



## REMEMBERING Eric Ratzlaff

May 13, 1934 - March 25, 2014



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### **Tribute from Wiebe and Jeske Funeral Home Staff**

Wiebe and Jeske Funeral Home Staff send our condolences to family and friends.

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### **Tribute from Beata and Vidas Girskis**

Relation: Friend / colleague

We send our condolences to the Ratzlaff family. Eric was a wonderful friend and an inspiration to us. We will always remember his enthusiasm, energy and friendliness. He was an example of a Christian that we want to follow.

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### **Tribute from Julianna Koksarova**

Relation: Eric was my teacher.

I send my condolences to the Ratzlaff family. Eric was my favorite teacher at the Summer Language Institute in Lithuania. What an exemplary servant of God! May his soul rest in peace.

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### **Tribute from Linda Wiens**

Relation: ESL colleague at LCC International U SLI program

I received this news with deep sadness from Robin Gingerich. My condolences to you Kay as you mourn the loss of your life's partner. He was always so friendly and welcoming whenever I met him. He will be missed a lot.

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### **Tribute from Braden Kool**

Relation: Former student

Sincerest sympathies to all his family and friends. He taught me History 12 in 1981-82, Abbotsford Senior. He touched so many of us, his students, with his pedagogic skills, but even more by the keen personal interest he took in us as individuals. He cared about you, even you, one among hundreds whose names he learned per year. I met him by chance a handful of times subsequently, updating the personal history. Often I would see him out walking around Abbotsford; the walk, his distinctive gait, told me who it was before I could recognize his face. Did I love history before I took his class, or is that a gift of his to me? He certainly fed that interest, kindled the flame, that has not gone out. I last met him several years ago, at Menno Home, where he'd arrived to visit a friend. Our first

acquaintance, in his class, was already decades past, and it seemed to me that the same happy fire and joyous aura hadn't dimmed, but had kept shining, shining, shining...

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**Tribute from Jenny Gilliland**

Relation: He was my favorite teacher in high school <3

Thank you for sharing Mr Ratzlaff with me and so many other students over the years. He was an amazing man of faith. He will be missed. Praying for your family

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**Tribute from Art and Eleanore Klassen**

Relation: friends

Our deepest sympathy to you, Kay, and to your family on the loss of your husband and father, Eric. We appreciated the interest and kindness Eric always showed. He truly was a "gentleman". "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." Psalm 116:15

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**Tribute from Harvey & Jean Hersom**

Relation: Friends

Dear Kay, girls, husbands & grandchildren,  
We just learned the sad news from Karen Crawford. We are presently in Kona and won't be home until Apr. 3rd. We would otherwise have been over to Eric's memorial service. He and you all have been in my thoughts and prayers' in the past few weeks.  
So glad he is now in the presence of our Lord, free from all pain and face to face with his beloved Saviour. I will never forget his loving, all e

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**Tribute from Harvey & Jean Hersom**

Relation: Friends

Encompassing warmth, made me feel like family. He was a great strength and example to all of us. Kay, we understand your grief just now and are so thankful for your precious girls and family. Know that you will all be in our prayers. Much love, Harvey & Jean

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**Tribute from John & Alvina Braun**

Relation: friends

So sad to hear of Eric's passing. Appreciated his friendliness and sincere hand shake. May you be blessed with all the fine memories you have of him. May God give you peace.

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**Tribute from Mary Reeves**

Relation: Teacher, friend

My deepest sympathies to Kay and the whole Ratzlaff clan. I will always remember Eric with the biggest smile to be matched only with his bigger than life encouragements!

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**Tribute from Amanda Closson**

Relation: Mr. Ratzlaff was my teacher

Mr. Ratzlaff taught me History at Abby Sr. He was the first adult who ever told me that he thought I should go to university, and his encouragement and kind words got me through many tough times. He

was so funny, and so kind - I don't think I can even remember someone who didn't respect Mr. Ratzlaff. Sometimes when I walked to school, his route and mine would sync up, and I'd walk with him for a little. It didn't happen very often, and it wasn't a big thing, but he took an interest in me that changed my life. I teach high school English now, and a big reason for that is because of Mr. Ratzlaff.

