



Laurel Waldahl

January 17, 1936 - October 4, 2010

Laurel “Baldy” Waldahl was born to Henry and Viola (Lundstrom) Waldahl on January 17, 1936 in Eagle Valley Township of Todd County, MN. Baldy was an integral part of the Wadena Community for over 62 years. Many people will remember him as a dedicated math teacher in the Wadena Public School system. He was a member of the Elks Club for 43 years and was inducted into the Minnesota Hall of Fame for basketball and golf coaches. For several years he recorded stats for the Minnesota State High School League. Baldy passed away, at age 74, on October 4, 2010, in the St. Cloud Hospital in St. Cloud, MN. He was preceded in death by his parents Henry and Viola. He is survived by brothers Jim and Lyle, both of Aldrich, and Lane (Donna) of Wadena; sisters Earlene (Dick) Blank of Poway, CA, and Gloris (Jack Schmitz) Rehak of Maplewood; nine nieces and nephews; and six great-nieces and nephews. Funeral services were held at 11:00 a.m. on October 8, 2010, in the Christian & Missionary Alliance Church in Verndale, with Pastor Dave Seaton officiating. Honorary pallbearers were Meagan Waldahl, Erik Waldahl, and Steve Rehak. Active pallbearers were Emily Waldahl, Vanessa Waldahl, Rick Waldahl, Erika Penner, Jeff Blank, and Cindy Brousseau. Interment was in the Woodman Cemetery in Clarissa.

Tribute Wall

MM

“ *Baldy was a great friend and a great person. He loved teaching and coaching and his students and players loved him.
I send my condolences to the family as does my daughter Heather. Baldy was her godfather and came all the way to Sidney Nebraska for the service.
He will be greatly missed
God Bless you Baldy and rest in peace*

Mike Morrissey - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ *The Wadena area has lost a awesome individual....I have loads of great memories from high school and he is indeed part of them all my prayers to his entire family may God Bless you all*

Sharl Olson(Umland) - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

BN

“ *WDC Students and Athletes have lost a dedicated teacher, a tireless supporter, and a wonderful friend. He will be missed!*

Bernie Nelsen - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DL

“ *Baldy was truly a very loved cousin! He has always been thoughtful and really cared about people; all people. Last year he started following my grandson around the country when he started playing basketball for the Perham school. He was only in 5th grade, but Baldy thought the world of him. My immediate family will miss him at all our family picnics, etc. And needless to say, my grandson Chase is already affected by his death but is also happy he got to see him right before he died. We will remember him always and he will be greatly missed. Love to his family and will be seeing you soon. Deanna and family*

Deanna Lietz - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

L(

“ To Friends and Relatives of Baldy,

I remember Baldy as one of my favorite junior high teachers. I remember sitting in his class and being afraid of math. He made it so much fun and enjoyable. He was strict and expected a lot from us but at the same time kept us laughing. He told jokes in class that had nothing to do with math.

I have memories of Baldy driving the cheerleaders to away basketball games too. I remember that someone had to sit next to Baldy one time and Sheila Roisum made me - and it was actually fun. He poked fun at us and kept us talking about boys.

What a mighty package you were Baldy.

Your influence on children was great.

You will be missed!

*Lori Kemmet (Domier)
Class of '81*

Lori Kemmet (Domier) - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

EW

“ *The lives you touched are countless as well as the tears that fall for you now.*

I look forward to the day we meet again.

*Love you forever,
Emily*

P.S. Mossy has been adopted by dad and will be enjoying her Swan's summer sausage and hot dogs daily.

