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05 A Tribute to "Sarge" Clark (1915-2001)

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A Tribute to "Sarge" Clark (1915-2001)

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T. Walter "Sarge" Clark was born on January 19, 1915 in Wawa, PA. He came to West Chester in 1921 when his family moved to 135 E. Nields Street. Later, after he returned from World War II, he moved into his house on Linden Street with his wife Laura. He died there last week at age 86.

As a student at West Chester High School (class of 1934), he was a very successful athlete who earned a scholarship to attend West Chester State Teacher's College. After a year, he left to play semi-pro baseball and eventually joined the Harrisburg team in the Pittsburgh Pirates farm system. At the height of his career, his picture was featured on a Wheaties cereal box.



Sarge and the 1933-1934 West Chester High Basketball Team

He left baseball in 1941 to serve in World War II where, as a member of a "Sea Bees" engineering company, he helped to construct the base on Tinian Island from which the atom bomb was flown to Japan. After the war, he returned to West Chester and worked as a carpenter until his retirement in the early 1980s.

In recent years, Sarge was well-known in the community for his habit of sitting on the front porch and greeting all who were willing to stop. In that way, he brought together university students and neighbors for conversations that ranged from sports to local history. In the mid-1990s, local history professor Jim Jones and one of his students conducted a series of interviews

with Sarge.

In the words of Dr. Jones, "Sarge Clark was a man who became a hero to the members of his own generation, but managed to find ways to connect to those from later generations. He was an example to the rest of us of how to be a good neighbor, and he will be sorely missed."