



Clayton Ness

Ness started GF Golden Gloves program

By Carol Graham
Herald Staff Writer

Clayton W. Ness graduated from high school at age 26. He was a pharmacist who made his living as a professional boxer during the 1930s and turned his photography hobby into a business of 20 years. He could recite hundreds of poems and didn't much like "modern" poets — those after Carl Sandberg and Robert Frost.

Ness, 78, 906 Belmont Road, died Tuesday, June 4, 1991, in Good Samaritan Nursing Center, East Grand Forks.

Services will be at 10 a.m. Saturday in Amundson Funeral Home. Visitation will be there from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday.

The family requests memorials to the Grand Forks Public Library to purchase large-print books.

Ness was born May 9, 1913, in Middle River, Minn., the son of Louis and Hannah Ness. He attended school there and graduated from North Dakota State University with a degree in pharmacy.

He was a pharmacist at the Larson-Torgerson Drug Store in Grand Forks and operated Ness-Epko at 409 DeMers Ave. from 1972 until his 1979 retirement.

Ness is credited with starting the local Golden Gloves program, which he ran for 20 years out of the basement of the camera store to provide recreation opportunities for local underprivileged youth.

That's where 8-year-old Virgil Hill went when he decided to be a boxer. That was 19 years ago. Earlier this week, Hill defended his World Boxing Association title in Las Vegas, Nev.

Denny Magnusson said Ness "was a trainer of young people through his life as a boxer." Magnusson worked in the store for six years beginning at age 15. "Lots of young people, probably without a doubt, get headed in the wrong direction," Magnusson said. "He took them under his wing and redirected their lives. He was firm, yet he was always fair. And he never asked for anything in return."

A 1970 profile of Ness in the Herald called him "a man of many hobbies. The kind who lets no grass grow under his feet."

Those hobbies included marathon running, coin collecting and teaching boxing and photography in adult education. His camera collection included an original Kodak roll film camera circa 1880. A carpenter and furniture refinisher, he also enjoyed work with hammer and saw.

Ness was a member of Zion United Methodist Church. On Jan. 21, 1933, he married Geraldine Hausauer in Grand Forks.

She survives with sons, Timothy, East Grand Forks, Dr. Frederick, Bemidji, and Thomas, Bismarck; six grandchildren; brothers, Herb, Everett, Wash., and Oryn, Portland, Ore.; and sisters, Donna (Mrs. Jack) Hodgins,* San Diego, Germaine Baughman, Seattle, and Bonnie (Mrs. Wade) Evans, Bellingham, Wash.

Ness's diverse interests continued to influence the lives of his sons. Tim writes fiction; Fred, a doctor, has run every day for 20 years; and Tom is a naturalist.