



## Edward Marion Havitz

May 17, 1930 - September 4, 2014

### Edward Marion Havitz

Life is paradox: often beautiful, then sometimes heartbreaking; generously blessed, then seemingly cursed; wind blowing gently at your back, then howling in your face. Ed Havitz was blessed with more of the former than the latter. On September 5, 2014, Ed's body was transported from a long term care facility nestled on infill property in one of the world's magnificent parks, Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, to serve one final time, this for medical research purposes at Michigan State University. From there his cremated remains will eventually be returned, reunited with those of his life partners, and spread on public land. Ed Havitz lived an incredible life. He fought under Douglas MacArthur, voted for Ike and JFK, danced to Louis Armstrong, marched with Martin Luther King Jr., plotted political strategy with George McGovern, walked with Millard and Linda Fuller, built homes with Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter, comforted and counselled people on society's and community's margins, lost an infant son and two beloved wives too soon, and cheered in solidarity with his daughters when Billie Jean King beat Bobby Riggs. Generous with his time and money, Ed sought "to give personal things to the people I love" and "material things to people who really need them."

Ed Havitz died peacefully September 4, 2014 in loving care at Lakeview Estate near Maple City MI. Born to Alma Albertine (Buelow) and Edward John Havitz in Marshfield WI on May 17, 1930. Ed was predeceased by his parents, two beloved wives Carol (Keefer) Havitz in 1982 and Pamela Fulton in 2009, a son (William John), sister Rosemary (Virgil) Seavers and brother John (Elaine). He is survived by two brothers Elliott (Katie) of Wisconsin Rapids WI and Lloyd of Amherst WI; six children, Mark (Sue) of Kitchener ON Canada, Lynn (Doug) Hansen of Lake Leelanau, Kari Brandon of Holt, Sue Nguyen of Holt, Jimmy (Morgan) Morgan of Lansing and Faith Fulton of Northport; five stepchildren Anna (Robert) Messner of Palo Alto CA, A.A. (Cindy) Hopeman of Arlington MA, Sue (Dee) Davidson of Dallas TX, Leslie (Jeffrey) Sheats of Niwot CO, Bob (Christy) Hopeman of El Cerrito CA; and 19 grandchildren. Ed cherished family. Responding over a decade ago to the question, "List what you'd do if you had only a few weeks left to live" the first two among Ed's seven entries were: "1) Arrange to hug and hold each of my children and grandchildren, including Pam's family, and tell them how valuable they were to me; and 2)

Thank God for two wonderful wives, each day.”

Raised on a Junction City WI dairy farm, Ed graduated from Central State Teachers' College (now Wisconsin-Stevens Point) and later earned a Master's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His Bronze Star service as platoon commander in a racially diverse 86th Searchlight Company during the Korean War impacted Ed's views on social justice. Returning home, Ed taught social studies for 35 years, first in Hannibal WI, then Escanaba MI and finally Lansing MI. Ed was a basketball coach, assistant principal, and advisor of the Black Students club, Ecology club and Student Council. Summertime he worked jobs ranging from police officer in Escanaba to construction inspector and recreation coordinator in Lansing. During the 1960s Ed chaired the Michigan Education Association's Human Relations Commission; he trained to mediate civil unrest contexts and was a vigorous advocate for hiring minority teachers. In the 1970s and 1980s, as an Eaton County Commissioner he championed farmland preservation and park development, proudly and harmoniously working, at times as the lone Democrat, on an otherwise all-Republican board.

Upon retirement from the Waverly School system in 1988, heavily influenced by favorite Biblical passages in the Book of James, Ed turned his avocational endeavor full-time to people on society's margins. His varied interests included volunteering at Lansing's Advent House ministry, organizing Church World Service CROP Hunger Walks in several communities for multiple years, presiding over Lansing Habitat for Humanity's Board during some formative years and, after moving back to the Upper Peninsula, co-founding (with Pam) Hiawathaland Habitat for Humanity in Manistique. He worked on over 50 Habitat builds, including service as principal fund raiser for at least half. A large portion of Ed's philanthropic work, as well as six trips to Mississippi and Louisiana on Hurricane Katrina relief teams, occurred after graceful acceptance of his 1997 Alzheimer's diagnosis. Ed was a lifetime member of the NAACP, member of Disabled American Veterans, and an active member of five Presbyterian churches over his adult life, serving in numerous capacities from Sunday school teacher to Elder. Honoring his life's work, two Habitat for Humanity homes were funded and built in Waterloo ON Canada in 2000 by a 120-member army of family and friends. Ed was MEA Regional Teacher of the Year, Manistique Folk Hero, Michigan Habitat Volunteer of the Year, and Finalist for the Michigan Governor's Lifetime Achievement Award for Volunteerism. His memorial service and luncheon will be held next month at Suttons Bay Congregational, last of Ed's church homes, on Saturday, October 11 at 11:00 a.m. Ed's family requests that charitable donations in his memory be made to Hiawathaland Habitat for Humanity <http://www.hiawathalandhabitat.com/> or to an organization of the giver's choice.

