



Howard L Wikel

November 13, 1923 - March 10, 2013

Howard Wikel really didn't know every person in Ann Arbor. But as legendary University of Michigan Football Coach Bo Schembechler was quick to say: "Anyone from Ann Arbor who says they don't know Howard Wikel must be living in a cave." Bo was one of Howard's best friends. In fact, he was a trusted friend to everyone in the football program and the entire athletic department for the last 70 years. The entire university is saddened at his loss. Wikel, 89, passed away peacefully March 10 at his Ann Arbor home. "They ought to name an award after Howard," said Jim Conley, captain of the 1965 Rose Bowl team. "That's how much he meant to all of us." Wikel was a giver. One of those guys who thoroughly enjoyed doing favors for others long before doing something for himself. "If someone was fortunate enough to meet Howard Wikel and spend an hour with him, you became his friend for life.," Conley said. "He could never stop giving. He'd give you the shirt off his back if he'd remember where he left it." "Howard, my adopted father, taught me and everyone he touched the art of giving, laughing, happiness, leadership and success - " and all came from his heart" says Bob Gray, MVP of the 1964 Hockey Team. Football players were always looking to earn money through summer jobs before the upcoming season began. To help with their search, Howard, Dan Dierdorf and Pete Newell established a painting company. A chunk of the football team was hired as painters. And Wikel provided the customers, too. "I remember one summer when we painted 10 houses," said Dan Dierdorf, a member of the College Football Hall of Fame and the National

Football League Hall of Fame. "They were all neighbors and friends who Howard convinced that their houses needed a paint job." During the winter, the players put away their paint brushes and went to their shovels. They shoveled snow throughout Wikel's neighborhood to keep all streets and sidewalks safe and clean. Because of his kindly personality, Wikel had a limitless number of contacts throughout Ann Arbor and the nation. "Howard was a great matchmaker," Conley explained. "If someone came to him with a problem, he immediately had someone who could step in to help." Big or small, he never turned away any request. Wikel was a superb athlete himself. For Michigan, he played football under Coach Fritz Crisler and baseball under Coach Ray Fisher. He liked to laugh at himself talking about his biggest game in football that occurred on his 20th birthday in 1943 against Wisconsin in the Big House. "In the second half, my number was called to carry the ball," he said. "Don Lund said it was only a three or four or five yard run. But the older I get, the longer that run was." As captain and shortstop of the baseball team, Wikel did get a few offers to play professionally. But he didn't want to wander from his Ann Arbor home and the university he so loved. With his athletic career finished, Wikel turned to golf and turned into one of the most successful amateurs throughout the state. Playing at his best, he was a scratch golfer. He was a life time member at Barton Hills Country Club, active with the Golf Association of Michigan, the Michigan Seniors and he still maintained a single digit handicap when he was 75 years old. Wikel came to love the sport and served on various amateur and club committees. He proudly served as the driving force behind Bo's charity golf tournament, the Millie Schembechler Memorial Golf Classic, to raise funds for Adrenal Cancer. He served on the board of directors for the University of Michigan Alumni Association and Michigamua. He also was a founding member of Michigan's Victors Club. Except for (1943-47) when he served in the U.S. Army Signal Corps, Wikel spent his entire life in Ann Arbor. He graduated from the University of Michigan School of Pharmacy in 1952. Howard and wife Betty Eastman Wikel were married for 62 years. Betty died on Feb. 19, 2011.

Howard is survived by daughters Susan Jordan, Laurie Garoutte, Cindy Thackaberry and son David Wikel; eight grandchildren; five great grandchildren and special family members, Jim Conley, Dan Dierdorf, Bob Gray, and their families. The Wikel name will live forever in Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan. A memorial service will be held on Friday, April 26th at 10:30a.m., at the First Presbyterian Church of Ann Arbor, 1432 Washtenaw Avenue. Additional parking and shuttle service will be available at the Forest Avenue Parking Structure, 650 South Forest Avenue. Donations may be made to the University of Michigan Athletic Department, Howard Wikel Scholarship Fund or to Arbor Hospice.

Tribute Wall



“ *Howard L Wikel*

December 07, 2023 at 05:11 AM



“ *My condolences to the Wikel family. When I was in high school 1954-56 I worked behind the soda fountain at Wikel Drug. I would come there after school and then I would drive with Howard to the Wikel home and baby sit while he and his wife went out to dinner. He was a lovely, charming gentleman who was interested in everyone and everything. RIP Howard. Sue Martin*

suzanne martin jackson - December 12, 2014 at 10:12 AM



“ *To the Wikel family: my sincere sympathies. I worked with Howard as Chair of Volunteers for the Millie Schembechler Memorial Celebrity Golf Outing and valued every minute spent with he and Bo planning and executing the event. He was a giving heart; a true servant leader; one of a kind. The heavenly UM alumni fan club got bigger by one.*

Jan Davies McDermott - December 12, 2014 at 10:12 AM



“ *RIP my friend...wish I had known you sooner. You were the heart and soul of the ROMEOs lunch group at Knight's every Wednesday. I looked forward to those lunches. We will miss you.*

Ray Hunter - December 12, 2014 at 10:12 AM

RS

“ A great friend of our family and an especially loyal friend to my Father Tom. Howard had an impact on everyone's life that he touched. He will be missed. Best wishes to the entire family.

Rob (Robbie) Simon - December 12, 2014 at 10:12 AM

CI

“ Dad you were an awesome person, husband and father loved by so many. The number of lives you touched are too numerous to count. You will be missed by many but most of all your family. It is comforting to know you are at peace, no more coughing or difficulty breathing. You can see again and do all those things you loved so much. I can only imagine all those who were there to greet you, I am sure it was quite a welcoming with so many friends and family. I know Mom, Milt and of course Bo were among the many. God bless you - I love and miss you tons!!!!

Cindy - December 12, 2014 at 10:12 AM