

August Henry Schwiesow

November 17th, 1930 - October 22nd, 2022



August Henry Schwiesow passed away peacefully on the evening of October 22, 2022 with his loving and devoted wife of nearly 70-years, Betty Lou, by his side.

Born in his family home in Des Plaines, Illinois on November 17, 1930, Aug remained a lifelong resident of his hometown. Aug's parents Fred Ferdinand Schwiesow and Mildred Gertrude Homuth were both second-generation German immigrants with his paternal grandfather immigrating to the United States at age 12 by himself. Finding his way to Chicago, his grandfather worked on a potato farm near Norwood Park ... a farm that he would one day own. Aug attended **Immanuel Lutheran School** through 8th-grade, then **Maine Township High School**, now **Maine East**.

As a young boy, Aug was fascinated by the Naval aviators flying at low altitudes in bi-wing planes near his home, which was a rare sight in those days. He joined the Navy Reserves on his 17th birthday and was stationed at **Glenview Naval Air Station** with the aspiration of becoming a Navy Pilot. Aug enlisted in the **Aviation Cadet Preparatory Course** while in the Reserves to achieve his dream, and at age 18 he flew his first solo flight. When war broke out in Korea, Aug requested a transfer to the first squadron to activate and was assigned to the **VA728 Attack Squadron** serving aboard the aircraft carrier **USS Antietam (CV-36)** where he loaded bombs and other ordinance onto AD

Skyraiders. When an irate pilot complained of his guns jamming, Aug taught him how to release the safety mechanism before firing. When another complained of not being able to hit a target, Aug took it upon himself to re-sight the entire squadron from factory settings to precision sighting alignment. This was his passion, and he was meticulous.

Shortly after returning home from Korea, Aug married his childhood sweetheart, Betty Lou Netherland whom he first met in 1941. Aug was accepted into the **Naval Aviation Cadet Program**, but had already been discharged and married before receiving his orders to report to Pensacola for training, which disqualified him from participating. Aug served in the Navy for five years and was honorably discharged as Aviation Ordinance Petty Officer C/2.

Following his Navy discharge, Aug (also known as Augie and Gus by close friends and family) worked first as a machinist, then as a partner in cement contracting before joining the **Des Plaines Police Department** in 1956. He continued his professional education through the years primarily at the University of Illinois, the Northwest Police Academy, and one-year full-time at Northwestern University where he studied with command officers from across the country, and around the globe.

Aug's career covered many aspects of the law enforcement profession including that as a Patrolman, Communications Officer, Detective, Detective Sergeant, Lieutenant, Watch Commander, Planning & Inspections Commander, Patrol Commander, and Chief of Detectives. He enjoyed them all.

Some of his contributions include being one of the first officers to specialize in fingerprint identification often assisting other police departments, training academies, and even the USAF. If you were a Boy Scout in Des Plaines in the 1960-70s, you likely earned your Fingerprinting Merit Badge from Mr. Schwiesow. As a Detective he used his lifelong interest in photography in criminal and accident investigations, and worked with another officer to establish the first departmental photo lab. Early in his career, he and Betty Lou designed the first DPPD uniform patch, which was then used for decades. Lieutenant Schwiesow worked with architects in the 1970s to design the current Police building. He researched and compiled the history of the Department with the intention of writing a book, but did put together a display at the time in the lobby of the then new building. He enjoyed his career immensely.

Aug retired from the Des Plaines Police Department after 30-years of service. He then served as the Chief of Police for the two campuses of **Oakton Community College** for seven years.

Aug had a wall full of trophies for his competitive shooting achievements. In 1972 he took **1st Place in Master Combat Shooting** in competition with police officers from many surrounding police departments. At age 90 he still maintained a level of proficiency with a pistol that qualified him to carry a concealed handgun in all 50 states, though by then he had not actually carried in years.

Augie loved the many pets that he had throughout his lifetime, which included dogs, cats, and parrots. Their first three pets as a married couple were two stray dogs and a stray cat that he brought home at the end of his shift.

He had many interests and hobbies through the years. As a young man he was a boxer and wrestler, and later as a rookie police officer learned Japanese Judo and Jo techniques, which was new to the ranks at the time. He credits the Judo rolls in saving his life when he was struck by a car while directing traffic at night at the newly opened **Maine West High School**. Aug became an avid photographer in the 1940s, and learned leatherwork in the Navy later making countless holsters, belts, purses and wallets. He enjoyed camping and canoeing with Betty Lou's family, and eventually with their own family. Aug loved music of many genre. He was a self-taught organist, and sang Barbershop around the country with the **SPEBSQSA**. Aug researched and mapped out the genealogy of both his and Betty Lou's family before on-line tools were fully developed. Though he hunted and fished for most of his life, he later was very remorseful for ever have taken away the life of an animal, and made sure that the birds and squirrels in their yard were well-fed through the winters.

Early in retirement, Augie could be found golfing with friends, family, and in a league with Betty Lou. His hole-in-one was well witnessed at **Rob Roy Golf Course**. He and Betty Lou enjoyed metal detecting in many beautiful parks and preserves where they found countless coins and pieces of jewelry. He tracked down the owners when possible with one driving down from Minnesota to reclaim his prized class ring that he had lost many years prior. With no training or prior experience, Gus became quite adept with personal computers mastering photo editing and design work, as well as logging thousands of hours flying scores of different aircraft on various flight simulators.

Being dedicated to his community, he was part of many local organizations including the Elks Club, American Legion, VFW, Silver Wings, Masons, and Shriners. Many people will remember Aug's and Betty Lou's '**Duffy's Tavern**', which was their backyard deck in the summertime where anyone, and everyone would randomly stop by for endless snacks, drinks, and laughs.

Aug is survived by his devoted wife Betty Lou and their five children Karen Miller, Mark Schwiesow, Kurt Schwiesow, John Schwiesow, and Kristine Ness. Others include his two sisters, Grace Hurder and Elinor Barth, many loving in-laws, ten adoring grandchildren, numerous great- and great-great-grandchildren, and countless wonderful friends and neighbors.

May he Rest in Peace knowing that he will be missed, but long remembered.
