



## Emil J. Groth

August 30, 1933 - July 30, 2018

Emil Groth, beloved father, husband, brother, coach, teacher, and friend, passed away on Monday, July 30, 2018, at St. Gabriel's Hospital in Little Falls, Minn. A funeral service will be held at 11:00 A.M. on Friday, August 3, 2018 at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN. Burial will take place in the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery north of Little Falls, MN. A visitation will be held from 4-8 P.M. on Thursday at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN and from 10-11 A.M. on Friday at the Shelley Funeral Chapel in Little Falls, MN. Military honors are provided by the Little Falls American Legion Post #46. Arrangements are with the Shelley Funeral Chapel.

A longtime resident of Little Falls, Emil was born in Hartley (O'Brien County), Iowa, on August 30, 1933, to German immigrant Ernest Groth and Marion (Meinel) Groth of Illinois. Emil was baptized and confirmed at the age of 18 at St. Matthew's Lutheran Church in Worthington, Minn.

During his youth, when he wasn't working on the family farm in Worthington, Emil enjoyed participating in sports. Most notably, he played football (lineman, #61) at Worthington High School, where he earned his diploma in 1953. Later that year, Emil enlisted in the U.S. Army, where he served for two years as an infantryman. He was promoted to the rank of corporal, and earned a National Defense Service Medal and a Good Conduct Medal. After receiving an honorable discharge in 1955, he served in the Army Reserve and enrolled in Worthington Junior College. He transferred to Mankato State Teachers College (now MSU-Mankato) in 1958.

Emil always said football saved him by ensuring he acquired an education. He played football in the position of tackle for the Mankato State Indians during their 1959 conference championship-winning season, under the renowned Mankato State Head Coach Bob Otto. Through his studies at Mankato State, Emil gained a passion for teaching. He earned a bachelor of science degree in physical education in 1961.

Emil got his first teaching job at Spearfish High School in South Dakota, where he served

as B-squad football coach and assistant wrestling coach during the team's wrestling state-title winning seasons in 1962 and 1963. Emil left Spearfish in 1963 to become a teacher and coach at Alexander High School in Nekoosa, Wisc. He taught U.S. history and a class called "modern problems," and coached varsity wrestling and junior high football.

At Nakoosa, Emil met the love of his life, Judith Gale Symes, who also was a teacher at Alexander High. Judy won Emil's heart by merely accepting his invitation for their first date, which involved scouting football talent at a nearby school. Emil and Judy were married in Milwaukee on June 6, 1964. That year, they both attended summer school at Mankato State, with the support of scholarships awarded by the Nekoosa-Edwards Foundation. The following year, the couple left Nekoosa and relocated to Cosmos, Minn., where they both taught at Cosmos High School.

Emil earned a master of science degree in school guidance counseling from Mankato State in 1966. Judy gave birth to their first daughter, Jennifer (Burr) in 1968. The family moved to Little Falls in the summer of 1969, and Emil began his 23-year career as a faculty member in the Little Falls school district, serving as guidance counselor, phy-ed and health teacher, and coach. In 1970 Emil and Judy welcomed their second daughter, Mary, and Emil began serving as assistant football coach. He coached both offensive and defensive lines for the Flyers varsity football team until his retirement in 1993 -- and even for a few years afterward. He helped lead the Flyers to many winning seasons, including the Central Lakes Conference Championship in 1985. He also helped out with the Flyers varsity wrestling program in its early days.

Outside of school, Emil enjoyed working his farm north of Little Falls, where over the years he raised pigs, chickens, and cows, and cultivated corn, oats, and hay. Emil continued farming after his retirement from teaching. He loved making hay, and despite his declining mobility, he was determined to continue working the fields as long as he could.

Emil's family, friends, and former students and athletes will remember him as a man with inexhaustible kindness, empathy, and generosity, as well as an indomitable spirit and enthusiasm for life. Emil was seldom seen without a grin on his face, especially in his final years, when he had the opportunity to spend every day with his beloved family, and to be an important part of their lives.

Emil was preceded in death by his wife Judy, his sisters Lola (Peterson) and Audrey (Slone), his parents Ernest and Marion, and many other relatives and friends. He is survived by his daughters, Mary, Jennifer (Burr), son-in-law Michael Burr, grandchildren, Mitchell, Lucas, and Violet, many nieces, nephews, and close friends, as well as Milo the

cat. His final resting place is adjacent to Judy's at the Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery near Camp Ripley.

# Cemetery

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## Minnesota State Veterans Cemetery

15550 Highway 115  
Little Falls, MN,

# Events

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**AUG** **Visitation** 04:00PM - 08:00PM

**2**

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Shelley Funeral Chapel of Little Falls  
214 SE 2nd Street, Little Falls, MN, US,  
56345

**AUG** **Visitation** 10:00AM - 11:00AM

**3**

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Shelley Funeral Chapel of Little Falls  
214 SE 2nd Street, Little Falls, MN, US,  
56345

**AUG** **Funeral Service** 11:00AM

**3**

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Shelley Funeral Chapel of Little Falls  
214 SE 2nd Street, Little Falls, MN, US,  
56345

# Comments

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“ A tribute video has been added.



