

School chief Louis Schmidt mourned

Thursday, April 16, 1981

(F)17A

By Tom Lonergan
staff writer

The flags at Clarenceville School District were at half staff Tuesday as former Superintendent Louis E. Schmidt was buried in Parkview Memorial Cemetery.

Schmidt, 71, of Farmington Hills, died Saturday in Mt. Carmel Mercy Hospital, after a long illness.

He was superintendent of the Clarenceville School District, which includes parts of Livonia, Redford Township and Farmington, from 1948 to 1966 and a one-term Republican state legislator, representing Livonia's 35th district, in 1967 and 1968.

His former Clarenceville colleagues remember Schmidt as an "old school" administrator. His tenure ended prior to the growth of teacher's unions, one of the issues that has changed school districts greatly since the mid 1960s.

SUPERINTENDENT David McDowell, noted that school remained open during Schmidt's funeral and said, "I don't think Mr. Schmidt would have wanted us to call school off. He hated to call school off for a snow day."

"He was an abrupt person who was extremely kindhearted," said McDowell, whom Schmidt and the Clarenceville school board hired as the high school principal in 1981.

"He didn't want you to think he was kindhearted, but he was. That sort of sums Louis up."

Schmidt headed Clarenceville "when the superintendent was the administrator or the captain of the ship, more or less, and it was accepted that way," said 22-year Clarenceville Board of Education member Sam Prisk. "He was the old school."

However, Prisk added, "I'm sure Louis would have molded or melded to the changes."

SCHMIDT HEADED the district during the post World War II baby boom, when most of its schools were built. Prisk said most school districts were on half-days during that time due to lack of space.

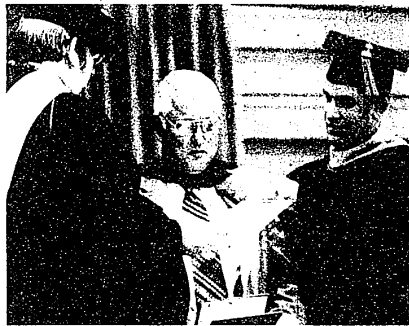
"Clarenceville never had half-days," he said. "Louis was very proud of that."

Three of the district's four elementary schools were built while Schmidt was superintendent, as was the high school and an addition to the junior high school.

Clarenceville's peak enrollment of 3,940 was reached in 1967-68. School enrollment now is 2,380 students. The district reached a high of 400 kindergarten students in 1963-64. It has less than 200 today.

The district auditorium, built in 1968, was named after Schmidt in recognition of his support for student extracurricular activities.

School board member Richard Wood, of Livonia, who was in high school during Schmidt's early years as superintendent, said "he never missed a school function."



File photo

Louis E. Schmidt received an honorary associate degree in applied science at Schoolcraft College commencement ceremonies in 1973. As a state legislator he lobbied for money for the college's physical education building.

A SAGINAW native, Schmidt is survived by his wife, Frances, two daughters, Barbara Madany and Betty Smith; four grandchildren; two brothers and a sister.

He was an administrative assistant to the state treasurer from 1968 to 1971

Following his one term in the Michigan House of Representatives.

Before serving as Clarenceville superintendent, Schmidt was principal of high schools in Plymouth, Eaton Rapids, Onaway and Kalkaska.

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