February 03, 2024 at 11:55 AM

BB

“ *Hal was one of the kindest people I have ever known. He and Melita gave such joy to all of us in the L. O. Lions Club. All my love and sympathy to Melita and her boys. Barbara Buckley*

Barbara Buckley - January 29, 2024 at 10:42 PM

PS

I met Hal in the LO Lions Club. I enjoyed him very much. He had a wonderful spirit and quite a sense of humor. I know George Fox football will miss him dearly as he was an avid fan. RIP dear Hal. Love to Melisa and Sons

Paula Schiedler - January 29, 2024 at 10:56 PM

RP

Sympathy for the family. I am a long ago friend of the Schmidt family. We had many Russell St John Lutheran League memories and trips. Ruth Tittel Pickering

Ruth Tittel Pickering - March 06, 2024 at 12:53 PM