

# Kearsley was first superintendent's life

By Robert Snell

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**FLINT** — The class photos covered the walls of George Daly's basement. One for each year of graduating seniors during his superintendent tenure at the Kearsley School District.

He didn't need to study the faces. Truth is, he never forgot the former students, teachers and staff. A year ago, while recuperating in a nursing home, a man was brought in to the adjacent bed.

"I know you," Daly told the surprised man, according to grandson Brian Kitchen. "I hired you in 1940 and you taught shop for one year."

Daly, the founding father of the Kearsley schools who served as the district's first superintendent from 1937-70, died Friday of congestive heart failure at his grandson's Flint Township home. He was 94.

He oversaw the 1940 reorganization that consolidated the Tanner and Wentworth school districts.

By 1946, the district had grown from 236 students the year Daly was hired to 1,429. He also helped manage the construction or expansion of several elementary schools.

His name graced the old



Daly

started a scholarship fund that gives two scholarships each year to Kearsley graduates.

"Kearsley was his life," Kitchen, 43, said Sunday.

Daly was four years out of college when he was tapped to lead Kearsley.

A former teacher in Isabella County, Daly brought equal doses of enthusiasm and discipline to the job.

He prowled the halls, greeting students and teachers. After the final bell rang, Daly drove home, ate dinner and drove back to the office to finish paperwork.

"My mother would say that when she was growing up, to see him, she had to make an appointment at the school," Kitchen said.

Then there was the cherry box.

It was a shipping box stored in his office. Inside it, Daly stashed a leather strap.

"He wasn't afraid to use it if

Daly Junior High School and is on the Kearsley-Daly Villa, a seniors complex, and the Kearsley-Daly senior center.

And Daly

kids were acting up," Kitchen said. "So many people have come up to me and said they remember the back end of that strap. It changed their lives.

"He didn't want to see any student fail and would help any student he could. He would get them to see the future and try to direct them that way."

Daly also owned the former Kearsley Theater on Richfield Road in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

He organized a local Boy Scout troop and belonged to the Welfare Masonic Lodge 517, the Bay City Consistory and Michigan Education Association.

He was a member of Lions Club International and served on the board of Leader Dogs for the Blind. He also as a charter member of Calvary Presbyterian Church.

The funeral was scheduled today at Calvary Presbyterian Church in Flint with entombment following in Flint Memorial Park.

He also leaves daughter Ruth Livingston of Clio and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife, Theda, on Nov. 27, 2002, and 13 brothers and sisters.