



Richard P. Irwin

October 22, 1923 - January 9, 2009

SCARBOROUGH, MAINE -- Mr. Richard Pitt Irwin, 85, of Scarborough, Me., and formerly of Colebrook, died early on January 9, 2009, in Saco, Me., after a period of declining health.

Mr. Irwin was born October 22, 1923, in Worcester, Mass., a son of the late Edwin McMillan Irwin and Eleanor (Huston) Irwin.

Richard was a 1941 graduate of Houlton High School in Houlton, Me., and he later attended the University of Maine at Orono where he attained his bachelor's degree and a master's degree in the field of education. During World War II, he served with honor in the U.S. Army Air Force from 1943-45 as a classification specialist with the 23rd Mobile Reclamation and Repair Squadron in England, France (Normandy/Northern France campaign), Belgium (Ardennes/Battle of the Bulge), and Germany/Central Europe (Rhineland campaign). He then returned to teaching.

Mr. Irwin taught at many different school systems in the New England area before settling at Colebrook Academy, including high schools in Bradford, Vt., Groveton, NH, Salem, NH, West Bridgewater, Mass., and Plainfield, Vt. For a brief period, he took a leave of absence from teaching and began to pursue a doctoral degree at the University of Pennsylvania in 1950-51.

Mr. Irwin arrived in Colebrook in 1960, residing at the home of Eleanor Noyes at 16 Monadnock Street for 40 years. He served as principal and headmaster at Colebrook Academy from 1960 to 1978. After that he remained as a social studies and history teacher for another fourteen years, fully retiring in 1992. He served as a member of the Colebrook School Board from 1995 until 2004. After retiring from his public service on the school board, Mr. Irwin moved full time to his seaside home at Higgins Beach in Scarborough, Me with his beloved dog Hobo, where he had spent many, many summers.

Mr. Irwin is survived by Eleanor Noyes' granddaughter, Alyson Bristol of Wellesley Hills, MA, and an enduring circle of friends, former colleagues and students. He will be remembered by several generations of Colebrook students as a beloved mentor, and as a teacher that one could never forget.

At Mr. Irwin's specific request, there are to be no calling hours or services.

Expressions of sympathy in memory of Mr. Irwin may be made to the North Country Humane Society, c/o Joan Shatney, 60 Pleasant Street, Colebrook, NH 03576.

Funeral arrangements are under the direction of Jenkins & Newman Funeral Home, Colebrook, NH.

Tribute Wall



“ I join with you all who have shared your memories of Mr. Irwin. Some of my memories are going to his garden one evening for a signature on an FFA contest application, his fondness for peanut butter spread on homemade bread, his coming into history class and opening all the windows...no matter how cold it was outside, sending me to the bank with his paycheck to bring back the cash (one of those senior privileges), his pronouncing peninsula as "peninjula" and then what "haffened" (apparently a Maine accent? LOL), his love for any food that Mrs. Colby and crew prepared, his scary fire drills, his sitting in study hall working on Permanent Student Attendance Records using his quill ink pen with ink bottle, his VW Beetle with the Ford/Dole sticker in 1976 (not a Democrat year for him), as a Justice of the Peace I administered the oath of office for him when he became a School Board member, and his having two pair of glasses...one for reading and one for distance. Knowing he had to trade glasses made it easy to whisper in the back of study hall and not get caught. I think we can all say that we are better people today because of the time we spent as students in his care. He truly did care for each of us. Thank you Mr. Irwin.##imported-begin##Brent Lyons##imported-end##

January 20, 2009 at 06:49 PM



“ Mr. Irwin will be fondly be remembered by many students. I can still picture him standing in the hallway as the students came walking in and he bellowed at me, "Ms Rainville!!!" and when I timidly replied, "yes" he said, "Good morning". "What in the blooming blazes" was one of his favorite expressions. His big heart will be remembered for paying for lunches for kids that couldn't afford it. He was a wonderful human being and I am glad to have known him.##imported-begin##Cindy (Rainville) Vallier##imported-end##

January 18, 2009 at 12:50 PM



“ As a member of clas of 1964 - the first class Mr. Irwin saw through all four years as principal - I always respected and admired him. He was tough but fair with students. Most of us saw through his gruff exterior to his caring heart. We understood that when he "barked" he was just doing his job.

As many people know, he boarded with my Aunt Eleanor for many years and eventually became her "family". Long after he retired and could have gone on to other things, he stayed with Aunt Eleanor until she finally passed away. His devotion to her and her dogs truly revealed what a wonderful person he was. He will be missed.##imported-begin##Marylu Granquist##imported-end##

January 12, 2009 at 10:59 AM



“ My sisters and I were sooo blessed to be able to have a principal and teacher like Mr. Irwin. Norine (1973) Sheila (1974) me (1977). He truly cared about each and every student and tried to pull out the best in everyone. I know everyone has their own memories..one of mine is at hot lunch when he'd stand over me and ask me if I was going to eat my peanut butter sandwich, and I would purposely get them, and not eat them, so that Mr. Irwin could have them..because I knew he LOVED them! Yes, he as definitely a gruff exterior, but by the time you get to your senior year...you knew he was a teddy bear. His eyes expressed it, and he would turn away so that you couldn't see his smile..but he loved his students, and I'm so grateful to have had him in my life Grades 7-12! Rest in peace, Mr. Irwin...you deserve it! My condolences to his family.##imported-begin##Lori (Parkhurst) MacDonald##imported-end##

