



**F**rederick Zitzer passed from this life on July 12, 2010, a sun-washed, breezy summer day. He died at home, finally overwhelmed by the spread of cancer at the age of 86. His passing was commemorated by four generations of his large family who surrounded him in a circle of strength and love and respect. His life ended with dignity and poise, as he lived. He was strong in his faith, and he was supported to the end by his wife, Patricia, and by his children.

Fred was born on April 2, 1924 in Bremen, Germany. When he was barely a year old, his family came to America and settled in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, where Fred grew up. He was an accomplished athlete all his life — participating in many sports as a youth, playing on men's teams as a teenager, earning eight varsity letters in baseball and basketball at George Williams College in Chicago, and winning the Masters National Racquetball championship in his 60s. In his later years he was a popular figure in local fitness clubs wherever he lived. And he was fiercely loyal to his favorite professional sports teams, the Chicago Cubs and the Denver Broncos.

Much of his professional career and private life was dedicated to the promotion and pursuit of athletics, especially the development of sports programs for youth. He worked for many years with the YMCA in Toledo, Ohio, and Janesville and Madison, Wisconsin, concentrating on youth character development through sports programs. He developed programs for fitness clubs throughout the United States, coached youth sports, teams, including a Little League baseball team he took to the World Series, and helped guide the development of racquetball in North America.

Fred served proudly in the Army during WWII. He took part in Day 2 of the Normandy landing in 1944, was later captured by German forces and spent the remainder of the war as a POW. His leadership qualities and personal integrity often came to light during the difficult months in prison camp. Much of his commitment to working with young people was provoked by his reaction against the Nazi youth programs he witnessed. Later in life he returned with Patricia to revisit the battlefields of the war and rekindle friendships made in Germany. He spoke often to school groups about his wartime experiences and the life lessons he took from them.

He married his college sweetheart and wife of 61 years, Patricia Anne, on September 10, 1949. Together they raised nine children who have carried on their commitment to close-knit and vibrant family life. Over the years the extended family often came together for boisterous holiday celebrations, anniversaries, and weddings. Fred could be found presiding over rousing games of "31." Fred and Pat saw the birth of seventeen grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Fred was a devout Lutheran and gave many hours of volunteer time to church projects, including the stewardship program in Bozeman.

He is survived by his wife, Patricia Anne Zitzer, and nine children — Sally Hobler (Hans), Nancy Mawhinney (Doug), Stephen Zitzer, Janet Zitzer (Ernest), Marypat Zitzer (Alan), Andrew Zitzer (Sara), Paul Zitzer (Laura), Matthew Zitzer (Sandy), and Thomas Zitzer (Chloe); and by his sister, Rose Poth of Sheboygan. His parents, Sophie and Jacob Zitzer, and his two brothers, Jacob and Godfrey Zitzer, preceded him, in death.

Graveside services will take place in the veterans section of Sunset Hills Cemetery at 10 a.m. on Saturday, July 24, 2010. A memorial service and celebration of Fred's life will follow at the First Lutheran Church of Bozeman at 225 S. Black St. at 11 a.m. In lieu of flowers, please send contributions to the First Lutheran Church Building Fund, 225 S. Black, Bozeman, MT 59715.

