

## The Family Man, Athlete, and Referee Honoree – Mr. Charles Lyle Smith



Many fans and players remember Lyle Smith refereeing many area basketball games over his 38 years of officiating in our area. Generations of players were on the floor with Lyle at the whistle. Fathers and sons can remember games played that were officiated by this professional gentleman. Over the years his partners included: Frank Fitzgerald, Jerry Toles, and Herb Rosine.

Charles Lyle Smith was born in Bad Axe and moved to Port Huron as a child. He graduated from PH High where he excelled in every sport...except football! He was named all-state in basketball for both his junior and senior years. As a junior he led his team to a state final appearance. The team lost in the Regional Finals in his senior year. In an era when games were low scoring, when 10 points was considered a good game, he often scored 20 points himself.

After graduation from high school he attended the University of Michigan and played for 2 years with the Wolverines. He left college early to join the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict. Like Harry, Lyle was sent to Germany with the Occupation Army, serving with the security division and attempting to intercept Russian messages.

While still serving he flew home from Germany and married his high school sweetheart, Bettie, on December 12, 1953. They are still as much in love as they were that day, even after 63 years! After a short honeymoon he returned to Germany for 15 months. After

leaving the service he returned to Port Huron and for 38 years worked for the Times Herald as a printer. Lyle and Bettie have four children; 3 boys and a girl, whom they are extremely proud of and have enjoy watching their lives unfold. Lyle and Bettie have travelled the world and enjoy their family and sports while still living in Port Huron.

Lyle recalls Coach Moore's teams as being well coached. They had great discipline and played very sound fundamental team basketball. He recalls Capac players as being respectful and always playing hard. He also remembers packed gyms and the "Capac Sleeved Jerseys."

Former players recall "Mr. Smith" officiating as being very professional, always being fair, and in complete control of the game. He let the players play the game and was very well respected and liked throughout the area.

Lyle's other athletic achievements include:

- Inducted into the Port Huron Sports Hall of Fame in 1982.
- 5 time Port Huron Elks Club Champion (Has recorded one ace over his playing career).
- In bowling: 4 perfect 300 games, 52 national bowling tournament appearances with a record 3-game series of 734 which stood for a long period of time.
- In softball: Fast Pitch Softball state champs as a pitcher playing for Team Shoffner.
- Many awards from the State for his high school basketball officiating.

The Harry C. Moore Memorial Tournament Family would like to welcome Mr. Lyle Smith for joining our ranks. We thank him for his dedication and professionalism as a referee and as a role model to all student athletes over his officiating career.



Photos:

Front Page: Lyle Smith refereeing a game between Almont and Imlay City in the early 1960s.

Left: Port Huron High School Basketball team from the 1947-48 season. Lyle is #33 in the front row.