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**Tribute from Martha Paul's**

Relation: Cousin

Sending you my condolences. You are in my thoughts and prayers...May our God wrap His comforting arms around you and fill you with peace.

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**Tribute from Katrina Nokleby**

Relation: student

Mr. Ratzlaff was one of those rare human beings that exudes light, kindness and love for everyone. People blossomed in his presence, myself included. Rest in peace, you will be missed.

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**Tribute from Astri Solgaard**

Relation: Friend

My sincere condolences to the Ratzlaff family. Eric always had a smile and time to chat whenever you would meet him, out on his many walks. He was a kind and caring man who impacted so many with his energy and interest in others. I am sad for your loss.

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**Tribute from Racheal Bateman**

Relation: He taught my sisters&€.

Mr. Ratzlaff had a generous and gentle heart. He taught my sisters and I would often walk by his classroom and it would be playing classical music. My sisters loved his class. The amazing thing is he took time for every student...like his mission was just to be kind to every person. I had talks with him that impacted my life and I wasn't even his student. May his family feel held by their friends and community as they walk through this loss and celebrate the amazing person he always will be to so many.

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**Tribute from Diane Ross-Cox**

Relation: student and neighbor

It is with great sadness to hear of the passing of Eric .

I send heartfelt condolences to Kay and the entire family who are so wonderfully close knit..

My fondest memories Eric of are of high school in the 70s, he was the most non judgmental bubbly teacher i know, full of love to all and a memory for names like no other.

I had the blessing of being a next door neighbor to Eric and Kayn 2009-10 It took me a long time to feel comfortable calling Mr Ratzlaff, , Eric, but he insisted i call him Eric :)

Greeted daily with a big hello and a smile as big as his walk :)

My love and hugs to the entire family

Diane xo

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**Tribute from Judy Johnstone (Penner)**

Relation: Abby Senior Alumni

Such a loss! My sincere and deep sympathy goes out to the entire Ratzlaff family! I never had the chance to have Mr. R as a teacher as he retired while I attended Abby Senior. I will never forget, him having taught my brother, that he knew my name and greeting me regularly! He was a true man of God and was never ashamed to encourage his students in their faith. I know he had touched many lives during his long career. My attempt to show acknowledgements doesn't even do justice to the great man we came to respect, know, and love!

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**Tribute from David Corrie**

Relation: Former Student at Abbotsford Senior

My deepest sympathy to Mr. Ratzlaff's family and friends. He was a fantastic person, an energetic teacher, and a "one of a kind individual". We shared an interest in Winston Churchill and I looked forward to his History class every week. Once or twice a year, I met him walking at Mill Lake and he was always smiling and happy to chat for a few minutes. He will be greatly missed.

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**Tribute from Danielle Spurgeon (nee Neumann)**

Relation: Highschool Teacher

Mr. Ratzlaff was one of my favorite teachers at Abby Senior - Class of 1994. I will never forget his enthusiasm for life, his heart for others and his great big smile! Mr. Ratzlaff truly did shine a light for all the world to see! "And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love." I think it is plain to see that the world was a better place because of him. We'll see you on the other side, my friend.

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**Tribute from Hank & Edith Hooge and family**

Relation: First cousin.

Our sincerest condolences to you, Kay, and your dear family. This is how we remember Eric, not "how he died", but "how he LIVED" - he lived his faith to the fullest, and gave of his talents so freely. We will always treasure our conversations with Eric, the sincere interest he showed in ALL of us, and of course, the delicious dinners he cooked & served - especially the salmon - cooked to perfection! Although we will miss him so very much, and grieve his loss with you, we are so THANKFUL that we had him!