January 12, 2009 at 09:35 AM



“ *Mr. Irwin....a man of wisdom, conviction, and dedication to the students at Colebrook Academy. When I was in high school, he was the principal. You could always hear him coming down the wooden hall floors. He was a large man with a large voice, you didn't want to cross him. On the other hand I recall seeing a smirk every now and then. He was a true educator, and will surely be missed.##imported-begin##Terrie Nelepovitz [Mercer]##imported-end##*

January 11, 2009 at 07:18 PM



“ *Our BIG BARK with the GENTLE HEART is gone but will never be forgotten. He was our first principal as first year teachers at the Academy and taught us much. Farewell, Richard, we all loved you.*

Webb and Marge Palmer##imported-begin##Marge Palmer##imported-end##

January 11, 2009 at 01:27 PM



“ *What a wonderful teacher and administrator. The old fashioned educator, donating so much of his personal time to all of us. How lucky my whole family was to have had him.##imported-begin##Donald Vashaw##imported-end##*

January 11, 2009 at 12:43 PM



“ To Mr. Irwin and all who knew and loved you - the fondest farewell and gratitude for the blessing of having you in my life as a high school principal. I'm certain I gave my Dad and you, during the same four years, more frustration and worry than either of you deserved to endure with a teenager entrusted to your care. And there you are now, two days behind my Dad in your new form, with the wonderful people at Jenkins lovingly taking care of the old form where you lived in all your time with us, just like Dad. On the same page. I so wonder if there's another Betty there with you now, one you and are challenged to care for against her will, just to keep you both on your new toes? One who can convince the boys to pick up your VW bug and wedge it between two trees, then run away to her get-away car! You were great to me and I now appreciate all you did for me in spite of me. A quiz every day though, seriously! Somehow though I do know a little history still, in spite of that crazy rule. If you can, blow sparkles from the sky on me. Remember how important it is for me to see the evidence? I so hope we really do meet again, and have fun with my Dad.

Love,
bettyriley (class of '69)

P.S. I so want to know what Riley Heath said when you got there too!##imported-begin##Betty Riley##imported-end##

January 11, 2009 at 12:01 PM



“ My mother was in high school when Mr. Irwin started at Colebrook Academy and I was there when he finished as principal. I enjoyed his history class and still can recall a few of the heads of the army from the civil war. You could always hear his "what in the blooming blazes?" reverberate down the halls. It was a privilege to have had him in school and wish everyone could have had him in school. I am sure he is watching all of his former students from the best view around.##imported-begin##Haven Haynes Jr.##imported-end##

January 10, 2009 at 08:30 PM



“ I, too, was one of his students from 1968 to 1972. I was one of the office girls and spent a lot of time with Mr. Irwin. He was an incredible man, with a big heart. I watched him time after time Yelling, perhaps "helping" some students to the office, but always a fair man. And as Georgette said, he always had the secret grin. The first day of school, I was scared to death of him. By the last day of my senior year, he had earned my respect. I was honored to have been able to continue seeing him quite frequently until a few years ago. And does anybody remember his tiny little dog? Here he'd be putting the fear of God into all of the students and then had this tiny little dog that he thought the world of. Oh, yeh and his volkswagon. We will never forget him. David & Jean Lawton##imported-begin##Jean (Brooks) Lawton##imported-end##

January 10, 2009 at 05:58 AM



“ *Mr. Irwin will be remembered as the wonderful man he was. As one of his former students, I'll miss the many lessons he taught me. Not only in history class, but life. I may not have realized it then, but as time went on I did. I know he's in heaven smiling, waving his finger and saying "you blooming idiots!" He'll be gravely missed.##imported-begin##Linda (Bolton) Haynes##imported-end##*

January 09, 2009 at 07:37 PM



“ *To all of us who shared an experience with Mr. Irwin his memory will keep him alive for many years to come. He was a special person with a "BIG BARK" and a "Soft Heart." Many times I spent "Quality Time" with the man and even when he was yelling at me he always had that little grin. He never could figure out how my skirts got longer walking from Study Hall to Mrs. Covill's room to get them measured. He used to just shake his head all the way back to Study Hall and say "I don't get it Poulin."*

He truly was a special person and gained a lot of respect over the years. He was one of the best people to ever pass through the door of Colebrook Academy.

Sincerely and Respectfully,

Georgie##imported-begin##Georgie (Poulin) Johnson##imported-end##

January 09, 2009 at 04:15 PM



“ I personally mourn the passing of this great man. I was a student of his from 1984-88 and he was truly one of my favorites. He had a gruff exterior that could not mask the love he had for his students and peers. He will be truly missed by all.##imported-begin##Stephanie J. Hughes-Cross##imported-end##

January 09, 2009 at 02:41 PM