



## Francis Paul Hamerlinck

January 13, 1926 - June 6, 2020

Francis Paul “Frank” Hamerlinck, 94, died June 6, 2020 in Fridley, MN, following a recent stroke. Last fall he relocated to Minneapolis-St. Paul to be closer to family, after living the previous 61 years in Thief River Falls, MN.

Francis was born in Lyon County, Minnesota on January 13, 1926 to Charles and Elizabeth (Anseeuw) Hamerlinck. He grew up in Minneota, MN, enjoying sports and Boy Scouts and spending summers working on his uncle’s farm. A fond memory was working at the local movie theater as an usher and seeing films like *Gone with the Wind* and *the Wizard of Oz* numerous times in their original release.

After a year at Bemidji State University, he enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1943. Serving as a Yeoman on Treasure Island Naval Base in San Francisco Bay, he signed his own discharge papers on his commander’s behalf at the end of the war, before hitchhiking home to Minnesota and returning to college. At BSU he lettered in football and basketball while completing his teaching degree. He later attended the University of North Dakota, earning a master’s degree in school administration.

A college football injury led to Hamer meeting a nurse named Jeanette Branigan and they were married in 1950. They settled in Clearbrook, MN where he began his education career as a teacher and coach. In 1958, he

began teaching in Thief River Falls, MN, later serving as junior high and high school principal and school district administrator. During his long career, he was active in many state and national educational organizations. Following his retirement in 1989, he continued to work as an educational consultant for another decade. He was elected to the Lincoln High School Prowler Hall of Fame in 1997. His "I Dare You Awards" challenged students to be their best in and out of the classroom. It was hard to go anywhere in Thief River without having someone come up and say, "Mr. Hamerlinck, do you remember me?" or "I'll always remember when you...that really made an impact on me." Recently, one of his high school basketball players from the 50's stopped by to visit and tell him what an influence he had on his life.

Frank was active in Trinity Lutheran Church, participating in everything from singing in the choir to starting the church foundation. He went on a mission trip to Jamaica in his 80s. He was a great believer in community involvement. In retirement, he was elected to the Thief River Falls City Council and served on boards for the TRF Education Foundation and the local hospital and community college. His wisdom and advice were valued by many groups and individuals -- probably more than he knew. He was a member of the American Legion and was proud to be active in the Lions Club, rarely missing a meeting and volunteering at the annual fishing tournament, even into his 90s. He was honored as Pennington County's Outstanding Senior Citizen in 2013.

Frank enjoyed camping with his family, deer hunting at "The Shack", a good game of Uno or Up and Down the River, and annual trips to Manitoba with his English River Angler friends. His music of choice was the Big Band hits and the "crooners" that he and Jeanette used to dance to. In his 80s he joined a number of local group tours, visiting much of the U.S. including Alaska, as well as a trip to Ireland, making new friends on every trip. You can bet that if you were a server or health care worker around town, he knew your name and your life story and remembered it when he next saw you. He was an avid

reader of Smithsonian, National Geographic, and Reader's Digest and he was always waiting for Publisher's Clearing House to show up at the door.

Known to family as "Bup" since becoming a grandparent, he was a great dad and grandpa. There were many fun times on road trips and Hamfest family gatherings. We learned that good Belgians eat red cabbage on their birthdays and say things like "Puz up zella". You can still be an Honorary Irish Person if you're married to a Branigan. The gift of a grandparent's time and love is irreplaceable and the kids all loved to spend time with Mam and Bup, going to the county fair, on winter picnics, playing Monopoly, pingpong, or goofy made-up games. His great grandkids wrote about Bup for their Veteran's Day project and they like to sing his old Navy songs on road trips. He was very good at spinning a Fidget Spinner on top of his bald head and finding quarters behind ears! Frank was a collector of clever and wise quotations. Some of his favorite advice included "be part of the solution and not part of the problem", the secret to longevity is to "just keep moving", and that "teachers (and people) are either forgiven, forgotten or remembered".

Left to lovingly remember him and miss him are his children: Barbara (Dan) Johnson, Michael (Rose) Hamerlinck, Mark (Jan) Hamerlinck, and Jeffrey (Julie) Hamerlinck; his grandchildren: Berit (Greg) Rosenberg, Ben Johnson (Lisa Froehlich), Gabriela Hamerlinck (Tyler Smith), Katie Hamerlinck, Moira (Clive) Rieke, and Claire Hamerlinck; and great-grandchildren Taryn and Quinn Rosenberg, and Charlotte and Boe Johnson; his sister Pauline (Leonard) Hoffman; sister-in-law Kathleen Hamerlinck and many nieces, nephews, cousins and friends.

Francis was preceded in death by his wife Jeanette, his parents, and his brother Donald Hamerlinck.

A private family gathering is planned, with burial at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

Memorials may be sent to Trinity Lutheran Caring Cooks, Thief River Falls; Heritage Community Center, Thief River Falls; Thief River Falls Education Foundation.

# Tribute Wall

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“ Sincere condolence to all of Frank’s family.  
He was a good man, always friendly, easy to  
talk with, long time Trinity Lutheran Church  
member and friend.

May your memories of him give you great  
comfort. He will be missed by many.

Blessings 🙏

Mark and Cathy(Barron) Hagen



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**Mark and Cathy Hagen** - June 11, 2020 at 10:02 PM