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**Tribute from Kim and Chuck Romig**

Relation: LCC SLI

Kay and family,

We are so sorry to hear of Eric's death. We remember you both so well from SLI in 2004 & 2005. Eric was such a sweet soul and so dedicated to students. Everyone loved him so!!! May many wonderful memories bring you comfort & may Jesus strengthen you for the days ahead! love, Kim and Chuck Romig

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**Tribute from Amy flint**

Relation: Student

My deepest condolences to a wonderful family in memory of a truly wonderful man. I have the fondest memories of Eric from Abby senior and beyond. Blessings :)

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**Tribute from Kim Buckley ( Welton )**

Relation: Student of his at Abby Sr in 1986

Mr. Ratzlaff was such a kind and wonderful person. He was definitely one of my favorite teachers ( Western Civ ). I'm sure I was one of his most annoying, chatty, giggly students. I remember bumping into him grocery shopping many many years after I had graduated and he greeted me with a warm smile and was so genuinely interested in how I was getting on with my life. RIP Mr. Ratzlaff

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**Tribute from Mike O'Donnell**

Relation: former student and colleague

He was a FANTASTIC human being and a GREAT educator. I was a student of his in 1981-82 and I never forgot the class he taught.. I would like to say he influenced my decision to become a Social Studies teacher. I am privileged to have known him. The torch is passed, Mr. R - Rest in peace.

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**Tribute from Colin McKenna**

Relation: Former Teacher

To the Ratzlaff family: I wanted to send my condolences to you, as I know you've lost a very kind and caring man. Mr. Ratzlaff meant the world to thousands of students over many years. Those of us who were lucky to have known him will celebrate his memory. He will not be forgotten.

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**Tribute from Diana Ganske Kazakova**

Relation: Student

Sending a heart full of condolences to the Ratzlaff family. Mr. Ratzlaff was one of my favourite teaches of all time. He was very supportive of my singing and the arts and really made a difference for all of us lucky enough to be in his classes at Abby Senior. He will not be forgotten. A good teacher makes a lasting impression and he truly did. All the best, Diana

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**Tribute from Kim Janzen(Rollason)**

Relation: teacher/student

RIP Mr Ratzlaff....you will always bee remembered as a wonderful happy teacher...and of course the classical music to study to....you will be missed

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**Tribute from Terry Stobbart**

Relation: former student

Condolences to family and friends. I am a former student of his. So sad to hear this news. He was a great teacher and inspiring to many students. Peace and courage to his family as they grieve.

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**Tribute from Maureen Deane**

Relation: Former Student

Im deeply saddened by the passing of Mr.Ratzlaff's passing.I have never forgotten him.Had him for 2 classes in Grade 12.What I remember most is we would often talk as we were both walking to school in the mornings.He will be missed.

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**Tribute from The Alan Hougen Family**

Relation: Relationship - How did you know the deceased?

Our deepest sympathy to the Ratzlaff family. Eric was a wonderful, positive and delightful person. He was a favourite teacher of Mark and Kirsten at Abby Senior. I enjoyed worked with him on the planning and organizing of many Graduations at Abby Senior. Eric gave freely of his time as a volunteer and will be greatly missed. But he will be fondly remembered by his many students as the "Best"!!

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**Tribute from Kristan Cooper (Greenan)**

Relation: Former student

Mr. Ratzlaff was the kindest and most motivating teacher I have ever come across. I always felt so validated in his classroom and he seemed to see something positive in every person and situation he encountered. He will truly be missed and I count myself lucky to have known him. Condolences to his family.

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**Tribute from Joanne Macpherson**

Relation: teacher and friend's dad

A gentle and wonderful man who is remembered by his presence walking around mill lake...smiling at everyone and just being present in this world I'm such a loving way.

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**Tribute from Johnny van den Berg**

Relation: My Teacher

He was an inspiration to us all. He never seemed to be in a bad mood. Always had a kind word for you. Energy to walk every where. He was amazing!

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**Tribute from Mike Milne**

Relation: My teacher @ Abby Sr. -89

condolences to the Ratzlaff family; as a teacher you were the best, when I came back to Abby from various places across the globe you were out walking as I was running around town, always quick to say hello and catch up on your way somewhere else.... and even after 20 years on and gone from Abby Sr. you always remembered me by name... for the amount of kids you taught = a feat in itself..... wishing I could come to your ceremony .... thanks for a dedicated life of service to the community and its youth...

