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## Gus Cifelli dies; football star, judge's life full of success

BY DAN CORTEZ • FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER • MARCH 29, 2009

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• An article in Sunday's Local News section about the death of Gus Cifelli should have said Highland Cemetery is in South Bend, Ind.

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Gus Cifelli knew what it meant to succeed. He won three national championships on the gridiron at Notre Dame. He helped lead the Detroit Lions to the 1952 NFL Championship and later was elected to the 48th District Court in Bloomfield Hills.

"Magnificent is the word for him," his wife, Gladys Cifelli, said.

Mr. Cifelli of Bloomfield Hills died of natural causes Thursday at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak. He was 84.

A native of Philadelphia, Mr. Cifelli joined the Marines. After earning a Purple Heart for his service in the Pacific Theater, he went on to the University of Notre Dame and studied philosophy while playing for the football team.

Once his career with the Lions was over, Mr. Cifelli earned a law degree from the University of Detroit Mercy. He spent 27 years as a judge, including more than a decade as chief judge of the 48th District Court. He retired from the bench in 2000.

John Panelli played with Mr. Cifelli at Notre Dame and with the Lions.

"He was a good ballplayer," said Panelli, 83, of Beverly Hills.

In addition to his wife, Mr. Cifelli is survived by his son, Stephen Czeizler; daughters Deborah Brownlow and Shelley Czeizler; two brothers; five grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren.

Visitation is 3 to 8 p.m. today and Monday at A.J. Desmond & Sons, 32515 Woodward, Royal Oak. A funeral mass is set for Tuesday at St. Hugo of the Hills Stone Chapel, 2215 Opdyke in Bloomfield Hills.

Ypsilanti.

Mr. Cifelli is to be buried at Highland Cemetery, 943 N. River St.,



Gus Cifelli, 84, died Thursday.

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