

HIGH SCHOOL

Ray Schultz, longtime football coach and administrator at Manual, dies at age 80

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Ray Schultz, a lifelong Southsider, loved routine and organization in his life. His morning always started with a Bible study and about an hour of writing.

“He was very organized, very dedicated in all of the areas of his life that helped shape him,” his son, Steve Schultz said.

Schultz, who died Thursday at 80 from cardiac arrest, was a driven man. He was best known as a longtime coach and athletic director at Manual High School, his alma mater, where he was a star tight end on one of the state’s most dominant teams as a senior in 1958.

Manual’s mythical state championship team finished 10-0 and outscored opponents 442-38, punctuated with a 35-0 season-ending victory over Cathedral in front of more than 10,000 fans at CYO Field on West 16th Street in an era before the playoff system.

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Years later, Schultz took pride that it was still considered among the best in state history. Schultz, looking at a photo in 2008 of the Manual team carrying coach Noah Ellis off the field after the Cathedral game, was asked where he was in the photo.

“I’m probably over here,” he said, pointing to the left of the photo. “I’m sure I was embracing the cheerleader who later became my wife.”

His wife of 62 years, the former Sandie Steele, survives her husband. The Schultz’s resided for 44 years in the Garfield Park South neighborhood, 40in their home on Southern Ave. One of Schultz’s high school teammates, John Stafford, who went on to be a Hall of Fame football coach at Columbus East, fixed up Ray and Sandie on their first date.

After high school and a two-sport college career at Purdue in football and basketball, Schultz returned to Manual as a football coach and biology teacher.

“He had a chance to stay at Purdue as a graduate assistant and be on the staff along with his buddy, Ron Meyer (who coached the Colts from 1986-91),” Steve Schultz said of his father. “Because of Manual and the opportunity to coach under his mentor, Noah Ellis, he decided to return there.”

Schultz, after several years as an assistant, coached football at Manual from 1973-85 before becoming the school’s athletic director until his “first retirement” in 1996, when he was named a Sagamore of the Wabash recipient. He also coached track and was an assistant basketball coach for several years.

In July: Manual drops its nickname as school transitions to new leadership

But Schultz, who was inducted into the Indiana Football Hall of Fame in 2006, was not done coaching after retirement. He returned to Manual as a volunteer assistant and had a short stint as the interim head coach. Schultz joined Franklin Central’s staff and led the freshman team to an undefeated season in 2003 and then, at age 64, started the football program at Lutheran, where he coached for three seasons to lay the groundwork for what has become one of the state’s best Class A programs under coach Dave Pasch.

The Manual field, named after Schultz in 1994, underwent renovations in 2019 after a fundraiser to repair the signage on the scoreboard, concession stand, press box and other upgrades. Schultz, who as a coach painted “Manual Pride is on Our Side” on a plywood sign that his players would pass by every day, called the renovations “really unbelievable” when he visited the stadium in September of 2019. The alumni at Manual, led by 1981 graduate Mark Bowell, raised more than \$12,000.

“I don’t want the renovations to be a reflection on me or even Mark,” Schultz said at the stadium in 2019. “I want it to be a reflection of how much pride (the alumni) have. Once this took place, it just gave the kids all another lift.”

The school, which is now Christel House at Manual with the teams renamed the Eagles, was always close to Schultz’s heart. He grew up honing his basketball skills in the alley behind his parents’ grocery store on Shelby Street and played pickup football games around the Sunken Gardens.

Schultz, who also coached track at Manual, was a gifted writer. He authored his memoirs, a novel, a brief history of Manual, and several books of poetry and short stories. Schultz organized Kristi’s Games at the high school, an annual festival named for his daughter, who was killed by a drunk driver on Sept. 8, 2001. He led the creation of the Kristi Broughton

Memorial Park in 2016, a playground for children in Emmaus' Fountain Square neighborhood. Kristi was a kindergarten teacher at Emmaus.

"The idea for school fundraiser carnival was my sister's idea," said Karen (Schultz) Alter. "She had taken it to the school a few months before her death. The school leadership came to us and said, 'We'd still like to do this and name it after her.' Dad had a lot of different roles in life and one of those was that was a really awesome fundraiser. He had a lot of connections in the community from different areas of his life."

Schultz was preceded in death by his parents, Harold and Mary, his brother Richard, and eldest daughter, Kristi. He is survived by his wife, Sandra, daughter Karen (Dick) Alter, son Steven (Brynne) Schultz, son-in-law Leon (Kristi) Broughton and Leon's wife, Cathleen, along with nine grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Family was the most important part of Schultz's life. He wrote stories about all of his grandchildren and enjoyed spending time with his family.

"I do know he would want to mention mom," Karen said. "They were a couple since he was 16 and she was almost 15. He was telling us just the other night that he'd just gotten his driver's license before their first date. She was his life partner for many years and losing a daughter was very hard on them, but they were a force to be reckoned with as a power couple. They made everyone feel like they were part of the family."

There will be a celebration of life at the Manual gym from 4-8 p.m. on Monday that is open to the public. Christel House at Manual plans to leave its football stadium lights on Friday night to honor Schultz's legacy at the school.

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