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**Tribute from Lois (Enns) Klassen**

Relation: former student

Dear Kay and family, I was sad to learn that Eric had died. He never missed an opportunity to say a kind word or to encourage me whenever we met and I know he did the same for all of his former students. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him. My deepest sympathy for your loss.

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**Tribute from Chuck & Christine Wiebe**

Relation: Cousin and dear friend.

Dear Katie and Family; our family is deeply sorry for your loss. Eric has left behind a beautiful legacy with everyone his life touched. We will fondly remember him as a thoughtful, well spoken and a very respectable man. May he rest in peace.

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**Tribute from George Keys**

Relation: Former student & teaching colleague

Eric was one of the most inspirational and positive teachers I have ever met. He was my teacher in grades six and nine. Later, we were teaching colleagues at Abby Senior. I gave a speech at his retirement and he at mine. He not only created a lifelong interest in books and reading in me as a twelve year old boy but most importantly, later he taught me that pervasive caring was the foundation of effective teaching. I am only one of many lives Eric touched in profound and positive ways. I will miss him.

I will am unable to attend his memorial service but be assured that I will be thinking of Eric and the entire family during this difficult time.

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**Tribute from Rachelle Borries**

Relation: Teacher

I had Mr. Ratzlaff as a teacher over 15 years ago. He was the sweetest teacher with such a caring heart. May your family find comfort at this time. Blessings.

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**Tribute from Norman and Pat Frers**

Relation: Friend

Our thoughts and prayers to Kay and the family.

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**Tribute from Mark Hougen**

Relation: Fortunate former student

Mr Ratzlaff was the rarest of teachers, one who could educate, create interest, motivate you to want to learn more and engage otherwise distracted grade 12 students. I had the good fortune to have Mr Ratzlaff for grade 12 History in 1981-82. His energy and love of the subject material was infectious and motivating. He was a great example of an educator who propelled his students into the future, desiring to learn more and to grow into adults he would have been proud of. If you were lucky enough, like I was, to have encountered him in the years after graduating, he expressed an amazing memory to recall my name and alot of details about me and my class. He accepted my profound appreciation and gratitude for his excellent teaching style, but I think he really just considered it to be the only way to deliver on his self imposed goal of excellence. He was just that way. An excellent man who did excellent work in a profession he loved. And he made a difference. Now that, Mr Ratzlaff, was an excellent life lived.

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**Tribute from Shaheen Shivji**

Relation: High School Teacher

Mr. Ratzlaff was favorite teacher in high school. He always took the time to talk with me, teach me and was probably the only person who could make World War II history come alive in the minds of students.

I have fond memories of him. He was a lovely, lovely person.

May he rest in peace.

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**Tribute from Glen Roger**

Relation: friend

Condolences to family.

Eric was a teacher in my school in Kitimat when I was a little kid in the late 1950s. We ended up teaching together at Abby Senior for many years in the 80s and 90s and into the 2000s.

There are very few people who had the smile and zest for life as Eric. He walked to work every day... and extended his walk so that he got more exercise. On his retirement, many of us met him one morning for his daily walk to work one day... and had trouble keeping up with his pace.

I've had the opportunity to work with many teachers... none of them more centered on their students than Eric.

There is no higher calling than to dedicate your life to the service of others. I've always been proud to call Eric a friend.

We won't be in the country for the service... but our hearts will be with family and friends.

Best.

Glen and Pam Roger

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**Tribute from Susan Friesen**

Relation: friend

My thoughts and prayers are with you in your time of grief. May your memories bring you comfort..

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**Tribute from Dave Pankras**

Relation: Student 1987

I'd like to offer my heartfelt sympathies on Mr. Ratzlaff's passing. He was my history teacher and although I always loved history he took that love to a whole new level which stays with me today. He was the BEST teacher I ever had. The way he could have his back to the chalkboard and still write with an outstretched arm will stick with me as much as his distinctive walk. I joined the Army after I graduated and when I returned from my Gulf War deployment in 1991 for a visit in uniform his face lit up like a Christmas tree. I'll never forget him. What a great legacy to have so many students so positively influenced.

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**Tribute from Paula Hamilton (Comey)**

Relation: My favorite teacher!

