

# OERS ERNEST KELEMEN

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Basketball 3, 4, Letter 3, 4;  
JV Baseball 2, Letter 2; Foot-  
ball 4; German Club 2, 3, 4,  
Treasurer 4; Junior Glee Club  
2; Intramurals 2; Junior Class  
3; Latin Club 2; Math Club 4;  
Orchestra 2, 3, 4; Physics  
Club 3, 4; Senior Class 4; JV  
Tennis 3, Letter 3, Varsity  
Tennis 4, Letter 4.



## Obituary: Kelemen, Oers E.



Dryden: Oers E. Kelemen, 67, of Dryden, New York, passed away Saturday, July 30, 2011. Oers was born in Hungary on January 12, 1944, the son of Tibor and Apolonia Bereczky Kelemen. Oers was a graduate of Ithaca High School and Cornell University. He worked for Citizens Savings Bank in Ithaca. He enjoyed golfing, reading and sitting in the sun. He was a member of the Dryden Footlighters and was on the Zoning Board of Appeals for the town of Dryden.

He is survived by his Mother, Apolonia Kelemen and Sharon Travis. A memorial service will be held at 4 PM, Friday, August 5th, 2011 at the Perkins Funeral Home, 55 West Main Street, Dryden. FOB are invited. Friends will be greeted Friday at the funeral home following the memorial service. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made Ithaca Recovery Center, 518 West Seneca St., Ithaca, NY 14850.

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## Memories of Oers from classmates

In the days following Oers's death the emails flew across the country as his old childhood friends remembered stories about his life. We have put together some of those remembrances in tribute to the boy and young man we knew and loved.

Al Nelson did some research online and found the document showing that Oers and his parents arrived by ship and landed on American shores Nov. 7, 1949. They made their way to Ithaca where Oers's maternal grandparents had settled. Al writes "Upon reflection, I think they lived downtown for several years. They were Displaced Persons at the end of the war. They fled from Hungary to get away from the Russians. His dad said that if the Russians had caught him, they would have shot him. I think he was some kind of bureaucrat in Hungary. I know he had degree in law. Anyway, they fled for allied lines while the war was still going on, and got caught in the fighting. Oers was wounded in the leg. They were subsequently interned by the allies in Germany after the war, and then permitted to emigrate to America."

Henry Bethe added: "Oers' grandparents lived in Ithaca, and had since before WWII, I believe. Their name was Beretzky (Oers' mother's parents). My mother had met Mrs Beretzky soon after she (my mother) moved to Ithaca in 1939 when she was looking for a source of Christmas cookies. Mrs Beretzky made the very best! We continued to get some from her throughout my childhood."

The summer of 1953 Oers's father took a job as the "super" at an apartment building on Triphammer Rd., and Oers moved from Central School to Cayuga Heights School to begin 5th grade. John Hirshfeld writes: "I can add a bit about Oers. He did join us in Mr. O'Connor's fifth grade class. He and I used to play after school at his apartment complex. He was an outstanding ping pong player and we used to have intense blood-thirsty battles that would last many games over hours. My principal connection with Oers was that he had begun playing the violin and played an unaccompanied solo for our fifth grade class. I was so taken with the sound that I decided that I wanted to do that too and went home to convince my parents to set me up with lessons. I never took it to a very high level beyond 12th grade, but I am definitely the richer for the experience in my ability to appreciate great playing by others and to enjoy watching our children's musical accomplishments as they were growing up."

Monty Shaw remembers Oers during high school years. " I do remember Oers as one cool guy who told some good jokes. One of these I can remember clearly, but can't repeat in this forum." Norwig added: "After table-tennis and the violin on Triphammer, Oers became part of the (largely winter) mountaineering; canoeing/ Kleppering; and Cayuga Lake waterskiing gangs. The first, Bob Blean arranged, Army rucksack trip into the ADKs ("Range Trail") was most memorable for the constant rain. We ignited fires with highway flares (this was before Bob, a bit "bleanish" we used to say learned to ignite fires by twirling a stick in some tinder, cooked via a reflector oven, brought a fail-safe Primus "stove", boiled H2O in paper bags, and had us all on dried food rations equally distributed among all participants. Oers was always delighted to hear about these adventures, but preferred the expeditions by water, in the summer!"

Norwig continued: "Our most frequent time with Oers (after grade school) was on Cayuga lake after the Kelemens had bought their "Lake Spot", northeast of Taughannock State Park. In June we submerged cases of beer under water to be

retrieved, exactly at the right temperature, during the summer. We stashed wine on the shorelines between Ithaca and "Kelemen's Lake Spot", played badminton on the Kelemen property, shot and ate crow there (never again), and introduced Buddy Brown in the fine art of mitigating the kickback of a 12 gauge shotgun by leaving a "cushion" of air between the gun's butt and his shoulder! We: Oers, Janis (and another 1956, tree-climbing Hungarian), Buddy, Monty, Bob, Alan, Anne, Linda, Lulu, Emily and a bunch of others spent many a summer day water-skiing, fishing (including home-made depth charges), swimming . . . on the lake . . . Oers was always coveted company. He made us all laugh with his antics and understated, witty remarks!

"Oers's parents I remember best for:

- Their beautifully executed fox-trots while chaperoning school and scout dances;
  - Mrs Kelemen's inimitable driving in their Packard Clipper . . . it was like being in a boat . . .
- the swerving, changes in velocity, hitting bumps like waves . . .
- Mr Kelemen's sharp mind, love of fun, German army shorts (clearly, the Soviets would have shot him!)"

Judi Fowler Quagliaroli remembers that Oers himself was a fantastic dancer. Not surprising since he was both a lettered athlete and a fine musician in high school, an unusual combination of talents.

Bud Brown summed up the email exchange with the following observation: "I've just seen all the emails regarding Oers' passing away. Thanks to all for the many bits of information most of which are new to me. We have kept Oers' memory vital and renewed, and I don't suppose one could do better on this earth than to leave many friends eager to share fond recollections after one has left. May Oers rest in peace even as our memories of a devilish, quirky, captivating young lion cartwheel down the corridors of our shared pasts."