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Florian Muske: Dentist patched up hockey stars

June 8, 2007

BY JOE ROSSITER
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

As the former team dentist for the Detroit Red Wings, Dr. Florian Muske never wanted for work.

In an era before protective headgear was common in the National Hockey League, he was the one responsible for repairing the mayhem that resulted from flying pucks, combative fists and errant hockey sticks.

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From Gordie Howe to Bryan Watson and Terry Sawchuk, he treated them all, and his only compensation was the opportunity to watch, up-close and for free, the game he loved since his boyhood.

Dr. Muske, who ran a private dental practice in downtown Dearborn for four decades and volunteered with the Red Wings almost as long, died of a brain tumor May 31 at Providence Hospital in Southfield. He was 92 and lived in Dearborn.

"He loved his job because hockey was his lifetime passion," said his daughter, Cathy Sarner.

An acquaintance of Jack Adams, former coach and general manager of the Red Wings, Dr. Muske was asked in 1949 to become the staff dentist and run the team's first aid room at Olympia Stadium, former home

of the Red Wings, along with two other doctors.

Whenever a player needed medical attention, Dr. Muske was summoned from his seat behind the bench and administered treatment.

"He was a great guy who had a gentle touch and a nice guy on top of it," said former Red Wings defenseman Bill Gadsby.

Born one of 10 children in Edgar, Wis., he graduated from the University of Detroit Dental School in 1942, the same year he married Justine Walker. During World War II he enlisted in the Navy but was transferred to the Marine Medical Corps, where he served in the Pacific Theater until his discharge in 1946.

Dr. Muske left the Red Wings in 1983 and retired from his private practice in 1986.

He was an avid gardener whose backyard abounded with colorful rose bushes and received many beautification awards from the City of Dearborn.

In addition to his wife and daughter, survivors include sons James and Jerry, daughters Marilyn Whitehouse and Cheryl Love, 11 grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

A memorial service is at 10:30 a.m. today at Sacred Heart Church, 22430 Michigan Ave., Dearborn.

The body will be cremated.

Contact **JOE ROSSITER** at 313-222-6594 or jrossiter@freepress.com.

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Dr. Florian Muske, volunteer

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