Mr. Ratzlaff was my favorite teacher. He gave me a great love for Western Civ. A couple of years ago his nephew passed away on my ward. When I saw him he gave me a hug and told me how delighted he was to see his former students and how they have succeeded in life. We reminisced about Abby and western civ. He always brought a smile to my aged the many times I have seem him out walking. Heaven has truly been blessed to recieve you. May you walk many more miles with your Heavenly Father. Lots of love Paula.

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**Tribute from Ken Friedrich**

Relation: Former Student

I was a student of Mr. Ratzlaff's 88-90 at Abby Senior... he was one of the first teacher's I really connected with.... he taught me a phrase that I never forgot... ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY... he actually helped me understand my Dad more who was a teen in Germany in World War II by explaining the history around it... he was always smiling and loved what he taught... but the biggest thing I'll never forget is when I ran into him almost 10 years after grad and he still remembered me and actually sat down with me for an hour... R.I.P. to a great teacher and role model... Condolences go out to the family... Thx for everything Mr. Ratzlaff...

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**Tribute from Karen Smith**

Relation: student

Mr. Ratzlaff was my teacher in the early 70's. He definitely lived his faith by how special and important he made each and every student feel. ( I know that's how he made me feel.) When I got saved in my early 20's I realized for myself why Mr. Ratzlaff seemed so special. He was a great role model and example for young people. Shine on in eternity Mr. Ratzlaff :))

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**Tribute from Dorothy Fowler Flynn**

Relation: Colleague

My heartfelt condolences to Kaye and the Ratzlaff family. Eric and I were colleagues at Abby Senior. Eric was a much loved and respected teacher for many reasons. He genuinely cared about his students and had the gift of communicating to people that they were special. Eric instilled a love for and an understanding of History. His positive outlook and clear moral compass made him a role model for all of us. Eric has touched and guided so many lives, I can think of no greater legacy!

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**Tribute from Dave Loewen**

Relation: Friend

Eric was a most engaging and genuine individual. I've heard so much about the kind of teacher he was, and reading comments here just reinforced what I had already known. He invested himself fully into whatever he did and our community is much richer because of the role he played in teaching young people for all those years! Wishing Kay and family much comfort and strength as you mourn his passing!

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**Tribute from Penny Lee**

Relation: former student

So sorry to hear of the passing of Eric - my thoughts and prayers go out to your family during this difficult time. It has been over 40 years since I was a student in his team teaching Social Studies class at Abby Jr. He was a wonderful teacher but his educating went far beyond what he taught in the classroom. Someone once said you might not always remember the definition of a polynomial, but you will remember the way a good teacher inspires and influences you. He was such an inspirational teacher to so many students over the years we will never know where his influence stops. Eric had an incredible gift of making each and every one of his students feel valued and respected. His memory for names was amazing and he would often not only remember your name but ask about your older or younger sibling by name as well of course! I so enjoyed meeting him over the years when out for a walk and sharing recent additions and updates on both our families. I feel fortunate and honoured to

have known him - he will be missed.

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**Tribute from Vi Wiens**

Relation: Work

I became one of those "strangers" whom Eric befriended when he came thru the halls at Menno Home. He became my affirmer, my encourager, my supporter - always rooting for me - was a blessing & inspiration for me always. The Service was wonderful - a wonderful tribute to a wonderful, man of God.

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**Tribute from Catherine L. Watson**

Relation: Student at Abby Senior

Mr. Ratzlaff was an amazing teacher and overall human being. I graduated from Abby Senior in 1989 and have never forgotten about an important life lesson that he taught me. It was one of acceptance, humility, and grace. I had some wonderful teachers at Abby but Mr. Ratzlaff stood out. I last saw him about 4 years ago when I visited Abbotsford. He gave me a huge hug in a parking lot. He was genuinely happy to see me, as I was to see him. He leaves behind an incredible legacy with so many of us. Wishing his family my deepest condolences.

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**Tribute from Jennifer Tracey Hedd**

Relation: student 1969

Mr. Ratzlaff you will be greatly missed, a wonderful man of God. being a student way back in the 60s until a short time ago he always had time to chat. I will miss you on Sunday mornings on your walk to church going passed ours and being able to say Hello and God Bless. Sorry for your families loss but what a richer and better place to be with your Lord and Saviour.

