



Fred Knights Crissey

November 24, 1932 - January 27, 2022

Fred K. Crissey was born November 24, 1932 and died at home on January 27, 2022 in the care of his wife (Jan) from COVID-19 after an extended battle with Parkinson's. He lived a long and productive life with many noteworthy experiences including military service, a stint in Canadian minor league baseball, raising a family of eight children, and touching the lives of countless students through his tireless service as teacher and coach. He was the head men's baseball coach of the Plymouth Canton Chiefs from 1972-93 and has been inducted into the Canton High School Hall of Fame and the Michigan High School Baseball Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Through coaching, he mentored generations of student athletes, helping them garner collegiate scholarships and inspiring many to pursue teaching and coaching careers, thus extending his legacy and impact on generations. One of his joys later in life was visits and correspondence with past students and players who expressed that he had influenced their lives for the better.

Fred was one-of-a-kind and known for his high standards, hard-driving approach, wit, charisma, coaching/teaching talent, booming voice (especially when fired up), and his penchant for assigning people creative nicknames. He sometimes employed colorful teaching and coaching tactics, including catching the attention of distracted students by tossing a racketball their way or having a class run around the building in the middle of winter with no coats to refresh their energy. Throughout his life, he was an avid reader with an impressive vocabulary and knowledge of history, he did a daily crossword puzzle, he loved dogs, ice cream bars and a good seer sucker suit, and he was always up for watching an episode of Jeopardy or a baseball game.

He is preceded in death by his mother (Hattie), his father (Ferdinand), and his first wife (Marjorie nee' Love). He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Janice (nee' Richardson), eight children (Catherine, Caroline, Christopher, Colleen, Joseph, Ellen, Katelyn, and Emily), and five grandchildren (Mark, Max, Benson, Amelie, and Curtis).

Private cremation services were arranged by Vermeulen-Sajewski Funeral Home in Plymouth. A public "Celebration of Life" will be held at a later date. Memorials may be made to the Michigan Parkinson Foundation, 30400 Telegraph Road, Suite 150, Bingham Farms, Michigan 48025-5819.

To share a memory, please use the share a memory tab on this webpage.

Tribute Wall

LT

“ Mr. Crissey is the reason I became an English and history teacher. When I ran into him years later, he was disappointed that I didn't become a lawyer like he suggested, but I took that as a compliment. An amazing educator and inspiring person.

Lori Taylor - February 23 at 08:45 AM

DT

“ Mr. Crissey was a wonderful man! He wore so many hats, not only a coach, teacher, mentor. He was like the dad to so many young men that went to central that didn't have active fathers in their homes. Fred Crissey knew exactly what these boys needed, a father figure. Ive heard so many story of this man going out of his way for young men at central. Such a man with integrity and class. He truly loved what he did. I feel blessed to have known such a wonderful man!!! RIP Fred Crissey, please hello to Annette when you see her!!! ❤️

Donna Thayer - February 22 at 03:05 PM

ES

“ You never chewed gum or talked while he was teaching, I learned that the hard way. I definitely learned quite a bit in his class. He was a great teacher

Eric Sharp - February 08 at 03:03 PM

AS

“ Many recall memories of Mr Crissey as a coach and mentor. As a teacher, he inspired me to read literature. These habits continue to the younger generation. Thank you, Sir. You have quite a legacy. Condolences and prayers to Mr. Crissey's family.

Alicia Szydowski - February 08 at 11:27 AM

JA

“ My thoughts and prayers are with you and the Crissey family. Having the opportunity to play for Coach Crissey and Canton Baseball was something that was an honor and still think about to this day. I remember my first freshman practice and coach talked to the team and I sat there thinking what did I get myself into. I quickly realized that I had a coach that cared about us and who wanted to get the best out of us every day. He was tuff on us both on the field and in the class room and I never wanted to let him down in either one. I remember my last game our senior year and sitting in the dugout and coach talking to all of us seniors and thinking back to something he told us as a freshman. He said enjoy your time as a student and as a player because it will go fast and he was right! I did enjoy my time as a student and player for Canton I miss my teammates and especially Coach Crissey. Coach, thank you for giving me four of the best years I could ever have. You will be missed but never forgotten. My coach!

John Anthony - February 08 at 08:22 AM

SH

“ Played middle school football under Fred Crissey 1977/78. He was tough on us but we learned to play with grit. We also learned valuable lessons about being there and doing our job for the team. A little bit of Coach Crissey resides in all the coaches of my generation and his technique is still used to this date. Thank you sir for your dedication and hard work with the youngsters of yesteryear, now old men of today. Thanks for being a great teacher!

Steve Hamblin - February 04 at 01:36 PM

MC

“ Coach. Playing for you amounted to four of the most impactful years of my life. Thanks for always having the time to offer some advice and support whenever I stopped by the house on Blunk, even if you usually made me clean your pool while there. There was never a better coach or mentor. RIP.

