

# Rittmueller Family



he history of the Lutheran School in Frankenmuth includes a prominent man by the name of Ernest F. Rittmueller, known locally as "E.F.". He came to Frankenmuth as a young 20 year old school teacher in 1914 and became not only a leader in local

education, but also in community activities. Frankenmuth's Middle School was named in his honor in 1979 (E.F. Rittmueller Middle School).

E.F. was born December 1, 1894 in Bensenville, Illinois and was baptized and confirmed at Zion Lutheran Church there. He received his early education at the Lutheran School in Bensenville and entered Addison College in Addison, Illinois in 1909. (There were no Lutheran High Schools at that time.) When River Forest College opened in 1913 he was a member of the first class, graduating in 1914.

The young teacher was issued a call by the St. Lorenz congregation in Frankenmuth to teach in the southern district in Birch Run. He arrived August 12, 1914 and taught in a one-room schoolhouse for the next 15 years. In 1925 he made a suggestion to the St. Lorenz Men's Club that the country schools be consolidated. On his advice, the St. Lorenz congregation built a new three-story brick school on Main Street and called it the St. Lorenz Central School. As of the year 2005, the building still stands, but is no longer used as a school.

In 1923, E.F. received his Michigan Life Teaching certificate. In 1929, he was named principal of St. Lorenz School, a position he held for the next 25 years. He organized the audio-visual and athletic programs at the school. He used his privately owned bus to begin the school bus system in 1929. E.F. also published the St. Lorenz annuals. His involvement in education extended beyond Frankenmuth.

The Michigan District recognized his leadership by electing him to serve as a member of the District Board of Education for 12 years. Closer to home, he was elected Secretary of the Frankenmuth School Board in 1962 – the year after he retired from teaching. E.F. retired from the board in 1976 when his hearing began to fail.

E.F. was active in St. Lorenz Church. He served as chairman of the congregation for 25 years. He organized the St. Lorenz Men's Club and Walther League.

In the community he was well-known for directing the Gera Dramatic Club for 27 years and was the founder of the Frankenmuth Historical Society. E.F. was awarded the H.L. Keinath Award in 1972. He was a member of Rotary and was awarded the prestigious Paul Harris Award in 1974. He served on the Board of the Saginaw County Aging Commission. He was a charter member of the Frankenmuth Golden Agers Club and was President at the time of his death.

E.F. married Milda Emma Marie Scharrer July 21, 1918 and they had five children. Their oldest son Walter (spouse Arlene) followed in E.F.'s footsteps and became a Lutheran School teacher and principal. Gilbert (spouse Irma) was a trucker by trade. Franklin (spouse Ruth Schluckebier) pursued a business career. The couple's daughters: Marion married Ruben (Bill) Braeutigam and Eunice married John Drew. E.F. and Milda's descendants total 83 as of 2005.

E.F. Rittmueller died August 18, 1980 at age 86. Milda Rittmueller died August 10, 1991 at age 89. They are buried in St. Lorenz Cemetery. The couple enjoyed gardening. Both were great card players. They loved family gatherings and Christmas was always a very special time throughout their lives.



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