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**Tribute from Anita Szabo**

Relation: Teacher and fellow church member

He was a great teacher, one of those you never forget. I also will remember greeting him on his walks around the neighbourhood. Also wishing him peace while he watches over his family.

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**Tribute from Jake & Phyllis Epp**

Relation: a friend

Enter your message here once approved by the moderator it will be posted to the website.

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**Tribute from Jim & Dana Kocsis**

Relation: Family Friend

We are all very saddened to hear of the passing of Mr. Eric Ratzlaff. He was a wonderful teacher, parent, grandfather and mentor to many people. He will be surely missed. Our profound condolences to family and friends during this very difficult time.

Sincerely Yours,

The Kocsis Family (Jim, Dana, Chris and Carissa)

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**Tribute from Bob Martens**

Relation: friend

Many years ago, Eric listened to us young guys pontificating on politics, and always responded with a welcome. Miss him.

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**Tribute from Laird Siemens**

Relation: Teacher

Mr. Ratzlaff was maybe the best teacher at ASSS in the late 60s and early 70s. Always a gentleman and always gracious - we lost a good one!

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**Tribute from Mike Griffith**

Relation: Eric was my History 12 teacher.

Eric touched the lives of too many to count. He provided the motivation and gentle push to allow me to maximize my potential. I looked forward to each and every day in his class. I count myself one of the lucky ones to have known Mr. Ratzlaff. God bless.

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**Tribute from Pauline (Fatkin) Isherwood**

Relation: he taught me at Abby Senior

To the Family of Eric Ratzlaff my deepest heartfelt sympathy.

He taught me at Abbotsford Senior and was one of my favorite teachers. During my History 12 class he would allow my boyfriend who had a spare during same block to come and sit in on his class. After a few history facts Mr Ratzlaff would start one of his boy/girl relationship talks which always made us laugh. Well, I married that boy and we were married 31 years until I lost him last summer to a malignant brain tumor, so I share your loss and your pain.

I planned to attend the service but we were short staffed at work that day and I was unable to get away, please forgive me as I really wanted to be there for the Family!

I always saw Eric walking around town with a big smile on his face and luckily got to speak to him over the years when our paths crossed.

He was a wonderful person and will be missed.

My thoughts and prayers are with you,

Pauline ( Fatkin) Isherwood Class of 1977

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**Tribute from Jo MacLeod**

Relation: friend and co-worker of Kay

Kay, I am so sorry to hear of your loss. May all these tributes to your wonderful husband and your memories console you. I can relate as I also lost my husband a few years ago. One day you will find

that your memories of Eric will make you smile and you will thank God for the privilege of having had him in your life. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

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**Tribute from Beth Drury (nee Gouldthorpe)**

Relation: friend of the family

I can only picture Mr Ratzlaff with a positive and enquiring look on his face! Enquiring after family, life and of course the Queen! Always welcoming, friendly and interested he listened more than he talked even though he had so much knowledge to share. My last visit with him before Christmas what hit me most was his unwavering faith which had shaped his whole life and he knew would carry him through what was to come. What an inspiring legacy he has left.

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**Tribute from Rob Reibenschuh**

Relation: Former colleague

It is with great sadness that I learned today of my friend and former colleague's passing. My family's prayers and best wishes go to Eric's loving family and friends. As a new teacher at Abby Senior, Eric helped guide me and mold me into the teacher and person I am today. He was compassionate, caring, and always held a beautiful smile. We will all miss him. Another eternal flame has been blown out. Go with God, Eric.

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**Tribute from Erin McGrail**

Relation: Former student

To the Ratzlaff family:

I am so sorry to hear of Mr. Ratzlaff's passing. A wonderful man and extraordinary teacher. Mr. Ratzlaff inspired me to become a teacher.

I consider myself incredibly lucky to have had such an amazing teacher.

Much love and thoughts to you and and your family.

RIP Mr. Ratzlaff.

Regards:

Erin McGrail

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