

Bernard Thomas "Bunky" Sullivan



Bernard Thomas "Bunky" Sullivan, Jr., 84, died Saturday, May 20, 2017, at Frances Mahon Deaconess Hospital, Glasgow, Montana, following an extended illness. Bunky was born September 16, 1932, in Great Falls, the son of Bernard and Elsie Mae (Illman) Sullivan. At age three, he and his parents moved to Glasgow, where his mother's family had homesteaded just northeast of the present Glasgow High School.

A graduate of GHS in 1950, Bunky was active in all sports, excelling in both football and basketball. He spent summers playing baseball, and his father coached him and his brother Jim in Junior Legion Baseball. He took great pride in Sullivan Park's being named in honor of his father, who had been so instrumental in ensuring that Junior Legion Baseball flourish in Glasgow. He attended Carroll College 1950-52, where he played football for the Fighting Saints.

Sullivan entered the U.S. Army October 23, 1952, and served in Korea until he was released from active duty September 1954. He transferred to the Army Reserves until November 1960.

Following his active service, Sullivan returned to college at the University of Montana, Missoula, graduating in 1957 with degrees in history and physical education.

Upon returning to Glasgow, he was first employed by Northern Testing Laboratories at Glasgow Air Force Base. School Superintendent William Greer persuaded him to join the high school faculty to fill a desperately needed history teaching position the fall of 1959, a career that continued for Bunk for the next 35 years. He ably taught generations of GHS students U.S history, world history, and Montana history. His love for the subject matter spilled over into the classroom, where he instilled that enthusiasm for history and the love of learning itself in generations of students, many of whom remember him as knowledgeable, funny, demanding, and beloved. He made a lasting impression; he was a loyal Scottie. He loved teaching, regarding each day as a new adventure. He went to school each morning eager and excited.

From 1986-1994 he chaperoned history students to Washington, DC, for a week of intense government Close-Up, an activity that many remember as the highlight of their high school years. Besides academics, Mr. Sullivan served as an assistant coach in both football and basketball for 11 years. He spent many summers coaching Junior Legion Baseball. Bunk met a fellow teacher, Bernardine Wentz, the fall of 1960. They married July 15, 1961, and have lived in Glasgow since. Bernie taught until the birth of their daughter, Suzanne Michelle, November 1965. A son, Thomas Bernard, died at birth July 1969.

Sullivan, a life-long Democrat who never missed an election, was a member of NEA-MEA-GEA, Elks, American Legion for 54 years, National Lewis & Clark Society, Montana Historical Society. He was a director for many years in the Valley County Historical Society, where he volunteered at the Pioneer Museum. He was also a director for the Fort Peck Dam Interpretive Center. He co-wrote an often-cited article about Fort Peck Dam for the Summer 1977 issue of Montana, the Magazine of Western History, having worked many summers as a Park Ranger at Fort Peck, a job he so enjoyed.

Bernard Sullivan was preceded in death by his mother and father, his infant son, and his brother-in-law, Nick Heisler. Survivors include his wife of 55 years, Bernardine; his daughter Suzanne (Charles) Berg; and his grandchildren, Hannah Marie and Ethan Thomas, all of Seattle, Washington. His only sibling, James (Marge) Sullivan, resides in Libby. Brother-in-law R.N. (Carol) Wentz, Billings, and sister-in-law Bonnie Heisler, Morehead, Minnesota, as well as many nieces and nephews, also survive.

He was actively involved in St. Raphael's Catholic Church, where his memorial services will be celebrated at a later date in June. Should anyone desire, memorials are preferred to the GHS Trust, c/o Jeanine Markle, or to a charity of your choice.