**Shelley Funeral Chapel** - August 01, 2018 at 04:42 PM

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“ Lance Chisholm lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



**Lance Chisholm** - August 08, 2018 at 04:48 PM



“ From a former student and athlete.

**Lance Chisholm** - August 08, 2018 at 04:50 PM

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“ There was no one like Mr Groth. He was definitely a unique teacher and coach. I will always remember a time in high school when Mr. Groth had us for PE. We were playing kick ball in the gym. During one particular play, someone kicked the ball and the play was to second base for the out. Mr. Groth bellowed in his inimitable way, "You're OUTTA THERE!!", accompanied by an exaggerated thumb gesture that was just hilarious!

I still talk about that memory today!

My thoughts and prayers are with his family. May you know the nearness of God in times like this and may the warmth and love of friends and family bring you comfort in this difficult time.

Michelle Posch Halcomb, Class of '80

**Michelle Posch** - August 06, 2018 at 08:33 PM

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“ My friends and I still laugh when we recall Uncle Emil getting up at my wedding and saying that we owed him a new pair of shoes because the stickiness from spilled beer on our floor wrecked them. He will be missed.

**Ken Symes** - August 06, 2018 at 02:18 PM

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“ Our thoughts and prayers to the family, so sorry for your loss.  
George & Terri Vilinski

**Terri Vilinski** - August 03, 2018 at 09:09 PM

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“ Emil was my PE teacher and football coach who loved to call us JAR HEADS when we didn't tow the line! It seemed that he liked to put on a gruff demeanor, but when I finally had the courage to talk to him, I discovered he was a kind man with a big heart! God bless you Emil and my sympathies to the family.

**Tom Hanowski** - August 03, 2018 at 05:23 PM

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“ Our hearts, thoughts & prayers are with all of you! We were saddened to hear of your dad's passing & hope you find comfort & strength in the many wonderful memories you have of your dad..... Sending love-Brad & Dawn Laager

**Brad & Dawn Laager** - August 03, 2018 at 12:13 PM

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“ We are sorry to hear of Emil's passing. We enjoyed every time he would bring Milo in and visit with us. Always happy. He will be greatly missed. You are in our thoughts and prayers

Pierz Veterinary Clinic Staff

**Pierz Veterinary Clinic Staff** - August 03, 2018 at 09:29 AM

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“ They are getting one of the best! He was and always will be one of the finest people I've always looked up to . He will be missed.

**Bruce Bellefeuille** - August 03, 2018 at 09:26 AM

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“ Emil has been a neighbor for about 48 years, although he didn't know it. Until the day I dropped off a coffee cake from Pete and Joys. He looked at me and asked how did I know where he lived. So I told him. I worked pt at P&J and he would come in and we were always happy to see him, even though he liked to act like he didn't care. He was a great guy and I was happy to have known him the little I did. My deepest sympathy to Mary and Jenny.  
Arlene and Harvey Hansmann

**arlene hansmann** - August 02, 2018 at 07:17 PM

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“ Mary and Jenny so sorry to hear about your dad. May you find comfort in knowing what a great role model he was to so many...former students, players, people he coached and taught school MMwith and friends of his in the community as well as you girls and the grandchildren. I remember so many good times with your mom and dad when I lived in Little Falls. My thoughts and prayers are with all of you.  
Linda Soulis Colliander

**Linda Soulis Colliander** - August 02, 2018 at 12:16 PM

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“ I've run a repair bossiness in Little Falls for 38 years and was fortunate to have Emil as one of my long time customers.He was always pleasant and a very reasonable man to deal with.He often would tell me that I couldn't retire because he wouldn't have anyone to bring his "problems" to.Emil was one of the good ones,and I'm sure he's driving God's tractor right now.

**Joe Valesano** - August 02, 2018 at 11:10 AM

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“ Our thoughts and prayers are with all of you during this time! So sorry to hear of your dad's passing.  
  
Elene and Dan Tonder

**Elene Tonder** - August 02, 2018 at 08:59 AM

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“ Emil was a great friend and mentor to me for over 41 years as well as a extra grandfather to our kids. You were always there to help me with my farming endeavors and travel with to the kids sporting events. I will miss the times we had coffee and attempted to solve the world's problems. Rest easy my friend and give Judy a hug!

## Dennis & Chris Newman

Dennis Newman - August 01, 2018 at 10:10 PM

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“ In life you have many acquaintances but few true friends. I'm proud to have had Emil as a very dear friend! He was the first person our family met when we moved to Little Falls and eager to help us get settled. He was a wonderful influence to me and my family. Coaching with him over many years was an honor and I will cherish that time always. He was an outstanding man! Our sympathy to his family. Bob Just

Bob Just - August 01, 2018 at 05:10 PM



“ Bob: I am Emil's son-in-law and will be leading the eulogy during today's service for Emil. I understand you are out of town and won't be able to attend. Would it be OK with you if we would read your beautiful tribute to Emil as part of the sharing portion of the service? Thank you.-Michael Burr

Michael - August 03, 2018 at 08:27 AM

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“ 38 files added to the album LifeTributes



Shelley Funeral Chapel - August 01, 2018 at 03:39 PM

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“ Dear Jenny and Mary, we are so very sorry about your Dad. We always had such good times with your parents. We have very fun memories. Our prayers as with you and your family.

