

Luther Smith - A Tribute

Hall-of-Famer a True Inspiration

By DR. THOMAS M. FLANAGAN

HOW does one describe a legend of a man who truly left his footprints in the sands of time?

For those of us who were fortunate enough to have known the late Luther Smith the glowing tribute paid by Dr. John H. Powers of Cooperstown, N.Y., in the July 17 issue of the *FIELD* strikes many a responsive chord. To those who were not so fortunate to know Hall-of-Famer Luther Smith, words are indeed inadequate to describe the man and his deeds.

Luther Smith's field trial accomplishments are a matter of record; few people who are active in trials today enjoy his long and successful career of a half-century, from the provinces of Canada to the piney woods of the South, and over the past 25 years a most successful grouse dog trainer from Michigan to the northeast sector of the United States.

The record speaks for itself.

It is about the *man* that would like to reflect. Luther Smith understood dogs and people better than anyone I have ever known. His knowledge of dog psychology, his patience and his willingness to work improved every dog in his string. Quite a few trainers can take a good dog and do quite well with it. Luther did what few great trainers can accomplish. He markedly improved every dog he worked.

Luther Smith was indeed a "gentleman-sportsman" of the old school. In 25 years of field trailing, to my certain knowledge, I never heard him complain about a judicial decision. How many active in the sport today



LUTHER SMITH

can say that? His willingness to help the newcomer, amateur or professional, was unparalleled in my experience. His wife Bernie, who was his constant and indispensable aide, helped put a pattern in young dogs that I have never seen equalled. To my family he was a great and good friend and the place he occupied in our hearts will never be filled.

Luther Smith died July 3 of cancer of the lung and a ruptured ulcer. Nothing became him more than his passing. In over thirty years of medicine I have seen too many patients die, but I have never seen one exhibit the patience, the fortitude and the peace of mind that Luther Smith demonstrated. He was a giant of example to all of us involved with his care.

Luther Smith was thinking of field trials right to the end. Luther deeded to me several acres near his house that the Lost Pond Club has traditionally used for parking and access to the field trial grounds.

Esther, our sons, and I decided that a gift to the Field Trial Hall of Fame in his name would be a fitting tribute to this stalwart Hall-of-Famer. We ask that our gift be in memory of Luther Smith.

With apologies to Grantland Rice and Pudge Heffelfinger:

*"With frame of iron and heart of steel
You've earned the nation's cheers.
You strode among the valiant few
Who whipped the passing years.
Any may you wave forever, Luke,
On through eternal space
To you who helped make the game
That helped to make our race."*

We urge the many friends and admirers of Luther Smith to take this opportunity to pay their respects to a man in a manner that he would so much approve.