Emily Waldahl - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SB

“ *I remember Baldy from back when I was in elementary school. I didn't know him well, but he was always the most spirited guy in the room, sporting his athletic jacket of choice and encouraging others to do their very best - always. Personally, he was an inspiration and encouragement to me during many a Hoop Shoot Contest. I still have those trophies to this day - I remember how proud I was of them. Every time I look at them, I think of Baldy and how he believed in me...and so many others. Clearly, he had a resonating impact on so many individuals and communities. Truly...what a great man. He will be missed dearly.*

Sarah Bach-Bergs - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SC

“ I am so sad to hear of the passing of our dear friend Baldy. We broadcast games together on the radio for nearly 6 years and became lifelong friends. Baldy was one of the most thoughtful, intelligent people I've ever met. Of course his memories and the stories of his life will be cherished by everyone who ever spent time around this great man. Baldy and I went to a Gopher football game last fall, and while we had known each other for nearly 35 years, I still heard stories that I had never heard before. Baldy never spoke a cross word to, or about, anyone. And I can tell any young man or woman that he coached or cheered, that he supported and remembered every one of you...even if you weren't the star of the team. I probably heard a story or two about many of you as well (ha ha). I miss him terribly.

Steve Carlson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ Our sympathy to you. We just heard about Baldy's death today.

Ken and Judy Broker

October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MS

“ Lane, Donna and family...
My thoughts and prayers go out to all of you! Baldy was a great man!! He bravely would drive us noisy/silly cheerleaders to all the away games and would always rile us girls up w/his hilarious jokes! He will be missed!

Michele (Krusemark) Smykle - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MW

“Baldy loved to tell stories, this is no secret. No matter who you where or where you were from, he could find something to talk to you about. A story that Baldy openly shared many people was the story about the events that unfolded shortly after he was born. Baldy was born premature and so he was a very tiny baby. In order to keep him warm, his mom and grandmother placed him in a bean box and set it on the oven door. He swore up and down that this was the reason why he hated all beans...he hated kidney beans, lima beans, green beans and even some human-beans! Now, anyone that knew Baldy knew this was not true. Baldy didn't hate anyone, I never heard him speak a negative word about anyone. He was one of the kindest, most giving person you could ever meet.

As my uncle, he took every opportunity to show me and his other nieces and nephews, how much he cared. Whether it was taking us to the elementary school after Christmas to play basketball, giving us golf lesson, arranging scavenger hunts, taking us on trips or just being present at our sporting events, Baldy always let us know that he cared. Recently during Baldy's annual Christmas present wrapping extravaganza, which I was always a part of, he told me his favorite day in the entire year is the day he could go up to Fargo to buy Christmas presents for those he cared about. This just proves how selfless he was as an individual. It didn't matter who you where, how much money you had or where you were from, Baldy treated everyone with the same respect.

So now that Baldy is gone, I really wish that I could have had one more conversation with him. What I wish I could said to him is simply thank you. Thank you for always being there and spending time with us, for putting us first. I will forever cherish the moments we spent together. The impact you have left on me, our family and the community will remain in our hearts forever. I love you Baldy.

Meagan Waldahl - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

GG

“ Of all the wonderful people I have met in the game of golf, Baldy is easily among the most memorable and lovable. He was an extraordinary blend of gentleness and strength, allowing him to be the North Star for countless young people. His steadfast persistence in living his life in the service of others is a solid lesson for people of all ages. His boundless charm made life fun for everyone around him. His greatest contribution to the game of golf was proving beyond a doubt that it is a game for gentlemen. No one has ever done more for the game than Baldy. I am so lucky to have known him.

Guy Green - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

KE

“ Baldy,

You were a great man, and awesome educator, and a wonderful role model.

As I was reviewing your tributes, I ran across many tributes from people I fondly recall from my days in Wadena. We all share a common bond - we will miss you.

You made math fun through practical excercises, i.e. standing in front of the HS timing how long it took cares to travel a certain distance, then calulcate MPH. We were the radar before radar was popular tool for law enforcement.

Golf, what more can I say - your love of the game was contagious.

I will miss you. You were the greatest ever in the Wadena School System, and there were some great ones...

Rest in Peace - Ace the course...

