

'Hans' deftly touched lives

To the editor:

We who grew up in the vicinity of Westminster College always thought we were special for having known and loved Dr. Paul J. Hansen. To us, he was "Hans." Little did we know that Hans was not just our own treasure but that he, in spite of his quiet way, was really an icon

among men. His influence was broad and deep, falling across layer after layer of human strata; and, like a brisk mountain breeze, it was refreshing to all with whom it came into contact.

I knew him as an educator (he was the dean of secondary education at the University of Utah), author, master psychologist, humorist and coach. But that was just the tip of the iceberg. He was truly a "Renaissance man," with many broad and varied interests. His chief focus, however, was people. His chief gift was deftly touching lives.

For Hans, the Golden Rule was always on automatic pilot, and unselfishness was always on cruise control. He was cut out of a cloth common only to the greatest of souls.

He applied his plethora of skills to our neighborhood by making the Edgell Gym into a basketball "eco-system." We stood in awe as a sports program touched so many lives for so many years. The vivid imagery of such sports fantasies as "Field of Dreams" Hoosiers, and "The Natural" takes a back seat to the epoch occurring at the Edgell Gym.

Many of us speculated just what Paul Hansen might have achieved if he had pursued another path; i.e., Supreme Court justice? President of IBM? U.S. senator? Head coach of the Boston Celtics? These were all within his purview, but Hans applied his energies to the "grass roots" all around him. I was just lucky enough to be within his reach. Hans died on May 22.

To President Bush, and all others who value quiet heroes, I commend to you Dr. Paul J. Hansen . . . 1916-1990.

Richard D. Paul
Irvine, Calif.