

Harold 'Red' Townsend *Oct. 18/97 p.1*

# Respected Belleville teacher dies

By Bill Hunt  
The Intelligencer

The man who introduced thousands of BCI students to the thrills of athletic competition and in the process became a mentor for many high school students, has died.

Homer "Red" Townsend died in his sleep at his North Front Street home. He was 90.

Townsend was a physical education teacher at Belleville Collegiate from the 1940s until his retirement 25 years ago. He earned a reputation as a tough-as-nails athletics coach, but also as one who was liked and respected by his students. He was later inducted into the Belleville Sports Hall of Fame.

His daughter, Jane Verner, said he was born north of Belleville and educated in the city, attending BCI before attending Guelph University. After a short time in Ottawa he returned to Belleville and opened Townsend's Sports Shop on Front Street, where the Bank of Montreal is today. Verner believes he started teaching at BCI around 1947 and his wife carried on the business for a few more years.

"He really loved hockey. He was known for his hockey — and coaching basketball I suppose...and Kampus Kapers, for organizing that," said Verner. Kampus Kapers was a stage production involving skits, music, gymnastics and other performances. Townsend organized the event in the early '50s original-



Photo submitted

Harold 'Red' Townsend during his playing days.

ly a fitness presentation called Boys' Night.

Dick Fitzpatrick, who attended St. Michael's and played against Townsend's sports teams, recalled teasing the ever competitive coach at high school games, saying Nicholson would win.

"Red was a good guy. He wanted to

win...that was Red's outlook on life."

Brian MacKenzie, who retired this year as head of the physical education department at Moira Secondary School and held that position at BCI before it closed, remembers Townsend as "quite excitable; quite a fierce competitor."

"He was well known. Students would keep coming back (to the school) to see him all the time."

"The other thing Red was known for was organizing the Boys' Night, which became Kampus Kapers."

Mackenzie recalls Townsend started the annual event to raise money for the athletics department.

Townsend along with Ken Colling, then sports editor of The Intelligencer, helped organize the Ken Colling Run (which later became the Ken Colling Memorial Run). As well, Townsend was one of three people involved in forming the Ontario Federation of Secondary Schools Athletics Association (OFSAA) with Peter Beach from Albert College and John Hayman of Quinte S.S.

"They came up with the idea and that happened right here in Belleville, and I think that's something to be noted."

Visitation will be Sunday 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at Burke Funeral Home, 150 Church St. The funeral from the chapel will be 1:30 p.m. Monday.

TOWNSEND, HOMER  
(Red)