

Orin LaVere Gooch

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OREN LAVERE GOOCH



JEROME - "Coach" Oren LaVere Gooch, 90 years old, passed away peacefully on Dec. 10, 2006, with his wife, Erma Lee, by his side on their 57th wedding anniversary after a long illness.

"Coach" was born Feb. 8, 1916, at Chesterfield, Idaho (also known as Kelly, Idaho). His parents were John O. and Matilda Folkman Gooch. LaVere was one of eight children. He attended schools at Chesterfield, Idaho (known as the Gooch School), and Burley, where he graduated from high school in 1933. In between high school and college, he worked for several years for Western Union; also as a grocery delivery person and at a laundry in Wyoming.

His younger brother, Robert, encouraged him to go to college, so he started Albion Normal School, a two-year college at that time. In 1942, LaVere received his "greetings from Uncle Sam," but he was allowed to finish his second year of college before he had to be inducted into the U.S. Army. So he was then inducted into the Texas "Fighting 36th" Division, Signal Company. He served as a communication specialist in the Army and his division was in Africa, Italy, France, Germany and Austria. They were involved in two D-Day landings and five major battles. He was honorably discharged in October 1945.

After he left the Army and returned to Albion College, which was then a four-year school, he graduated with a degree and became a teacher. He moved to Jerome, where he served for 30 years teaching and coaching, all in Jerome. He retired in 1977 as a junior high school teacher. Many students and athletes wrote to him and called on him over the years, praising him and thanking him for the impact, guidance, fairness, trust and for the influence he had in their lives. He gained a lot of respect from everyone who knew him. He received many awards in his profession as well as in his community, some of them being Teacher of the Year, Superintendent's Award, Idaho Hall of Fame Wes Lowe Memorial for "Outstanding Teacher who had an impact on students," Robert Matthews Memorial Award, Elks Distinguished Citizen Award, American Legion Award, as well as many others.

He was a member of the Jerome Country Club for 32 years and served on the board of directors, Lions Club serving as an officer, American Legion where he also served on the board of directors, and several other community projects such as summer recreation programs for kids in the early '50s.

"Coach" LaVere married Erma Lee Skiver on Dec. 10, 1949. They were blessed with two daughters, Debra and Linda; three grandchildren, Tighe, Sky and Erin; and two step-grandchildren, Casey and Paul, all of whom survive him; as well as his brother, Robert Gooch; and many nieces, nephews and other family members; as well as an uncle Gary and aunt Barbara Skiver. He was preceded in death by his parents and three brothers and sisters. A celebration of life will be conducted for "Coach" at 2 p.m. Friday, Dec. 15, at the 1st and 3rd Ward LDS Church on East Avenue "B" in Jerome.

A very special thanks to Dr. James Irwin, Lori Buttars, Jeanie Benson and all the staff of First Choice Hospice, the Alpha House, family, friends and neighbors for their loving and caring concerns. The family suggests memorial contributions to the Bertha Skiver Teaching Scholarship or the Brad Craig Scholarship fund, in care of the College of Southern Idaho, P.O. Box 1238, Twin Falls, ID 83338, the Idaho Youth Ranch or a charity of one's choice.

Services are under the direction of the Hove-Robertson Funeral Chapel in Jerome. • Published Tuesday, December 12, 2006