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TOM MCQUAID - TEACHER AND COACH

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Tom McQuaid is legendary, and his memory lives on. Former students of Beaufort High School remember him as their math teacher, basketball coach, or both.

We remember him as being a strict disciplinarian, a professional teacher, and one whose teachings in the classroom and on the basketball court earned great respect. In the eyes of his students and players, he was a true gentleman.

Thomas Harold McQuaid was born in Austintown, Ohio on February 12, 1912. He received his AB degree in mathematics in 1935 from Newberry College in South Carolina. He later received his Masters Degree in physical education in Springfield, Massachusetts.

In 1935, he began his long, renowned career in Beaufort, where he taught mathematics and coached basketball.

One could not have attended Beaufort High School without having had Mr. McQuaid. Our brothers and sisters were taught by him in math classes and learned basketball skills on the basketball court. Then younger family members came along, and we were privileged to have had him also.

Beaufort High School was a small school, and the town was fortunate to have had teachers of the caliber who taught here, teachers dedicated to their profession, teachers strong in their knowledge of subject matter whose leadership prepared students for life. They helped to build character, instilled fairness and determination; they gave us the opportunity to become leaders. Mr. McQuaid was one of those teachers.

I remember days spent in his' classroom when I took Algebra I and II; it is the only classroom I remember where I sat, and it was not on the front row. Most students were almost afraid of Mr. McQuaid; therefore, misbehavior was not a problem. This teacher liked to tease his pupils, and at times there was much laughter. He earned our respect and appreciation.

Mr. McQuaid dressed immaculately. I have no recollection of him wearing anything to school but a suit and tie. The casual appearance found in today's classrooms would have been uncomfortable for this teacher. I remember glen plaid suits as a favorite, and I also remember that when his teams were winning, which was most of the time, he would wear the same socks to each game. I have also heard that he chose to wear the same tie. He was not superstitious, but he did not want to take chances.

Faye Mason Nelson reminded me of the manner in which he called a class roll. When the student's name was called, the student responded with the number of problems he or she had completed for homework. Only the most daring would give an incorrect number because sometimes he took up the homework and other times he would not. Honesty was the best policy.

One of the first days in his classroom brought forth the story about when Tommy Russell, my brother, made a basket in the opposing team's goal and gave the other team two points. This happened in a county tournament when Beaufort was playing Morehead City High School, which also won the game by two points. Without a doubt, Tommy was pulled from the court and took his seat on the bench as far from the coach as possible. After all of those years when Tommy played on one of the early basketball teams, Mr. McQuaid was quick to remind me of Tommy's mistake.

The gymnasiums at Newport, Atlantic, and Beaufort were built about the same time as WPA projects. The Newport and Atlantic gyms were wooden buildings, painted white, and the exteriors and interiors were exactly alike. One end looked just like the other.