

Bogard

Ira Allen Bogard was born in 1915 in Winters, Texas, a tiny village in the center of the state. His parents, Charlie Thomas and Myrtle Lee were itinerate cotton pickers who were as poor as church mice and traveled from place to place in a covered wagon. They settled in Winters for a while, because of the cottonseed mill that was there. When Ira was born, he was blue. He wasn't breathing and he was lifeless. In the wisdom of today's world he would have been thrown away, as happens every day in America. However, in the civility of yesteryear his grandmother, Tennessee Louisiana Bogard, grabbed the tiny boy, dunked him in freezing cold ice water and put him in a warm wood stove. Shortly thereafter, little Ira began to cry loudly and let Tennie Lou know that he was hungry! For 97 years Ira "Bogie" Bogard had a significant footprint on this earth. His childhood was spent in the backwoods along the Indian reservations surrounding McAlester, Okla. From there his parents took him to Plainview, Texas and then on to Logan, N.M. It was there that he began to excel in sports of every kind, in particular baseball and basketball. Playing semi-pro ball in high school with the Tucumcari Utes, he was privileged to compete against Satchel Paige, Burley Grimes and Dizzy and Paul Dean. In one exhibition game against the barnstorming Pittsburgh Pirates he was offered a contract with the Pirates to play professional baseball. He declined, however, in order to pursue his education and enter college at New Mexico Normal (now Highlands) where he graduated in three years and four summers - the first in the entire Bogard clan to graduate college. At 5 foot, 7 inches, he played forward on Normal's basketball team, which at that time was one of the best small college teams in the nation. When the Harlem Globetrotters were first becoming famous, they came through Las Vegas to play three exhibition



games against Normal, and Bogie and Normal are the only team in basketball history to have beaten the Trotters two out of three games! Another of Bogie's accomplishments was to hold the New Mexico record for the 50-yard dash for over 50 years. He was also an accomplished par golfer, with more than 15 holes-in-one, and he twice won the State Seniors Tournament for his age bracket. Bogie's greatest accomplishments, however, were not in sports but in the lives he changed. After graduating from N.M. Normal, he began a wonderful career in teaching that spanned over 37 years. Although it began in Moriarty, most of his teaching career was done in Portales where he met the forever love of his life, Ava Arlene Cooper. After a whirlwind, six-week courtship the two were married, and their time together here on earth lasted over 70 years. Bogie is survived by his wonderful wife, Arlene; his daughter, Dusty Neergaard; his son and daughter-in-law, Craig and Lynn Ann Bogard; his grandson and his wife, Shane and Susan Neergaard; his great-granddaughter, Maya Neergaard; and, his grandson, Christian Neergaard. He is predeceased by his grandsons, Daniél Bogard and Dustin Bogard and his son-in-law, Bill Neergaard. He is also survived by a host of family, friends and students throughout the world. Bogie was one of a kind. He enlisted in the U.S. Coast Guard on Dec. 8, 1941, and served his country honorably throughout World War II. After the war he finished his master's degree in education and returned to Portales to continue teaching. He proudly served as the executive director of the State

Student Councils of New Mexico for 22 years, and he received the Distinguished Service Award for his countless years of distinctive service to high school students through his work with student council. He was a true American hero who loved God with all his heart and loved his country the same. He taught history and government as it should be taught, and he challenged his students to learn to think for themselves. After 40 years of teaching, he retired to sell real estate in Ruidoso. He taught Bible studies at his church, and he sent all the proceeds from the sale of his real estate to Aslan Youth Ministries, a work touching the lives of inner-city children in New Jersey and Haiti. This ministry that his children founded continues to this day. When Bogie and Arlene moved to Las Cruces to retire, they joined New Covenant Fellowship and continued to support numerous Christian works. Finally, Bogie was as proud of his Native American heritage as of anything in his life. Part Lakota Sioux, he fought his entire life to help every person he came in contact with - whether student, friend or mere acquaintance - to understand how unfairly the original Americans have been treated throughout the history of our country. His passion regarding the plight of Native Americans reached such intensity that it often brought him to tears. Bogie left for the loving arms of Jesus early Monday morning. The best husband, father and grandfather in the world, there will never be another like him. A viewing and time with the family will be held at La Paz-Graham's Funeral Home, 555 W. Amador in Las Cruces on Sunday from 4 - 8 p.m.. Funeral services will be held at New Covenant Fellowship, South Main, 20 Holy Cross Road, Las Cruces, at 2:30 p.m. on Monday. In lieu of flowers, it was Bogie's wish that donations be sent in his memory to Asian Youth Ministries, P.O. Box 270, Red Bank, NJ 07701-0270.

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