Mike Culver - February 01 at 09:35 AM

DK

“ My thoughts and prayers to Fred Crissey's family, friends, players, and all who knew him. I didn't know him personally except as a formidable opponent in the '80s. I do know Wayne Sparkman, Brian Gilles, Tom Willette, and John Gravlin all spoke very highly of Coach Crissey. He coached some of my dearest friends Johnny Longridge, Steve Robb (Chester? lol), and many more. His positive contributions extend far beyond baseball and our community in the countless lives of those he coached and taught. All Salem Rocks should be grateful he was a terrific mentor to Coach Gravlin. I wonder if Coach Gravlin 'borrowed' some of his famous one-liners from Coach Crissey: "C'mooooown." "You're better than that." "Aw nuts." And my favorite "Yeah you can!!!"

Sincerely,
Doug Kirkpatrick, Salem Rocks 1985

Doug Kirkpatrick - February 01 at 12:21 AM

PH

“ I love this photo of Mr. Chrissy in 1985-86 Central Yearbook. It captures his high energy, caring spirit, and humor in everything. His booming voice and tennis balls always kept us awake in English. He always made you think and you knew he cared. My nickname was “socks.” Thank you for making in difference in my middle school years, Mr. Chrissy! Rest easy. My condolences to your family



Paula Hindley - January 31 at 11:24 PM

TA

“ Mrs. Crissey and family...Wow what a beautifully written obituary about a GREAT man.

I totally remember all the things mentioned in addition to the many memories others have shared.

Coach came to my dads service 8 years after I had graduated from HS. He was always there for us.

I was also lucky enough to have breakfast with him, Coach LaPointe and a few other players about 5 years ago. What a wonderful memory I have of that morning.

It is because of Coach that I have been and continue to be a teacher and coach for now over 30 years.

Thank you for sharing him with all of us former Plymouth-Canton Chiefs baseball players.

Rest peacefully in heaven Coach Crissey!!!

Tony (toe-nots) Aiken, Class of 86

Tony Aiken - January 31 at 12:48 PM

DS

“ Coach had a sign above his Central Middle School office that read "First is First, Second is nothing". I'll never forget him. Playing ball for him with great teams of 80, 81 and 82, were the best years any teenage boy could have, but one of my favorite memories is having him as my History teacher. Thanks for your service Sir, thanks for touching so many lives and being a "First is First" mentor and Human being. RIP

Dan Smith - January 31 at 10:57 AM

PP

“ I had Mr. Crissey as a teacher at OLGK in the early 60's. He was admired and respected by all of us and his love for his students was evident to all. We all wanted to be like him.

Pat Peruski - January 31 at 10:25 AM

PJ

“ The most honorable endeavor a teacher can achieve is making a difference in a student's life. He cared about how we played and helped us all to become better people. How lucky we all were to have Coach Crissey in our lives. Rest in Piece Coach.

Boog - 1972 (Pete Jenner)

Pete Jenner - January 30 at 04:10 PM

DP

“ *My sincere condolences to Fred's family. "Mr. Crissey" was a big presence in my life when I was 13 and 14 years old and was good to me.*

Dan Penrice, OLGC Class of 1967

Dan Penrice - January 30 at 02:09 PM

PM

“ *My deepest sympathies to the Crissey family. Fred was a community institution I grew up with--as kid "in the stands" at my brother Steve's games with the great Canton teams of the 70s, as student and at Central Middle School, and player in the Canton program. I was thrilled to be able to visit with him a few years ago and he recalled the details of each of these periods as if they had just happened. Like so many he touched, very appreciative to have had Fred as a coach and mentor.*



Peter Morman - January 30 at 11:37 AM

SR

“ *Coach Crissey was my JV baseball and football coach in 1970-71. He taught me many things, both physical skills and mental skills, and I went on to be a successful college athlete in both sports. His nickname for me was "Chester". He, along with an amazing group of coaches in the Plymouth Canton school system at that time, inspired me to follow a career path into teaching and coaching. But the things I remember best about Coach are the things he taught me about life - we talked about persistence, we talked about a positive attitude and positive/negative reinforcement, we talked about perception, we talked about success and failure, we talked about enjoying what you do in life. I had the opportunity to talk to Coach several times over the years - his passion for teaching, the joy he found in it, his core beliefs and values - they never wavered. Life lessons from a great man, I will never forget. Rest in Peace, Coach. Steve Robb*

Steve Robb - January 30 at 11:32 AM

DP

Hi, Steve. I believe you and I played Little League together, on the Giants, and that your dad was one of our coaches. Dan Penrice

