

Played with hockey greats, found greatness in coaching

HEATHER RIVERS

He played with some hockey greats, but found his own greatness coaching the game.

A much-loved former high school math teacher and coach has died following a crash that left him with injuries to his neck and pelvis.

While at first his injuries didn't appear to be life-threatening, South secondary school teacher Glenn MacDonald, 87, died on May 11.

His death followed surgery for injuries he received during a two-vehicle crash while he was exiting Northland Mall on May 1, headed for Shoppers Drug mart to mail his income tax return, his daughter Kristin Bona said.

"He ended up getting pneumonia and passing away; it was a real shock," said Bona, 58.

London police confirmed the incident and said "no charges have been laid up to this point."

"The investigation remains active and ongoing," Const. Matthew Dawson said in an email.

MacDonald played hockey for the Regina Pats from 1954-55, and was later moved with a couple of fellow players to Michigan State University.

"My dad played hockey all of his life up until he was 82," Bona said,



Glenn MacDonald, a much-loved former high school math teacher and football coach has died following a crash that left him with injuries to his neck and pelvis. (Supplied photo)

adding that was when his wife, Denise MacDonald, fell ill with cancer. "That's gives you an idea of what kind of a sportsman he was and how much he loved the game." At Michigan State, where he

met his wife of 60 years, he played alongside Canadians Butch Miller and hockey great Joe Selinger. They were coached by Hall of Famer Amo Bessone.

The four were immortalized on

the walls of the Michigan State arena, where "a big picture" of them hung on the wall.

"He didn't play professionally," Bona said. "He knew he had to get a job and not depend on hockey."

He began his teaching career in Quebec before moving to London South secondary school, where Bona believes he stayed for his entire career.

"I don't think he taught at any other school than South," she said. "We found South yearbooks from 1967 to 1985 when he retired."

His students adored him, Bona said. "He'd get up early so students could come in for help with math." After school, the family never ate until 6 p.m. because MacDonald was coaching football or hockey.

"I remember him coming home and having supper and sitting at the table and marking papers," she said.

"My dad gave so much to South secondary."

After retirement he continued to play hockey in Ilderton and baseball in London. He curled and golfed and later enjoyed lawn bowling.

Visitation is June 23 at Forest Lawn Cemetery, 1997 Dundas St. E. with a celebration of life on June 24. Cremation already has taken place and he will be buried with his wife in Michigan.

A memorial fund for South students struggling to pay for sports-related fees has been set up. hrivers@postmedia.com