

In Memory Of Edward J. Knipper

April 17, 1923 – May 21, 2013



Edward J. Knipper passed away in Waco, Texas, surrounded by his family, on May 21, 2013. Services will be at 2:00 p.m., Friday, May 24, at First Baptist Church Waco with the Dr. Matthew Snowden and Rev. Randall Perry officiating. Mr. Knipper will lie in state at Wilkerson-Hatch-Bailey Funeral Home.

Ed was born in Bloomfield, New Jersey on April 17, 1923 and moved to New York City in 1938. He graduated from George Washington High School in January, 1940. He worked for a year and a half at Time, Inc. in the Mail Room.

He enrolled as a freshman at Baylor University in Waco in September 1941. In December 1942, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program. He completed Pilot Training as a B-29 Heavy Bomber Pilot. He was part of the 20th Air Force, 499th Bomb Group, 477th Squadron. Ed flew combat missions to Japan from bases in Guam and Saipan. Upon cessation of hostilities, he helped air drop food, clothing and medical supplies to Allied Prisoner of War Camps in Japan. He was the Recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with clusters.

Ed separated from service in January, 1946 and returned to Baylor to complete his degree, upon completion of which he taught German at Baylor and commenced work on a Master's Degree.

In August of 1949, he married Mary Blanche Hooker (Baylor '48) and they served as directors of Kokernot Hall. They have two sons, Jeff and Joe.

Upon completion of his Master's Degree in 1951 he began a 41 year secondary teaching career in the Waco ISD. His assignments included stints at West Junior High, Old Waco High and Richfield High. His principal teaching assignments were in Chemistry, Physics and German. For some 15 years while at Richfield High, he would lead his German students on summer study programs throughout Europe. In addition to

his teaching duties he also served as an athletic coach at both high schools (assistant in football and head baseball). He retired from the Waco ISD in 1985 and accepted a similar teaching position at Vanguard College Preparatory School, where he stayed until his retirement in 1992. For over a decade, each summer, he served as a counselor and horseback riding instructor at Camp Stewart and Camp Rio Vista in the Texas Hill Country.

He was the recipient of the first Waco ISD Outstanding Teacher Award and the recipient of the first Waco Educations Foundation Distinguished Retired Teacher Award.

He is one of 14 charter members who founded the Waco Calligraphy Guild in 1998. Since that time he has become an accomplished calligrapher, having attended numerous workshops conducted by internationally recognized calligraphers. Besides calligraphy, his varied interests included gardening, horsemanship, and Baylor athletics of every type. He and Mary were a regular presence at the Ferrell Center and the Baylor ballpark. After his retirement, Ed and Mary enjoyed traveling extensively throughout the world.

For more than 50 years he has been a member of First Baptist Church's Abner McCall Sunday School Class.

In whatever capacity you knew Ed, he touched the lives of thousands of people in a positive way. He was not a perfectionist, but he was a person of excellence and pursued all his endeavors with passion and purpose.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Mary Knipper; his sons, Jeff Knipper and wife, Emily McLaughlin, Fort Worth; and Joe Knipper and wife, Eileen, Waco.

Honorary pallbearers are the former members of his Richfield High School Baseball Teams.

If desired, memorial donations may be directed to the Baylor Bear Foundation Scholarship Fund and the First Baptist Church Foundation. The family invites you to leave a message or memory in our "Memorial Guestbook" at www.WilkinsonHatchBailey.com.

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Longtime Waco educator Edward J. Knipper dies

Edward J. Knipper, who won the first “outstanding teacher” award presented by the Waco Independent School District, died this week at age 90.

By MIKE COPELAND mcopeland@wacotrib.com Waco Tribune-Herald

Edward J. Knipper, 90, a war hero, New Jersey native and winner of Waco Independent School District’s first Outstanding Teacher Award, died Tuesday in Waco.

Knipper became a legendary teacher at Richfield High School, often leading his German students on summertime trips to Europe.

He also felt at home in the dugout, coaching the Richfield Rams’ baseball team with a rulebook stuffed in his back pocket for support if he disagreed with a call.

Knipper was a demanding teacher, but students clamored to take his classes, said Mary Henderson Senter, a public relations specialist for WISD who attended Richfield High, “where Mr. Knipper was considered a legend.”

“He was passionate, had an infectious enthusiasm and challenged people to do their very best,” Senter said.

