

Matt Moroney was more than a vice-principal

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Many people in Sudbury will remember Matt Moroney as their former teacher or their strict vice-principal, but Matt had a quiet devotional life that only his closest friends knew about.

"Whenever we'd go out with him and we'd bump into a former student and Matt couldn't remember them he'd say, 'You must have been a good student and you mustn't have been a troublemaker. If I can't remember you, then you were never in my office,' " said Mary Henderson, a close friend to Matt.

Matthew Moroney was born in 1927 and raised in Sudbury. His father, Matthew, was a police officer and detective with the Sudbury Police Force. His mother, Irene, was a homemaker and the mother of seven children: Mae, Noreen, Matt, Lillian, Sheila, Desmond and Terry.

He attended a Catholic boarding high school in Ottawa, operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph, where he excelled in languages. After high school he went to teacher's college at St. Patrick's College.

"He became a teacher at a very young age and his speciality was languages," said Mary.

Matt taught in Ottawa for about five years before returning home to Sudbury. Matt was the vice-principal at Nickel District Secondary School and taught Latin, English and guidance. When the new Lockerby Composite School opened in 1959, Matt took the job as the vice-principal.

Matt hired Ed Henderson, Mary's husband, to teach drafting and the two men became life-long friends. They chaperoned many schools trips.

"Matt was a very strict vice-principal at Lockerby High School, because that was his job," Mary said. "He really struck the terror of the Lord into everyone. Matt never had any discipline problems, because he was very much a disciplinarian." A gentle disciplinarian, Mary added.

"He had so much respect from the students and the staff, because he knew how to run a school."

Long before it was fashionable, Matt worked out at the gym every day. He started out at Gold's Gym downtown. When the Connie Lou's opened on Lorne Street, Ed and Matt

became members and remained members when the facility became Cambrian Fitness Centre.

"I really believe, and so does Ed, that Matt lasted as long as he did, because he was in such good shape all his life," Mary said.

His attention to fitness and eating well likely came from his concern with heart disease in his family. He enjoyed good food and was a regular customer the former Sheraton Caswell Hotel for breakfast and dined in the dining room four nights a week.

Matt was a member of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church.

"He was a really avid prayer," Mary said. "Matt took time out of his day every day to pray. It was a side of him that a lot of people didn't know."

Matt supported the Mass for Shut-ins from its inception, because he felt it was important for people who couldn't attend mass to have a mass. He gave generously to the Sisters of St. Joseph, as well as the Franciscan Fathers and the work they did around the world. Matt was a major donor to the sister's new residence behind Holy Redeemer Church.

"When he donated to certain causes, he didn't want people to acknowledge it," Mary said. "He wanted it to be very low key."

Matt retired in 1989 after 30 years at Lockerby. In 1995, he had a heart attack followed by quadruple bypass surgery, but he returned to working out soon after to get back in shape. In 2001, he had surgery for colon cancer and in October 2007, he had bowel surgery again. He never completely recovered.

Matt Moroney died Feb. 27, 2008. He was 81.

As Lockerby Composite School celebrates its 50th anniversary this year, a room in the school will be named in Matt's honour.