Keith

Keith - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

TA

“Baldy was my math teacher, 7th grade basketball coach, and summer rec coach. I caddied for him in many tournaments and was his partner in three state bestball tournaments. As I read other tributes to Baldy I find myself nodding my head as I have many of the same memories. One summer morning Baldy stopped us in the middle of hitting balls on the driving range. He said that he'd noticed some of the kids tossing clubs and saying some "not so nice" words after bad shots. He said he never got mad at a bad golf shot. When one kid asked why he replied, "cause I told myself years ago that I had no right to be upset about anything as meaningless as a poor golf shot when I have family members crawling through the mud and fighting for their lives in Vietnam." Just one of many life lessons learned from a great man! I love you Baldy.

todd w. adams - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

KG

“ Even though I attended school in Wadena, I never had Mr. Waldahl for a teacher. I really got to know Baldy through work at the radio station.

On our trips to the Region 6 basketball tournament at Concordia, he would start a story in Wadena and finish it as we arrived in Moorhead...and there would be four or five stories weaved in between!

And it seems that whenever I am out of town for an event, when someone learns where I'm from, the first question they ask is, "How's Baldy?"

He cared about a lot of people and a lot of things, but he really cared about kids.

He was one of a kind and he will be dearly missed.

Our condolences to all of his family and friends.

Kyle & Jackie Gylsen - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ Sharon's favorite memories include the trips with Baldy to the away games for cheerleading..he always asked for hot cocoa in the thermos! Jammin' with Janell Hamre in the back seat, the car rocked so hard that Baldy had to tell us to stop!

Mark's favorite is when Baldy kept the stats for 7th grade basketball, he had a picture of the 2 trainers...Scott Niska struggling with a full rack of balls, while Pete Mueller was pushing a rack with one ball on it!!

He was a great teacher, great supporter of Wadena athletics, and all in all..a great man. He will be missed,

Sharon (Krier) & Mark Kalina - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RS

“ 35 years ago (while in 8th grade) Mr. Waldahl asked me if I would like to try joining the Jr. High Golf program. He said that being I was just getting involved with the hockey program, that I must like hitting something with a stick! I went to the next golf practice with the Jr. High team and he found a few clubs for me to use. Thanks to my Dad, and Zozel's Hardware Store, a week later I had a new set of clubs and became a member of the Golf Team! His advice and encouragement may have not meant much at the time, but there is not a time today on the golf course today that I do not think of his clever ways to explain the rules of the game, and his favorite saying to me:

"JUST HAVE FUN".

May the family of Mr. Waldahl "Baldy" be blessed knowing that he was an inspiration to all of his students and friends.

Randy and Ruth Steinkopf - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DH

“ For those of us who were fortunate enough to have had Mr. Wahldahl as a teacher and a coach, we all understand in his passing that he was an extraordinary man.

There are no words to express the sadness of this loss.

Every young person needs someone who believes in them; someone who sets high expectations for them; someone who walks alongside with encouraging words.

For an army of us, Mr. Wahldahl was that man.

Mr. Wahldahl, I've no doubt that you're settling into one of the biggest mansions in heaven and I'm sure that if there are whistles there, you are a carrying one.

Thanks for making a difference in all of our lives.

David Hunnicutt - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

AG

“ Mr Wahldahl was a great asset to the WDC schools. I had him in 7th and 8th grade math classes. I hope that all students will have an amazing teacher like Baldy. Rest in peace.

Amy (Hillesland) Greenwaldt - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

GR

“ Baldy was one of the nicest individuals ...and they don't make them like that anymore...In 50 yrs.. I have never heard anyone say a bad word about "Baldy."

Gerald and Maryann Riewer - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

MJ

“ Sorry for the loss of Baldy. I had him as a teacher in Jr High and he had great spirit and could have a good story to tell. I recently lost my Grandfather last fall and it is always an adjustment to not have them part of your life anymore. Remembering the good times always helps with grieving process. My prayers are with Baldy's family.

Maggie Pettit Jacobson & Mike Jacobson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DS

“ Central Minnesota has lost a great citizen. As sports director at the Wadena radio stations I spent hours in vehicles with Baldy and his stories. He loved kids, loved his family, loved teaching, loved coaching, loved sports.
HE COULD HOWL LIKE A TRAIN. His pockets were always full of "stuff" and over the years we left gloves, mittens, stocking caps, medicine, and more in gyms, press boxes, and restaurants. He was a math genius. After 28 years behind the mic he was the best stat man ever. God bless the memories of my friend Baldy.

