

Lifelong city resident had 'mind for history'

More obituaries, 4B

BY TOM BAER
STAFF WRITER

Ed Thayer's birthday parties had become an important social event on Farmington's Warner Street.

"One of the neighbor ladies would get a cake and some ice cream," recalled Bonnie Dale, Warner Street neighbor, "and all the parents with young children would bring them over to Ed's house for a party."

Certainly there'll be something missing on May 2, his birthday, for the Warner folks who loved Edward D. Thayer. The lifelong Farmington resident died Jan. 31 at age 94 at the VA Medical Center in Ann Arbor. He had suffered a stroke.

A memorial service for Mr. Thayer will be held at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 8, at Grace Chapel, 27996 Halsted, north of 12 Mile.

Mr. Thayer, whose father John Thayer surveyed much of the Farmington area in the past century, was a retired carpenter and construction worker. He worked for the old Detroit United Railway International line that ran through Farmington.

He was also a union painter, worked in a gas station and was a volunteer fireman in both Farmington and Farmington Township.

He lived in the same Warner Street home more than 80 years, having helped his father hand-dig the foundation as a youngster.

Mr. Thayer "had a mind for history," according to Bonnie Dale, especially the history of his community. He saw the Universalist Church moved, the Methodist Church built, and houses come down and buildings go up on Grand River.

"He was walking history," said Jo Anne McShane, a Farmington councilwoman. "He knew more about Farmington than just about anybody."

Added Dale, "He never forgot a date. I don't know how he did it." Another great love for Mr. Thayer was vegetable gardening on his own land and that of a neighbor, Doris Porter.

"Until this year he was able to take care of his own lawn and garden," said great-niece Sue Kafkas of Livonia. "He grew tomatoes for the neighbors."

Dale recalls that he also grew zucchini, squash, pole beans and pepper plants.

Mr. Thayer, who served in the Marine Corps in World War I and



From long, long ago: A studio portrait dated April 1919 shows a young Ed Thayer in a Marine uniform. Mr. Thayer served in both World Wars.



Social event: Ed Thayer's 1991 birthday party included (from left) Janie Gundlach, Leslie Schroer, Nancy Scott, Spencer Schroer and Bonnie Dale.

in the Army in World War II, told Dale and others that he used to play baseball on a swampy area west of Oakwood Cemetery where there is now a pond.

"He'd chuckle and tell you that the ground would shake when he ran," Dale said.

"Everyone remembers him sitting on his front porch all summer, reading the paper or listening to the Tigers," she added. "He was getting fed up with Spunky (Anderson, the manager) and he didn't like the new announcers. He used to say he was going to

watch the hockey fight instead of the game.

"He always voted because it was important to him. He was proud of this country. He had a flag out on his porch all the time."

Ninety-four was an important number in Mr. Thayer's life. He died at 94 in 1994. His parents both lived to be 94.

In addition to Sue Kafkas, Mr. Thayer's survivors include nephew Russell T. Pagel, niece Joan Long, and great-nephews John Snyder and Robert Snyder.

ON THE AGENDA

Below are highlights from the agendas of meetings this week. All meetings are open to the public.

Farmington Hills City Council study session
Farmington Hills City Hall, 474-6115
7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7

Agenda items include:
■ Review of Dumpster ordinance

enforcement.
■ Review of false alarm ordinance amendment issues.
■ Review of management audit approach.

Farmington City Council
Farmington City Hall, 474-5500
8 p.m. Monday, Feb. 7

Agenda items include:
■ Consideration to adopt city

council expense policy.
■ Consideration to introduce Cable Television Customer Service Standards ordinance.
■ 1994 County Tri-Party program.

■ House Resolution 3636 Re: Public Right-of-Way access.
■ Progress report on city seal.
■ Contractor payment sewer improvement project.
■ Purchase of handguns.



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