# Comments

---



“ Dear Family,  
We look forward to seeing you and getting a chance to share memories of Ed at the memorial service on October 11th in Suttons Bay. He was a special person. Ed, Pam, and Faith mean a lot of us. The Waterloo ON Canada H4H build with all its memories remains a favorite of ours. Ed brightened our lives with his ever-welcoming smile, handshakes and hugs. We thank God for letting Ed and his family be a part of our lives.  
Don & Janine Tyrrell  
Manistique, MI

**Don & Janine Tyrrell** - September 30, 2014 at 01:13 PM

---



“ Dear Mark, Sue, and Family,  
  
Wishing you much comfort and peace during this difficult time. Having heard your family stories over the years, I can undoubtedly say that your father was a generous and was an inspiration to many. Love to you all.  
  
Kathy Wicks

**Kathy Wicks** - September 15, 2014 at 01:17 PM

---



“ Ed was one of the most active men I ever knew in terms of the pursuit of equality and social justice. I met him in 1970, and he let me in to the group of crazies that played full court basketball at Waverly High at 6:00 A.M. We also worked together with the Eaton County Democratic Party. The world needs more people like Ed, and he will be sorely missed.

John R. Joslyn-September 11 at 3:53 PM

**John R. Joslyn** - September 11, 2014 at 02:55 PM

---



“ Ed was a special friend, one who mentored myself and many others. he was a man who walked the life he taught, one who inspired me, one that showed what giving was all about. Ed touched my life in ways no one else has or ever will. Our sympathy to his family.

Ray & Bev Blount

Ray Blount - September 09, 2014 at 08:40 AM

---



“ Ed was a man who so believed in things that he did something. Whether he was walking or building, he did it with strong conviction in his heart and a smile on his face. I remember when he and Pam came to visit out on Martha's Vineyard one summer. We had a canoe, but were keeping it the garage, so what did he do? He built us a canoe rack. I am so glad he did, because now every time I see it, it reminds me of Ed and his can do and just get up off your butt and do something attitude. He has touched and changed many lives and his memory should remind us all that that is in all of us.

Cindy Starks - September 09, 2014 at 05:29 AM

---



“ Ed (I knew him as Mr. Havitz) was one of my favorite teachers at Waverly West, back when it first opened as a junior high. I have thought of him often through the years; my choice of careers (environmental protection) was due mainly to his influence and encouragement. My sympathy for his family--thank you so much for sharing this wonderful man with us.

skm - September 08, 2014 at 01:43 PM

---



“ Our most sincere Condolences to Pamela Thompson and her family. Edward was a Fine and respected person, always.

Bill and Shirley Bernhagen

William Bernhagen - September 08, 2014 at 07:37 AM



“ Thank you so much, Shirley. Your thoughtfulness is always appreciated!

Pamela Thomson - September 08, 2017 at 06:32 PM

---



“ Mr. Havitz was a favorite teacher of mine. May he RIP.

Brenda McBride Alleman  
Waverly High School  
Class of 1978

**Brenda Alleman** - September 08, 2014 at 06:23 AM

---



“ Mark, Lynn, Kari, Sue and families,  
So sorry for your great loss. Can't help but to find comfort in knowing he is with Mom,  
Uncle Jack and other dear loved ones, celebrating the love of Jesus! His patience,  
love, wisdom and continuous giving heart will never be forgotten, and forever missed.

**Cousin Pam Seavers Thomson** - September 07, 2014 at 10:35 PM



“ Pam Seavers Thomson

**Cousin Pam Seavers Thomson** - September 07, 2014 at 10:38 PM

---



“ Ed's lasting legacy inspires us all to act socially responsibly. Our family was blessed  
to have his influence in our lives.

**Ellyn Plackowski** - September 07, 2014 at 06:22 PM

---



“ Dear Mark and Sue

You can be sad that your Dad is gone, but also you can cherish his memory and let it live on. Smile, Love and be Happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.

Thinking of you and your family,  
Dale and Anne



**dale weber** - September 07, 2014 at 11:31 AM

---



“ Thank you for the world so sweet,  
Thank you for the food we eat.  
Thank you for the birds that sing,  
Thank you Ed for everything.

No one lived a fuller life or loved more deeply than our 'walking man'.  
You made the world a better place, Big Ed. May you always know how  
much we all love you! :) ~ Laura Wendel



**Laura Wendel** - September 06, 2014 at 11:47 PM

---



“ Mark - I am sorry for your loss. Fathers are very special people, and yours sounds like he was quite a guy!  
Sharon Kelly

**Sharon Kelly** - September 06, 2014 at 04:25 PM

---



“ It's rare to know a person who lived a life so full of impact. To have him as a father and friend, is extraordinary. With deep sympathy and best wishes in celebrating his life. Bill, Yumiko, Tatum and Samuel

**Bill Stewart** - September 06, 2014 at 03:54 PM

---



“ Sending our heartfelt sympathy.

**Marguerite M. Van Dyke** - September 06, 2014 at 01:33 PM

---



“ Mark,

Please accept my condolences on the loss of your father. He lived a long, service filled, and meaningful life, and he helped create one heckuva long distance-running son.

I wish for peace and loving memories to you and your family.

Sincerely,

Dan Dustin  
Bountiful, Utah

**Dan Dustin** - September 06, 2014 at 01:12 PM

---



“ In celebration of a life well lived -- leaving a legacy of, with and for his family; leaving a legacy for Habitat for Humanity. I know that Ed will be missed by all who loved him, but continue to dwell on the good memories and to share those stories to help celebrate his life. Gail VS

**Gail Vander Stoep** - September 06, 2014 at 12:52 PM