Dan Penrice - January 30 at 02:11 PM

JK

“ My sincerest condolences to the entire family. Coach Crissey was a great person, educator, family man, and Coach. Growing up in the Canton Baseball Program as a Freshman, it was clearly evident to me, I was in for a great experience for the next four years. These experiences helped shape me into the person I am today. For that, I am truly grateful to have played for a man of conviction, competitiveness, structure, discipline, and love for all that crossed his path. From the Spring Training trips to Florida, to riding a bus up the Ozark mountains in Table Rock Missouri, for a weeks long training camp, and all the memories with Coach Crissey and teammates, will forever be with me. I couldn't have asked for a better upbringing as a young person. The success on the field was a direct result from Coach Crissey's teachings and belief in you as a person/player, that you can overcome obstacles in life, and when life throws you a curveball, you have the ability take to hit it head on. It wasn't all about the wins, it was about growing as an individual and becoming a team. My favorite term he used was, TEAM. Together, Each, Accomplishes, More. This has stayed with me to this day. As I grew with Coach Crissey and got to know him, my goal and challenge was to make him smile, just once. I swear, it was the most challenging thing to do. He was focused, determined, and stubborn, but I finally cracked the code, and noticed smile after smile during practices, games, and talks we would have. I am forever grateful to have played for Coach Crissey ('86-'89). May you Rest In Peace Coach, and thank you for all the life lessons you taught me. Forever My Coach.

Jeff Kugelman - January 30 at 09:59 AM



I remember you, Jeff! Thanks for the tribute.

Ellen Crissey - February 01 at 11:49 AM

DY

“ Coach you had a huge impact on my life. We learned to play the game the right way and to take care of each other. We played great baseball at Canton and that was a gift to many people over the years. That experience motivated me to be a lifelong educator and leader. Coach Crissey....you will always be with me and I will forever be grateful. Dan Young, 1986



Dan Young - January 30 at 09:44 AM



Thanks for sharing the photo and memories with us. ❤️

Ellen Crissey - February 01 at 11:50 AM

JS

“ Janice and family. Not many people touch as many lives as Fred did. He did it with style and in his own way which was so very effective. So many people followed his legacy to become teachers and coaches themselves. Truly a life well lived. It doesn't get any better than that. It was an honor to be taught and coached by him. I will do my best to pass it on. Rest in peace Coach Crissey. You were magnificent.



John Sutherland - January 30 at 07:44 AM

VM

Mr. Chrissy is the first teacher that made an impact on me. My curiosity for knowledge sparked by that man. Forever grateful thank you. Mr Chrissy rest in peace.

Virginia McMahon - January 30 at 09:18 AM



I love to see him so young in the photo. Thanks for sharing with us.

Ellen Crissey - February 01 at 11:50 AM

JE

Mr. Crissey was one of three men who had a profound impact on my life.

Fred molded a group of mediocre young seventh and eighth grade boys into a tight knit highly effective baseball team.

We won our division with a perfect 7 and 0 record and advanced to within one game of playing for the state CYO championship at Briggs stadium. I can hear his voice now telling me to bow my neck and strike out that next batter.

As many have attested, there was no better coach. Fred was a great friend of the Ennis family in his early days at OLG. Our memories of him have lasted for the five Ennis children for over sixty years.

May the God of all comfort provide joy and peace in his legacy.

Jim Ennis
OLGC Class of 1962

Jim Ennis - February 01 at 10:01 PM

MP

“ *Janice and family, I'm so sorry to hear of Fred's passing. He was truly a great man and so important in the hearts of many. It's been so long since we've had contact. I miss you all. May your hearts be filled with sweet memories of your loving husband, father and grandfather. Much love, Mary Major Poole*

Mary Lee Major Poole - January 30 at 07:18 AM



Thanks for the kind note, Mary! I'm sure my mom would love to visit someday.

Ellen Crissey - February 01 at 11:51 AM

FL

“ *If you ever went to Fred's office you saw this sign.... First is first, second is nothing.*

Frank LaSota - January 29 at 09:41 AM



Sounds like my dad for sure. Thanks for sharing that memory.

Ellen Crissey - January 29 at 10:47 AM

TH

A true (ICON) from Plymouth.

Tom Hindman - January 31 at 12:58 PM

BK

Mr Crissey was my teacher and coach in 1964 and 1965 at OLG. We were going to play for the championship in basketball in the winter of '65, but a few days before the biggest game of our young lives Mr Crissey's wife Marjorie died in childbirth. Our school went into deep shock. We did not have him to guide us in the championship game and we lost it in the final minutes. I am 71 years old yet at the age of 14 that was the worst sports loss I ever experienced. I never had him as a coach or teacher ever again but I have always had him on my mind all these years. God bless Mr Crissey. I have always loved the guy

Bob Kellman - May 02 at 02:26 PM