



Obituaries

Norman A. Leising, retired golf course superintendent

Norman Aloysius Leising, 75, a retired golf course superintendent for the Country Club of Buffalo, died Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2007, in his Williamsville home.

Born in Williamsville, he attended Newman High School and received his certification in turf management from the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Besides a stint from 1952-53 as a sergeant in the US Army, Mr. Leising worked for more than 45 years at the Country Club of Buffalo, 30 of those years as its superintendent.

Mr. Leising had been a member of the Western New York Golf Course Superintendent Association since 1965 and played a key role in starting a chapter turf newsletter and co-authored a set of training guidelines for workers with special needs. He also invented a sand washer to recycle bunker sands.

On Jan. 12, 2007, he received the first Western New York GCSA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Leising retired 13 years ago from the Country Club of Buffalo but continued to be active in the Western New York GCSA and was a consultant to area golf courses and homeowners.

Prior to entering the golf business, he started his own lawn-spraying business.

He also became known as a pioneer in the practice of spoon-feeding nitrogen, a process where nitrogen is applied in small amounts to encourage healthy root and blade development, deter fungus and insect invasion and keep a golf playing surface smooth.

Mr. Leising was one of the first members of St. Gregory the Great Parish in Williamsville. He enjoyed pheasant and deer hunting with his sons and grandsons.

Mr. Leising is survived by his wife, Ann Marie; a daughter, Diane Gambacorta; two sons, Michael Leising of Boca Raton, Fla.; and John Leising; a twin sister, Norma Pfohl, as well as sisters, Zeta Allen, Irma Gray, Ruth Huber, Sylvia Hahn, Bernice Leichtnam, and Joan Walker; three brothers, James, Vincent and Robert; and eight grandchildren.

Prayers were said on Friday, Feb. 23 from Amigone Funeral Home followed by a Mass of Christian Burial from St. Gregory the Great Church.



Leising

Joseph P. Niland, legendary Canisius College men's hoops coach

Joseph Patrick Niland, 89, of Williamsville, a former Canisius College basketball player and coach and later a local businessman, died Sunday, Feb. 18, 2007, in Veterans Memorial Hospital, Amherst, after a brief illness.

Born the ninth of 13 children in the City of Tonawanda, Mr. Niland started from 1933 to 1937 at Tonawanda High School where he was All-Western New York in basketball and football in his senior year.

At Canisius College, he played basketball until graduating in 1942 as an All-American. He also played in the 1942 All-American College All-Star Game in Chicago before dabbling in pro ball with the Sheboygan Redskins.

During World War II, he served

with the Army's 20th Armored Division in Europe, ending up in Germany and returning home in 1945.

After the war, Mr. Niland took over as Canisius basketball coach, and his career and the college's program blossomed. Mr. Niland posted the second-highest winning percentage in Canisius history, beating a CCNY team in 1950 that was the last to win both the NCAA and NIT tournaments. He coached some of the top names in Griffins history, including Leroy Chollet, Hank O'Keefe, Herman Hedderick and Bob MacKinnon, while recruiting 1950s stars such as Johnny McCarthy and Hank Nowak.

After leaving Canisius in 1953, Mr. Niland coached the Rochester Colonels in the Eastern Professional Basketball League with Larry Costello and Hubie Brown. In 1955, he took over as coach at Bishop Ryan High School, where his "Foxy Five" squad of 1959 became the first in school history to reach the Manhattan Cup fi-



Niland

nals. His teams later won back-to-back cups in the mid-1960s and were league runners-up in five other seasons.

Mr. Niland served as a scout for the fledgling Buffalo Braves of the NBA from 1970 to 1972, helping to bring aboard stars Bob McAdoo and Randy Smith. He also was a baseball scout for the Cincinnati Reds in the 1960's and spent 10 years as an aide to General Manager Bill Polian of the Buffalo Bills, including during the team's run of four Super Bowl appearances in the early 1990s. Along the way, he also established his own trucking company, JED Trucking.

Mr. Niland was inducted into the Greater Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame in 2001 and also the Canisius College and Tonawanda High School Sports Halls of Fame.

His oldest son, Joe Jr., is head basketball coach at the University of Mobile in Alabama, and his son David is head coach at Penn State-Behrend in Erie, Pa. His nephew, John Beilein, is a former Canisius College head coach who now coaches at West Virginia University.

Surviving, in addition to his sons, are his wife, Lois Higgins Niland; five daughters, Maggie Glass, Martha Lamparelli, Sara McNamee and Maria and Bridget Gwitt; a sister, Ina O'Hanlon; and a brother, J. Michael.

A Mass of Christian Burial was offered Thursday, Feb. 22 in St. Gregory the Great Church.

Arrangements were made by the Dengler and Roberts Funeral Home.

Helen R. Seel, choir member

Helen R. Seel, 86, of Kenmore, died Saturday, Feb. 24, 2007, in Kenmore Mercy Hospital.

Born in Buffalo, the former Helen Zeinz graduated from Mt. St. Joseph Academy in 1939.

She was employed by the David Bell Company during World War II. She married John J. Seel Sr. in 1947 and raised five children.

When Mrs. Seel re-entered the work force during her child rearing years, she was an employee of Jeness Department Stores as a credit clerk and moved on to become a bookkeeper for Guelich Enterprises. She continued her skills as a bookkeeper with Sheridan Plaza Properties until her retirement in 2003.

She loved music and shared her vocal skills as a member of the St. Andrew's Church choir for many years.

Mrs. Seel is survived by four sons, John J. "Skip" Jr. of Clifton Park, N.Y., Richard H. of Colchester, Conn., Timothy P. of Getzville, and Christopher M. of Kenmore; a daughter, Mary Jo Picone of Getzville; 13 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Prayers were said Tuesday, Feb. 27 in D. Lawrence Ginnane Funeral Home followed by a Mass of Christian Burial in St. Andrew's Church.

Lucille 'Pat' Curry, former crossing guard

Lucille "Pat" Curry, 75, of St. Petersburg, Fla., formerly of Amherst, died Friday, Feb. 16, 2007, in Kindred Hospital Bay Area.

Born Lucille Mikoll, she was a native of Western New York and moved to Florida in 1978 from Jamestown, N.Y. While residing in

Buffalo, she spent many years as a crossing guard at Blessed Trinity School. She was a cashier for the last five years at Carillon Center Publix Supermarkets.

She enjoyed embroidery and traveling with her husband of 42 years, Philip J.

Besides her husband Philip, she is survived by a daughter, Charlene B. Watkins Cleary of Lancaster; two sons, George W. Watkins of Lakewood, N.Y., and Jim Watkins of Brandon, Fla.; a sister, Irene Stapleton; and five grandchildren.



Curry

Deaths

BAUER, Betty L. (nee Betz) of Williamsville, died Monday, Feb. 19, 2007; wife of the late Harry G. Bauer, Jr; mother of William Bauer and Robert P. Bauer; sister of Jane Cooper; also survived by six grandchildren. Mrs. Bauer was a former employee of Amherst Adult Day Care, an active volunteer at the Amherst Senior Center, and a member of New Beginnings. Services were held Friday, Feb. 23 from Evangel Assembly of God. Arrangements were made by Amigone Funeral Home. If so desired, donations may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Roswell Alliance Foundation.

BLUNT, Violet F., of Amherst, died Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2007; wife of the late Clarence A. Blunt; mother of John A. Blunt; sister of Margaret Pera; also survived by two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Services were held Saturday, Feb. 24 from St. Peter's Episcopal Church. Arrangements were made by the Harry A. Wedekind Funeral Home.

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