

OBITUARIES

Veteran D.M. educator Dorothy Hall dies at 92

By GENE RAFFENSPERGER
and JIM POLLOCK
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Dorothy Hall, who taught English in Des Moines junior high schools for 40 years, died Friday of a heart ailment at Calvin Community nursing home. She was 92.

Miss Hall achieved status and fame as an expert in English grammar far beyond that of other equally talented teachers because she became known to



Hall
"Outstanding"

Iowans and others through the nationally syndicated column "Words, Words, Words," written by Michael Gartner, who once was editor of The Des Moines Register and is now editor of the Ames Daily Tribune.

Gartner's column is a chatty mix of etymology, grammar and usage. And he often uses this line: "Remember Miss Hall's rule on. . ."

Contrary to what many readers assumed, Miss Hall never had Gartner as a student during her 30 years at Callanan Junior High School in Des Moines and 10 years at Merrill Junior High.

He met her after becoming executive editor of The Register in 1974 and became enchanted with her and her list of English rules, "The Ink Section."

"I started quoting her and she became the symbol of the great junior high English teacher," Gartner said Friday. In the column, "I said she was my favorite teacher; I never said I had her for a class."

Hundreds of youngsters did go through her classes, however, learning about prepositions and helping verbs and techniques for giving short speeches.

One of her pupils was Robert Ray, the longtime governor of Iowa who is now interim mayor of Des Moines.

Once, when Miss Hall was in an audience of several hundred who were to listen to a nationally known speaker, she noticed the governor on the platform. He was to introduce the speaker. Miss Hall sent Ray a note that read:

"Dear Robert, I hope you do well on your oral report. Remember not to use too many 'ands.' If you make a mistake in grammar, don't go back and correct it. Ninety percent of your listeners won't know the difference. . . ."

Every student in her classes learned, Ray recalled. "She was stern, firm, but an outstanding teacher," he said. "I think people were half afraid of her, but they loved to go into her class."

Miss Hall grew up in Des Moines, where she attended Hanawalt Elementary School and graduated from West High School. She went on to Lindenwood College in St. Charles, Mo., and later took education courses at Drake University.

Her first teaching job was in a small town near St. Louis. She moved to Des Moines, taking a job she thought would last only a year. It lasted 40 years.

Services will be at 1 p.m. Wednesday at Plymouth Congregational Church. Burial will be at Woodland Cemetery.

There are no immediate survivors. Friends may call after 3 p.m. Tuesday at Westover Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be made to Calvin Community nursing home.