Love

Bill and Linda Bates



William Bates - August 01, 2018 at 02:41 PM



“ Helen McLennan lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



**Helen McLennan** - August 01, 2018 at 02:40 PM

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“ BreeAnn Rakow lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



**BreeAnn Rakow** - August 01, 2018 at 01:36 PM

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“ Emil always made me smile...mostly by giving me a hard time! He was a loving and generous man who impacted so many! The Just family talk of him and fondly. He will be missed.



**Ann Just** - August 01, 2018 at 01:06 PM



“ Talks of him often and fondly...

**Ann Just** - August 01, 2018 at 01:07 PM

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“ Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Emil J. Groth.



August 01, 2018 at 10:18 AM

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“ Emil was a good man...appreciated sharing views with him. Many years ago, he came to help us with our belongings when we were moving from one residence to another. A generous man with a good heart...

May the Lord bless him and bring him into His heavenly presence. Saying a prayer for Emil and his loved ones...

Jerry Snyder

Jerry Snyder - August 01, 2018 at 09:37 AM

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“ Mary and Jenny, we are so sorry for this heartbreaking event. So much loss for you in one year's time! What more can we say. Wishing you peace! Bev and Dick Culshaw

Bev Culshaw - August 01, 2018 at 08:55 AM

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“ Becky lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Becky - August 01, 2018 at 08:04 AM

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“ Alan Thelander lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Alan Thelander - August 01, 2018 at 01:44 AM

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“ Judy Berger lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Judy Berger - July 31, 2018 at 11:33 PM

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“ Duane/Snipe An Cindy Witucki lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Duane/Snipe an Cindy Witucki - July 31, 2018 at 10:12 PM



“ Iam going to miss Emil he was dang good friend . Dam the luck

Duane/Snipe an Cindy Witucki - July 31, 2018 at 10:15 PM

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“ Bruce And Kathy Anderson lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



**Bruce and Kathy Anderson** - July 31, 2018 at 06:58 PM

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“ What you see is what you get! In Emil I see a true friend, someone who doesn't judge but supports! Since we have retired we have had many more meaningful conversations than while we were coaching and teaching together. I will forever cherish the times we spent talking Johnnie football and the Flyers. Man, we had all the answers. Our favorite was that" the older we get the better we were and the athletes got bigger, faster and stronger! Emil, I miss you man and I. Will never forget giving you a big hug and telling you I loved you, I thought it would kill you, you know what? You hugged me even harder the next time!!! LOvE, Mike

**mike ratzloff** - July 31, 2018 at 05:47 PM

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“ Claudette Moran lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



**Claudette Moran** - July 31, 2018 at 03:20 PM



“ Prayers and condolences go out to the family of Emil Groth, former coach and phy ed teacher at LFCHS. May he rest in the peace of Christ, and may God hold all of you in the palm of his hand.

**Claudette Moran** - July 31, 2018 at 03:21 PM

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“ Larry & Jeri Betts sent a virtual gift in memory of Emil J. Groth



Larry & Jeri Betts - July 31, 2018 at 12:29 PM



“ Emil will be missed by many during his coaching & teaching career & a friend to so many!!!  
May You Rest In Peace, Emil

Larry & Jeri - July 31, 2018 at 12:31 PM

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“ John & Char Berns lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



John & Char Berns - July 31, 2018 at 09:46 AM

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“ Joe & Maggie Plante lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Joe & Maggie Plante - July 31, 2018 at 08:40 AM

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“ Mike & MaryJo Olson lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Mike & MaryJo Olson - July 31, 2018 at 07:44 AM

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“ Wendy Waltman lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Wendy Waltman - July 31, 2018 at 07:32 AM

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“ Laurie Venske Koll lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Laurie Venske Koll - July 31, 2018 at 01:23 AM

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“ Jeanne And Ron Beam Family lit a candle in memory of Emil J. Groth



Jeanne and Ron Beam family - July 30, 2018 at 09:30 PM



“ Emil had a great impact on my teaching and coaching during my 33 year career in North Branch, MN. I learned so much from him....most important how to treat kids. I also learned to speak your mind and backdown from nobody. The lessons I learned from him made me a better teacher and athletic coach. He was a great friend and mentor.  
He had a great influence on my life and Pam’s too.  
Our thoughts are with all as we tell our favorite “Emil” stories tonight in our new home of Denver, Colorado.  
#DamnJarHead



**Mark and Pam Savage** - July 30, 2018 at 09:04 PM

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“ Emil was a great man. He was a good man to very many people and it's a shame that he passed. He was always saying how he would be happy if he died on the tractor and that's exactly how he went. He will be missed.

**Violet Burr** - July 30, 2018 at 08:42 PM