**A Happy Fathers Day to Paul Moyes**

**By Jim Moyes**

[**jimmoyes@aol.com**](mailto:jimmoyes@aol.com)

**Shortly after I began writing Moyes’ Memories, I received a phone call from the late Ray Baty. Ray’s first words: “You have to write a story about your father.”**

**I wasn’t aware that Ray knew my father, but over the years, after getting to know Ray, I found out that Baty was a former football coach at Ravenna.**

**I told Mr. Baty that I didn’t want to self promote my family with my writings ---but he was insistent. “Your father was a very special man; a great guy and nobody could tell his story better than you,” replied Ray.**

**Paul Moyes first arrived in the Muskegon area in 1942, departing Haslett High School to move to North Muskegon just in time to take over the head coaching duties for the Norsemen football team.**

**Just as he did at Haslett, Dad would coach all three major sports for the Norsemen, a task not uncommon during this long-ago era.**

**Training.**

**C.O. Wilkins was not your average bus driver, for his real job was serving as treasurer for 25 years at MSC. Mr. Wilkins was so impressed with Paul Moyes that he introduced him to his daughter Sara, and ---well, you can guess the rest.**

**Grandpa Wilkins was certainly a jack-of-all trades. I remember accompanying ‘Gramps’ to an early football game at MSC in the mid 1940’s and he would be selling programs before the game.**

**A season ticket holder since 1923, the first year the current Spartan stadium was built. How I loved to attend Spartan games with C.O. as his seats that he kept until he passed away in 1969 were straddling the 50-yard line with our backs comfortable leaning back against the press box.**

**Dad had not a clue how strong his football team would be at North Muskegon when he arrived for the squad’s first practice. By adding a little razzle dazzle to the offense this Norsemen team would win 15 straight games, undefeated, untied, and unscored upon, a Michigan High School record that still stands today.**

**How proud I was to be the emcee when his team was inducted into the Muskegon Area Sports Hall of Fame in 2000.**

**However, the euphoria of coaching this great team, certainly took a back seat to a much more important agenda, as our country was firmly entrenched in World War II.**

**Dad was nearly 30 years old, married, the father of two children, and a full-time coach and math teacher and North Muskegon, a role that certainly would have exempted him from any service obligations.**

**But Dad wanted to do to his part to help preserve this country’s freedom from the oppressive enemies in Germany and Japan and enlisted in the Navy.**

**On May 6, 1944, just hours after coaching the Norsemen to a baseball victory over arch-rival Hart, en route to a West Michigan Conference Championship, Dad was present when wife Sara give birth to his youngest son Tom, and then caught the train to enter the Armed Forces.**

**Dad returned from the War in time to resume his coaching duties at North Muskegon in the Fall of 1946, a position he would hold until his battle with Multiple Sclerosis got the best of him, and he had to give up his labor of love following the 1950-51 school year.**

**I will never forget how shocked I was while attending the football teams end of season banquet in the late fall of 1950. It should have been a joyous occasion as the Norsemen had won yet another WMC football title.**

**Instead, Dad dropped a bombshell on my kid brother and me when he announced that he was retiring as a coach at North Muskegon due to his illness. “Illness?” I gasped to my brother Tom, “Dad never said he was ill.”**

**His retirement from coaching went out on a high note, as his 1951 baseball tam was a real powerhouse, losing only to the 1951 state champs, the undefeated Muskegon Big Reds.**

**Dad’s illness quickly took him downhill fast, and in 1953, while teaching his beloved students from a wheelchair, he had to retire from the classroom as well as the playing fields for NM.**

**For the next seven years, until he passed away at the Saginaw Veterans Hospital on October 1, 1960, Dad never once complained of his misfortune, and always maintained his incredible sense of humor.**

**My biggest regret was that Dad, who taught us all the fundamentals when we were very young, never got to see either of his two sons play in high school.**

