

Donald McEwen



McEwen, Donald, 8/27/1928 - 9/21/2017, Ann Arbor

Donald Scott McEwen was born on August 27, 1928 to Anna Viola Siegert and John Cameron McEwen in Montreal, Quebec, Canada and died peacefully at home in Ann Arbor on Thursday September 21. As a youth he described himself as "quiet, shy, and insecure" so at the age of 16 and started running five miles each evening to "build myself up." He started running in high school, in Ottawa and quickly became a national high school record holder. University of Michigan track coach Don Canham scouted him as a youth and later highly recommended him to the University. Don McEwen he went on to become "one of the greatest track athletes in North American history," leading the U of M track squads in the early 1950's. He set and reset numerous meet, fieldhouse and stadium records in both indoor and outdoor track seasons. He won back-to-back Big Ten cross country championships in 1949-50. In track and field, he won two national titles in the two-mile and six Big Ten championships. His two-mile time of 9:01.9 won the 1950 NCAA national title and was a new NCAA record. He twice set American and World records in the indoor two mile and in 1951 he was the anchor leg of a world record breaking distance medley relay. In 1952, the Big Ten Conference presented him with the Medal of Honor for excellence in scholarship and athletics. Also, while he attended the U of M, he was captain of the Michigan Track team, member and vice president of Kappa Sigma fraternity, student representative of Intercollegiate Athletics, member of Sphinx Junior Honorary Society, Secretary of the School of Business Administration Student Council, and performer in the Michigan Union Opera. In 1953, he graduated from the University of Michigan Business School and became a sales trainee for Shell Oil of Canada. He wasn't satisfied with the world of business, however, and in 1955, he became a soccer, and track and field coach at Cranbrook School for Boys, in Bloomfield Hills, where he taught math and physical education. He completed a Masters degree in Athletic Administration and teaching certification, and was hired by the Ann Arbor Public Schools in 1958 as a math teacher and assistant track coach at Tappan Junior High School. He then transferred to (now) Pioneer High School to teach Business and serve as assistant track coach. In 1962, he stopped coaching and became a full-time counselor at Pioneer High School. Throughout the years, he also served as C.O.E coordinator, class principal, cross-country coach, women's cross-country and track coach and athletic director. He worked with the Ann Arbor Track club which he helped form through the Ann Arbor Recreation Department. In 1988, he was inducted in the University of Michigan Athletic Hall of Honor and in 2007, into the Michigan Men's Track and Field Hall of Fame. In February 2008, his record for the fastest two-mile time in a dual meet between Michigan and

Ohio State was broken after standing for 55 years. He was a volunteer timer at that meet when Michigan sophomore Sean McNamara broke his record by approximately eight seconds and told the Ann Arbor News: "He ran well. I'm just glad he wasn't an Ohio State guy." That's just how he was. He was a cribbage champion, lover of golf, and college football. He enjoyed serving as volunteer timer for the NCAA meets. He was a long-time volunteer at Kiwanis, and driver for Meals on Wheels. He is preceded in death by his parents, John Cameron and Viola Siegert; his first wife, Gunhild von Feilitzen; his second wife Amber Jean; his brother, Jack McEwen; and his sister, Jean Casey. He is survived by his two children, Anna (Antoine), and Scott (Gayle), and his grandchildren Remy, Christian, Annika, Taurus, and Brennan. As he wished, there will be no service. Donations may be made to Kiwanis Club and Foundation of Ann Arbor.

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