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Joseph Berkowski: University registrar took pride in being able to help students

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By JOE ROSSITER
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In his role as registrar for nearly four decades at what is now known as the University of Detroit Mercy, Joseph Berkowski saw students come and watched them go.

From the uncertain times of freshman orientation until the day they confidently marched down the aisle at commencement ceremonies, he prided himself in the fact that he had a hand in successfully shepherding them through the education process.

Mr. Berkowski of Dearborn Heights died Monday of lung cancer at St. Mary Mercy Hospital in Livonia. He was 80.

"He was always supportive of good education, and that translated to his own children as well," said his daughter, Monica Barbour, senior attorney and corporate secretary for the University of Detroit Mercy.

The University of Detroit became the University of Detroit



Joseph
Berkowski

Mercy in 1990 after partnering with Mercy College.

Mr. Berkowski became assistant registrar in 1951 and, two years later, was named registrar and director of admissions.

His duties involved coordinating admissions, registration and class scheduling, and maintaining school records, grades and transcripts. Additionally, he was responsible for assisting with commencement exercises.

"Always a very meticulous person, he prided himself in the fact that he never lost a student record — and that's saying a lot, considering it was well before the age of computers," his daughter said.

Mr. Berkowski retired in 1988.

A university booster, Mr. Berkowski religiously attended all of the Titans' home basketball games with his wife and

other family members. Each of his children graduated from the school with at least two degrees.

Born and raised in Detroit, Mr. Berkowski graduated from Holy Redeemer High School in 1944. He served in the Army after World War II ended and was stationed in Japan. After his discharge, he attended the University of Detroit, receiving a bachelor's degree in philosophy in 1951. He married his wife, the former Lillian Slowik, the previous year.

In addition to his wife and daughter, survivors include sons Joseph Jr., William and Lawrence; daughter Carol Ann Schneider, and 17 grandchildren.

Visitation will be today from 11 a.m. until the funeral mass at 11:30 a.m. at Church of the Divine Child, 1055 N. Silvery Lane, Dearborn. Burial will be in St. Hedwig Cemetery in Dearborn Heights.

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