**I have always been a strong opponent of schools having parent’s day for one’s final game in his senior year in high school. I remember the pain I felt when only my mother accompanied me out on the court for our final home basketball game back in 1959.**

**I grieved because I knew how badly Dad would have wanted to be there, and I know this grief carries over to all the youngsters who cannot experience the joy of having both of their parents in attendance.**

**Dad was also a firm believer in education. So much so that even knowing his time to teach would be very short, he was determined to get his master’s degree in mathematics, a goal he accomplished just before his retirement from teaching in 1951.**

**It was while Dad was attending MSC that he met and became very close friends with an assistant football coach of the Spartans, Duffy Daugherty.**

**Daugherty, who would succeed Biggie Munn in 1953 as the head coach of the Spartans, was not only a legendary coach, but also a man who will always stay No. one with me in Spartan coaching lore. Despite Duffy’s incredibly hectic schedule during a football season, Daugherty would often show up with a projector on hand and show on a blank wall the preceding Saturday’s MSU football game to my grateful father.**

**I remember also how much joy Dad got from seeing his former players stop by to spend time with Dad during his last years.**

**His 1942 team took a visit a step further back in the 1950’s when the entire team stopped over, not to just say hello and thanks, but came equipped with ladders and paintbrushes and painted our entire house!**

**It is one’s natural inclination to pursue your father’s interest and hobbies, a trait that I quickly followed. Dad loved sports, particularly football and baseball. He never hunted, fished or did a lot of shopping.**

**His only vice was smoking those ghastly Old Gold cigarettes that we had to hide whenever Grandpa Moyes would arrive unannounced from nearby Cedar Springs.**

**How I loved going to baseball games with Dad. I can remember Tom Mitchelson, a former star athlete at North Muskegon, picking up Dad and his two sons to take us to Sunday baseball games at Whitehall.**

**Town ball was huge in the 1940’s and early 50’s and I was thrilled to watch those players from yesteryear perform in front of very good crowds at the old Whitehall ballpark.**

**Mitchelson was the shortstop on Ray Funnell’s Whitehall team that featured a couple of pitchers that I remember to this day. One was Dude Pelon, a left-handed pitcher whose fastball couldn’t break a thin pane of glass but had more dips and doos then any contestant on Dancing with the Stars.**

**The other pitcher was Claude Boyer who looked like Roger Clemens, with a nasty scowl on his face that seemingly always had a three-day-old beard.**

**About a decade later, I hit my first (of very few) homeruns off of Claude Boyer, who by that time had lost a few MPH off his fastball.**

**Dad always let me hang around his practices when he was coaching football and baseball. Gads, I must have been a pest. I felt like a million dollars following a John Arntz kickoff when I raced onto the field to remove the kicking tee.**

**I can recall visiting my dad at the Veterans Hospital in Saginaw and ‘boasting’ about my latest basketball game. But Dad was a realist, who knew his son was not about to become the second coming of Bob Cousy.**

**When I asked him what major college powerhouse, I should attend to further what I surely felt would be a ‘sterling’ basketball career he said: “Join the Army.” And although I never for a moment agreed with Dad: He was right. I should have joined the Army.**

**In November of 1963, long after Dad was gone, I didn’t join the Army, but instead Uncle Sam drafted me into their ranks.**

**Every year since 1973 I am so proud to return to my alma mater at North Muskegon to present the Moyes Sportsmanship Award to a Norse boy and girl senior.**

**This award goes back to 1953 in honor of Paul Moyes, an award won by his youngest son Tom in 1962. There was no way I deserved this award when I was attending NMHS. The officials at North Muskegon added by brother to this Memorial award after he passed away in March of 1973.**

**I believe Dad might have been proud of what I accomplished athletically, but he never would have approved of my on-court demeanor. In a nutshell, I was an immature hot dog!**

**It’s now been over 50 years since Dad left us, but I doubt that a day doesn’t go past that I don’t think about him or my brother Tommy.**

**Happy Father’s Day Dad!**