

Roswell S. Richards

Dec. 2, 1905 – September 21, 1946

“Roz” Richards, 40, Formerly Editor of Messenger, Expires Prominent Monticello Man Dies in Home Saturday After Long Illness

Residents of the village and the surrounding community were unashamed of the tears that swelled into their eyes Saturday afternoon when they learned that Roswell S. Richards, 40 years of age, highly esteemed life-long resident of Monticello, had passed away at about 2:15 at his home after an illness of about four months' duration.

Mr. Richards' untimely death, which left the village and surrounding community plunged into the depths of despair and sincere sadness, was the result of a rare ailment diagnosed as enlargement of the lymphatic glands, a disease which medical authorities were unable to combat. Last May he submitted to an operation for goiter. Then it was discovered that he was the victim of the glandular ailment. “Roz,” as he was familiarly referred to by his many friends and acquaintances, suffered untold agony during the last days he was with his family and friends and only his unabating determination to continue his struggle enabled him to remain with us during the last hours.

Native of Village

Roswell S. Richards was born in Monticello Dec. 2, 1905, the son of S. Earle and Ida Zwickey Richards. He attended the Monticello high school, where he excelled in athletic activities, and graduated with the class of 1923. Journalism was his chosen profession after he had become interested in newspaper work when a mere boy in his father's shop here, the home of the Monticello Messenger, and he completed the course in journalism at the University of Wisconsin in 1928. His interest in the affairs of The Messenger was so intense that he made trips to Monticello each week in his last two years at Madison to assist with the work of publishing the paper. On Aug. 2, 1928, he was united in marriage to Yolanda Elmer, the ceremony taking place in Monroe.

That year he became associated with his father as editor of The Messenger and continued in that capacity until the paper was disposed of to the present owner in 1936. He had served as postmaster in Monticello for 13 years, assuming the position in 1933.

Sterling Character

The death of “Roz” has taken from the community an individual of indelible honesty and sterling character, a man who always adhered rigidly to the ideals and beliefs for which he worked untiringly. In serving the public he was never too busy to dispense with the heavy mail distributions and give counsel and aid to any of the hundreds of patrons who filed in and out of the postoffice each day. His broad smile and friendly greeting were inseparable characteristics which his myriad of friends in the village and community and far around always associated with him.

Possessed of a buoyant and good natured disposition, “Roz” always maintained a jovial attitude when he was the subject of a “ribbing” by his friends but always retaliated with a jest that was just a bit on a higher plane. In the many years in which he served the public, both as a newspaper editor and postmaster in Monticello, he always made every effort to please the people whom he associated with. He took great pride in his work and accomplishments and the results of his efforts reflected the conscientious manner in which he applied himself to his tasks.

The death of Mr. Richards has emphasized the high esteem with which he was regarded in his community. He was well liked by everyone and the reasons are clearly apparent. His unwavering honesty and his unfailing geniality were only a few of the admirable characteristics which won him the wholesome respect of his fellow citizens. His cheerful greetings and ready smiles will long be remembered by his wide acquaintanceship.

An energetic and progressive young man, his loss to the community will long be felt. Many thousands of copies of his mimeographed paper, “The Drizzle,” a timely publication filled with the events of the village and community, the welfare of our people in service and other items, interspersed with the kind of humor and wit which he wrote so fluently, were sent to service men and women from Monticello during World War II.

Won Many Prizes

At an early age “Roz” began to spend much time around The Messenger office and it was not long before he had the printing bug. Endowed with a thorough knowledge of the operation of a newspaper, Mr. Richards began thinking in terms of an improved paper. In 1935 his entries in the Sigma Delta Chi Better Newspaper contests won many awards and national honors were also won by The Messenger that year.

Mr. Richards was a member of the Zwingli Evangelical and Reformed church, Monticello, and was affiliated with Sigma Delta Chi, honorary professional journalism fraternity.

Mr. Richards excelled in writing and his work and ethics were a credit to the profession.

Surviving are the bereaved widow; two daughters, Rosanda Rae and Ronda Kay; his father, S. Earle Richards, Monticello; and one sister, Mrs. Charles J. Niles, Monroe. He was preceded in death by his mother and one son at birth.

Funeral Tuesday

Funeral services were held at 2 Tuesday afternoon at the Zwingli Evangelical and Reformed church. The Rev. A. R. Achtemeier, church pastor, officiated, and burial was in Highland cemetery. Pallbearers were; Carl Dick, Dr. Wm. V. Baebler, C. W. Karlen, W. D. Elmer and Thomas Brusveen, Monticello, and R. H. Schoonover, Monroe,