Dan Skogen - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

GK

“ Thank you for being a great teacher and mentor as I, along with many others, remember the great person you were. You taught in way to make learning easy for the students and always had time for anyone with a question or concern. Wadena was a great place to grow up because of teachers like you and it is a sad day for all former students. Thank you for being a great person.

Greg Krier - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JC

“ *Mr. Waldahl was a great man. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Baldy's family and friends. A great teacher and supporter of WDC students and athletics will surely be missed. Every student should have experienced Mr. Waldahl as a Math teacher and heard his famous Train whistle from his days in school at Staples before they were the "cards". Baldy rest in peace you will be missed.*

Jim,Michelle, Morgan and Madison

Jim Harrison/Michelle Clark - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

TL

“ *When I think of growing up and playing golf in Minnesota, Baldy is and has always been a part of that picture. He was one of those men who just loved the game and loved the people who played it. It really did not matter how big or small the tournament or how good or how poor the golfer, Baldy loved everything and everyone. He always treated me with kindness and respect, even as a kid, and he always had something good to say. It just wasn't possible to play golf in Minnesota and not know Baldy Waldahl. His memory still puts a smile on my face. Having lost my own father less than a year ago, I understand what this means to his family. My heart goes out to you all. May God give you comfort through the memories.*

Tom Lehman - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM



“ *Rest in Peace, Baldy! Your friendly smile and bright eyes will be missed. But I have a feeling they will light up the heavens forever just as they have done to all who knew you.*

October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SM

“ I have so many fond memories of my home town and Baldy is amongst so many of those memories. As I child, I remember stopping by his house on Halloween in anticipation as a table mounded with candy was there to meet us, and Baldy standing there with the widest grin and a sparkle in his eye. The joy he brought to the classroom in the old junior high, now long gone. The countless road trips to football and basketball games. Driving to Detroit Lakes or Crosby Ironton, in sometimes blinding snowstorms, with the car packed full of giggling, gossiping cheerleaders. The trunk was always full of our favorite pop and he always endured our crazy 80's pop music with a smile. He brought such joy to everyone he knew and he genuinely received joy in doing so. Barb and I were lucky enough to tag along with Baldy to the Twin Cities for the State Basketball tournament. But we couldn't go home quite yet because he had a surprise for us. Dinner in the most gorgeous restaurant we had ever laid our small town eyes on! Such a big hearted, truly thoughtful, and one of a kind gentleman that I have ever had the privilege to know. Baldy Waldahl, my young life was so much better having known you. Thank you for the wonderful memories and God Bless you and keep you!

Sally Sundstrom Marjama - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SK

“ Mr. Waldahl was one of my favorite Jr. High Teachers! He taught 7th grade math when the Jr. High was still located in the old Jr. High building. I remember that he was always in a good mood and made learning fun! He had a very sweet spirit and I'm sure he had a huge impact on the lives of many students! He was one of the best!! Though I don't know the circumstances surrounding his passing, I pray peace & comfort to all his family & friends! Rest in peace, Mr. Waldahl!

Stefanie (Tapley) Kittelson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

DD

“ Baldy was a great math teacher, and an even better person. He taught me the math skills to major in Mathematics in the College of Liberal Arts and the U of M. I became a math and physics teacher because of Baldy.

I remember the quick wit Baldy had with our HS class and how much he enjoyed life. He would take Dean Tibbetts and I along to golf "shortstop" tournaments when we were in college. We always had a great time playing golf with Baldy. My friends in LeSueur always asked about Baldy as many met him along the way at golf tournaments.

Don Dickinson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

CE

“ Our thoughts and prayers are with the Waldahl families during this difficult time.

Chris and Sheila (Mudek) Erickson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

SO

“ The Wadena area has truly lost one of it's finest. I remember as a Jr and Sr in High School, he would drive us cheer leaders to the away games. We played our own music loud, talked a lot of girl talk and he never complained or said a thing! Multiple times he would take us out for a nice dinner on the way home. He did so much for WHS over the years. He truly made it a better place to learn! Thanks Baldy! You will be missed by many!