Knipper received the first WISD Outstanding Teacher Award and the first Waco Education Foundation Distinguished Retired Teacher Award.

Teaching took him to West Junior High, the old Waco High and to Richfield until his retirement in 1985, after which he taught at Vanguard College Preparatory School until 1992.

Knipper was known for his varied interests. Each summer for more than a decade, he served as a counselor and horseback-riding instructor at Camp Stewart and Camp Rio Vista in the Texas Hill Country.

He also was among 14 charter members who founded the Waco Calligraphy Guild in 1988.

“He was an outstanding person in every phase of his life — school, church, whatever,” said Kay Metz, a former teacher at Richfield who later served as WISD’s director of development and community partnerships.

“He was a gentleman, scholar and friend who inspired others and believed in people in every part of his life. He probably influenced more children in the history of the WISD, so there was no doubt he would receive the first Outstanding Teacher Award.”

Dr. Joe Knipper, a Waco dermatologist, said he never had the opportunity to take a class under his father and envied those who did.

“I was going to Waco High when he was at Richfield,” Knipper said. “But I heard about how much fun his students had, and the connection he had with them. But he was tough. If you made an ‘A’ under him, it was because you earned it. His mantra was: Never be satisfied with anything less than the very best.”

As a coach, Knipper was very competitive, “but he was also a stickler for playing by the rules,” his son said. “He always had a rulebook in his pocket so if something happened on the field, he could pull it out and confront the umpires with, (saying) ‘This is what the rulebook says.’”

“I count myself blessed to have him as a dad,” Knipper said. “He did a lot of things for people no one ever knew about because he refused to toot his own horn.”

Knipper was born in Bloomfield, N.J., on April 17, 1923, and moved to New York City in 1938. He worked a year and a half in the mailroom of Time Inc., but in 1941 enrolled at Baylor University. His studies were interrupted by World War II, and he enlisted in the Army Air Corps Aviation Cadet Program.

He flew combat missions to Japan from bases in Guam and Saipan. Upon cessation of hostilities, he helped air-drop food, clothing and medical supplies to Allied prisoner of war camps in Japan. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross and Air Medal with clusters.

After the war, he completed his master’s degree at Baylor, where he taught German and oversaw Kokernot Hall with his wife, Mary Blanche Hooker, whom he married in 1949.

During his retirement, Knipper enjoyed traveling extensively throughout the world, gardening and attending Baylor sporting events.

“He was a sweet guy and very faithful,” said the Rev. Matt Snowden, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Waco, where Knipper for more than 50 years was a member of the Abner McCall Sunday School Class, named for the longtime president of Baylor. Services for Knipper are scheduled for 2 p.m. Friday at First Baptist Church. He has designated the Baylor Bear Foundation Scholarship Fund for memorials, and honorary pallbearers are former members of his Richfield High School baseball teams.

A few interesting bits of information that were shared at Ed Knipper's funeral service:

Mr. Knipper was married to Mary and on their first date, he took her to a wrestling match. Also, Mr. Knipper collected ties and it was pointed out that he probably never wore the same tie twice. His wife, Mary, would go through these ties periodically and take some of them to Goodwill, in order to make room for the new ties that he would purchase. Upon his death, Mr. Knipper was in possession of 48 ties. Also, another funny thing mentioned: One time Mr. Knipper was teaching a class and there was one girl in the class who kept talking instead of listening to him. Mr. Knipper went to the back of the room, opened a closet and got out a fire extinguisher. He walked over to the girl who had been so busy talking and not listening...gave one shot with the fire extinguisher to her footand then told her to be quiet.

Anyone who knew Mr. Knipper surely knows this sounds just like the prankster that he was—but he knew how to get --and keep-- one's attention! A great educator!!!

Original calligraphy by Ed Knipper and a picture of Mr. Knipper in his garden:



As the
BIRD FREE
OF ITS CAGE
SEEKS THE
HEIGHTS,
SO THE
CHRISTIAN
SOUL IN
DEATH FLIES
HOME TO
GOD.

An Original Ed Knipper Creation



We give back to you, O God, those whom you gave to us. You did not lose them when you gave them to us, and we do not lose them by their return to you. Your dear Son has taught us that life is eternal and love cannot die. So death is only an horizon and an horizon is only the limit of our sight.

William Penn