

Milner Russell Carden



Milner Russell Carden was called "coach" by the many generations of student athletes he mentored in the Tullahoma City Schools System.

Milner died on Thursday, Dec. 10, 2015 from health complications due to multiple myeloma, according to his niece, Caren Gabriel. He was 85. Gabriel said Carden had donated his body to Vanderbilt University Medical Center for the furtherance of medical and scientific study.

Carden was born on Aug. 28, 1930 in Noah to the late John Russell and Miriam Milner Carden. He joined the Navy in the middle of his college career at Middle Tennessee State College. Upon his honorable discharge, he obtained both bachelor's and master's degrees in education from Middle Tennessee State College in 1957. After graduating, he and his wife Martha moved to Tullahoma, where they began long and distinguished careers in education at East Junior High School, East Middle School and Tullahoma High School.

Carden was employed from 1957 to 1987 with the Tullahoma City Schools. He coached the football teams at East Middle School (then East Junior High) and the track and cross country teams at Tullahoma High School. He was also an economics and history teacher at Tullahoma High School.

He is survived by his wife, Martha; one daughter, Beth Watson; two granddaughters, Savannah Watson and Paris Watson; one sister, Arlena Nickle; two brothers, Bill Carden of Noah, and John Emory Carden of Manchester; and numerous nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by two brothers, Charles Thomas Carden and James Render Carden.

Milner was a member of the Tullahoma First United Methodist Church for 58 years.

Love of Coaching

Martha Carden, who taught physical education and home economics at East Junior High School, said her husband's passion was the school system's sports program. "He loved coaching and taught for 30 years. And he coached just about everything," she said. "He really enjoyed the successes of his students, and appreciated that his students did well with everything they were involved in."

Aldermen Mike Stanton said Carden was a "wonderful coach and teacher." "Milner taught economics and history while coaching. Not only was he successful at the local level, but at the state level as well," said Stanton. "He had strong discipline and demanded a lot of his students. And he got a lot from them." Stanton also said that Carden was a 'prankster.' He said, "Even though he played practical jokes, he could take them as well." "I'm going to miss him. He enjoyed life, and always had a story to tell," said Stanton. "He was very likeable and excellent in everything he put his mind to. He expected excellence out of students, teachers and principals. If you were involved with Tullahoma City Schools, he expected excellence."

TCS Athletic Director Jerry Mathis said while Carden coached the East Junior High football team, he went undefeated for the six years he was there.

John Rickman, Tullahoma Noon [Rotary Club](#) member, taught physical education at East Junior High when he met Carden in 1969. "I coached after him at East Junior High," said Rickman. "He built quite a reputation in football and track. He was quite a character. I'm going to miss him. "You can't forget Milner. He was confident in his abilities," he said. "And he succeeded at any task, although some might not agree with his methods." Rickman said he and Carden were involved with the Tullahoma Noon Rotary Club, and was a delight to work with. "Milner told me and Pat Welsh back when he was 81 that, 'If something happened to me I wouldn't have any regrets. I've had a good life.'"

Carden was also influential in bringing Grider Stadium to Tullahoma.