



## Luther Freeman Heaton

August 3, 1930 - July 24, 2013

Luther Freeman Heaton, 82, Minot, North Dakota Softball Hall of Fame umpire and award winning youth director at the Minot Air Force Base, died on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 in a Grand Forks hospital.

Luther was born on August 3, 1930 in Crossville, AL to Lyous and Lemon (Peppers) Heaton. He was reared and educated in Crossville and graduated from Crossville High School in 1948. He played professional baseball for one season prior to enrolling in Newberry College in South Carolina. Following his education, he was employed at a textile mill and played amateur basketball.

Luther married Ruth Saylor on June 2, 1950 in Trion, GA. He enlisted in the United States Air Force (USAF) on February 11, 1952 and was stationed at various air force bases including Greenland, Georgia, Tennessee, Germany, Vietnam, Minot (from 1967-1972) and Japan. Luther returned to Minot Air Force Base (MAFB) in 1976 and retired from the USAF on February 28, 1978 following 26 years of service. Luther and Ruth continued to make their home in Minot until Luther, due to his failing health, moved to Grand Forks to live with his daughter.

Following his military service, Luther continued his education at Minot State University and received his bachelor's degree in Business Administration in 1982. Following his graduation he was employed as the Minot Air Force Base athletics intramural director for two years before becoming the manager of the MAFB youth center from 1983-1993.

Luther's beloved wife Ruth died on September 23, 2007.

Luther was a member of Vincent United Methodist Church and Faith United Methodist Church. He was a member of Noncommissioned Officers Association (NCOA) and the Amateur Softball Association (ASA). He was inducted into the North Dakota Softball Hall of Fame, was named Outstanding Youth Director for the Strategic Air command and received the Meritorious Service Award for Outstanding Youth Director. Luther especially enjoyed fishing, gardening, traveling and crossword puzzles.

Luther's loving family includes his daughter: Lisa (Paul) Kocsis of Grand Forks and grandchildren: Jessica and Michael Kocsis.

Luther was preceded in death by his parents, wife, sisters: MaeBelle Steele

and Myrtle Moorer, brother: LeRoy Heaton and special niece: Bobbie Jones.

Funeral service will be 2 p.m. (CST) Sunday, August 4th at Wilson Funeral Home Chapel with Dr. John Screws officiating. Graveside services will follow at 5 p.m. (EST) at West Hill Cemetery in Trion, GA. The family will receive friends Saturday from 4 until 7 p.m. (CST) at the funeral home.

Wilson Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements

# Tribute Wall



“ *Luther Freeman Heaton*

---

January 12, 2023 at 10:45 AM



“ *Luther and I met in 1962 as NCOs in the military police in Georgia. We shared many trips traveling throughout Ga. refereeing HS Basketball. He drafted me into IABO(International Association Basketball Official). We shared many good and bad times. We traveled to Massachusetts during the Cuban missile crisis in 1962. He fed me in Saigon in 1968 when our plane was damaged by enemy fire and we sat down there without resources. He was custodian of the NCO club. He shared with me his many trips to Alaska--he loved that. In later years, we talked lots on the phone about our journey through life. I absolutely admired his dedication to Ruth. When his vows said "through sickness or health", he took that seriously and cared for Ruth for many years. On his departure, a part of my life went with him. My condolence to his family. I had a nice long chat with Lisa subsequent to his passing. He was without a doubt one of the best people I ever knew. He will always be loved and remembered. God will surely welcome him into his Kingdom and take good care of a wonderful man.*

*Lt. Col Chuck Helton, USAF, Retired*

---

**Chuck Helton** - July 13, 2015 at 04:37 PM