Shannon Schlecht O'Keefe - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

BA

“ I remember playing high school basketball and feeling that maybe it wasn't for me. So I decided to take stats for the Girls Varsity games instead. This was where I met Baldy and got to know him. He would be so into the game but still able to tell you his stories of watching the girls grow up, seeing coaches change, and the fun of following the teams. Every day he asked me "Why aren't you out there playing?" I just told him I didn't think it was what I wanted. As the season progressed he continued to ask me, "What's holding you back you seem to love the game?" As the season ended he would still stop me in town and ask if I was going out for ball next season. Well in the end I did return to basketball because of Baldy's encouragement and support. It was the best decision that I had made. He will be truly missed and I feel grateful to have had the opportunity to know and work with him on the side lines. Thank you for your support and encouragement! I'm sorry for your loss of a life altering man.

Brittaney 'Roberts' Anderson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

JT

“ As my Dad (Terry Olafson) and I were driving home from my son's football game last Friday, we were talking about great people in our lives....and Baldy was top on our list. We remembered the good-ol-days at the golf course with Baldy and what an amazing influence he had on the golf program in Wadena. He was tireless in his devotion to kids!!!!

I remember many hours in his car going to and from MGA meets and listening to Oliva Newton John 8-tracks!!! He would sing right along with us and made every trip so much fun!

Baldy even affected the next generation...by hosting the summer golf tournament and insisting that my boys come and play...and they did! They loved Baldy as much as I did! Kyle even won the Twins tickets one year...what a great family time we had. And we still couldn't stump him on a rule in golf!!!

I guess its ironic that these memories happened just hours before his death. I hope he knew how much we loved and appreciated him.

We love you Baldy...rest in peace.

Jill Olafson Thompson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

CW

“ *Baldy,
I came across this today and it so reminded me of you:*

To laugh often and much, to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children, to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends, to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others, to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch.... to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded!

Baldy, you did succeed! In such an awesome big way! See you later, Chris

Christine Waldahl - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

ML

“ *I was suprised to hear of his loss.*

What a great guy- fun, always smiling.

I liked his ability to remember and tell great local and state sports stories. He was an excellent teacher in the old junior high and at Golf. I remember hearing that because the school was so old, there were times when his classroom had lights dangling and other things falling but he just kept right on teaching without missing a beat.

He was truly a solid person who did many wonderful things for the Wadena area. He will be greatly missed.

Mark Larson - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM

RR

“ Well, Where does a person start to even begin to say what we need to say. I have been thinking about you every day and how I can't believe you are gone. I wish we could have one last trip meeting at Perkins. I didn't know our trip in September was going to be our last or I would have made it go on for many more hours. Our family will miss you more than words can say. My two boys have lost a person they looked to as their grandpa. Brendon would always ask , "when is Baldy coming again so we can go see our girlfriend in Rothsay and play the hunting game." Baldy would come down on the hottest days of the summer and my 3 year old would have him outside going from the barn to see the chickens to the sandbox and Baldy would not quit. We finally would have to tell Brendon that he has to give Baldy a break. He would not miss one of my boys birthdays. We werent blood-related but he sure made you feel like you were. Brendon has cried many tears for Baldy (I have also) and is missing him dearly. Brendon misses his train whistle. Boy wasn't that amazing. Or his funny gifts that it took him hours to prepare. There is not another man out there like him. I will never forget that every NDSU game I played he was there. It didn't matter how far it was or what it took to get there. His bravada had many miles on it that he had when I was in college and I know a lot of those miles were coming to watch me play. Wow what a great fan he was. We miss you dearly, Baldy. I know you are resting in peace and playing ball or golf. You were a huge part of our lives and I will miss everything about you, even if you told me the same story once in awhile. I didn't tell you enough and I wish I could see you one more time because we all would say We love you. Oh ya one more thing. that Patsy Kline music that you claimed to like so much, What was that stuff?

Rhonda Randklev - October 04, 2010 at 12:00 AM