



## Mr. Donald J. Pearson

July 11, 1939 - November 3, 2016

“Observation followed by experimentation leading to further observation followed by further experimentation.”

This definition of science — included on every exam and assignment — remains embedded in the minds of thousands of Berlin-area students...and now can serve as part of the lasting legacy of Donn Pearson.

Donald Joseph Pearson entered eternity November 3, dying from heart complications at Appleton Medical Center.

Born in Marinette, WI on July 11, 1939, Pearson committed himself to serving the Berlin community beginning in 1965, remaining engaged and invested until his death.

With a 45-year tenure as a teacher in the Berlin Area School District, Pearson’s impact was widespread and deep. Besides teaching science and math and heading the local teachers’ union, he also served as a coach: high school basketball and football; middle school track, football, boys and girls basketball and girls volleyball. His imposing size, booming voice and larger-than-life persona often intimidated students initially. Over time, however, they recognized he was more fatherly than frightening. His unique blend of humor and high expectations often brought out his students’ best — both in and out of the classroom. Well-known for dispersing nicknames, hand-made buttons and candy treats, “Mr. P.” cherished the relationship he had with his students.

His investment into the community continued beyond the school grounds and past school hours. For decades Pearson worked for the Parks and Recreation Department, beginning the Open Gym, T-Ball, Dartball and Flag Football programs, managing and maintaining the Webster Street pool, Miller Natatorium and Berlin Aquatic Center, initiating the Berlin Swim Club, teaching swimming lessons, lifeguard training, as well as CPR and First Aid. Pearson personally maintained an outdoor skating rink near the swimming pool, staying up all night flooding the area in hopes of it freezing well enough for the community to enjoy during the day. He also was instrumental in organizing community movie events beginning in the 1970s and continuing well into the 21st century. Most recently, Pearson has been a fixture at Berlin's P4K Youth Center running tournaments, overseeing activities and continuing to interact with local youths.

A 1958 graduate of Marinette High School, Pearson attended Marinette County Normal/Teacher's College and finished his schooling with a bachelor's degree from University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. He taught one year in Oconto Falls before moving to Berlin.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Marlys (JoAn); sons, Troy (Becky) of Farmington, MN and Shawn (Dawn) of Berlin; granddaughters, Morgan and Mikayla; foster son, Tim (Patrice) Magdanz and Elizabeth and Hunter; three brothers, Fred (California), Warren (Peshtigo), and Frank (Menomonee, MI); three sisters, Loretta Delisse (Menomonee), Bev Zorza, and Sally Taylor (both of Marquette, MI). He was preceded in death by his mother, Ann, father Fred, brother, Robert and sister, Shirley.

A man of deep faith, Pearson's favorite song was "The Old Rugged Cross".

His family and friends mourn his loss but also rejoice in its truth: "So I'll cherish the Old Rugged Cross, 'till my trophies at last I lay down. I will cling to the old rugged cross and exchange it some day for a crown."

A Celebration of Life gathering is fittingly slated for Saturday, November 12 at Berlin's Clay Lamberton School gymnasium. A short service will begin at 10 a.m. followed by a chance to visit, share and interact extending until 1 p.m. at

which time the family will have a private burial service at Bush Cemetery in the township of Berlin.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks for donations to be made on his behalf for a scholarship fund. Monies can be sent to Berlin's Farmers & Merchants Bank earmarked "Pearson Memorial".

# Cemetery Details

## **Bush Cemetery**

Town of Berlin, WI 54923

# Tribute Wall



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the family of Mr. Donald J. Pearson.* ”



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November 11, 2016 at 08:46 AM

KP

“Change agents are people who act as a catalyst for changing the lives of people around them. Well, Mr. Pearson (better known to me and many others as ‘Mr. P’) was definitely a change agent in my life and in the lives of many others. Whether it was in science class, on the basketball court, or later in high school as his employee at the Berlin Aquatic Center, Mr. P was always cheering me on to give my best, do my best, and always do everything the right way with integrity and character. The person I am today is because of the change agent he was in the life of a scrawny little seventh grader some 25 years ago. He instilled in me a confidence and passion that has shaped me to become the person I am today.

As I reflect back on some of my fondest memories of Mr. P, my heart is full of gratitude and overwhelmed with sadness at the loss of probably my biggest fan. Mr. P had a nickname for all the students who crossed his path either in the classroom or through his coaching. My name was “Pete” after Pistol Pete Maravich, the highly regarded point guard.

Whether it was leaving motivational letters and posters on my locker, making pins of Michael Jordan, Larry Bird or Pistol Pete, he always found a way to inspire me and put a smile on my face. It was always those extra little things he did that always made me feel that I was so special and that I was someone to be valued. At the time I thought I was the only one who got that special attention but was I ever proven wrong. Mr. P made everyone feel special!

Mr. P always had a smile on his face and always found a way to connect with his students in his classes. He had such a passion for teaching. The students in his class were truly his most important asset and he invested and immersed himself into every one of them. He even would try to play matchmaker by always arranging the seating assignments in his class. It was always a good day when you were sitting in the front by his desk and he would sneak you a Charleston Chew as you left the classroom.

*Even when I moved on from junior high, Mr. P moved on with me in lots of ways. He would show up at all my high school volleyball matches, basketball and softball games and make sure to personally wish me luck before the games would start. I could always hear him cheering from the sidelines. That support didn't stop when I graduated from high school. He would continue to send me cards and call on occasion just to check in and make sure that "Pistol Pete" was making all of her lay-ups throughout my college basketball career. He has been my own personal energizer bunny. He just kept giving and giving his support and his encouragement to me. His modeling is what inspired me to become a teacher and coach. The question "why do you teach?" is often asked of me and my response will always remain "because I want to make a difference in the lives of my students like my teacher Mr. P had on mine."*

*Recently one of the American swimmers competing at the Summer Olympics was asked would she have any regrets after her Olympic competition. Many would think she would say, "a false start" or something that would have disqualified her. Her biggest regret was that at the end of the race, there would be something left in her tank. I know Mr. P left this world on an empty tank. He poured himself into so many people and our lives will never be the same. He will be remembered by many different titles: teacher, coach, boss but the one I hold close to my heart is friend. Thank you Mr. P for leaving a lasting legacy that has left an imprint in my heart. You have earned your WD Degree ... "Well done my good and faithful servant, now enter into the joy of the Lord."*

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**Krista Peterson** - November 10, 2016 at 08:17 PM



“ 11 files added to the album *Memories Album*



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**Wiecki-Skipchak Funeral Home** - November 04, 2016 at 05:34 PM