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Student, Father Die In Fire

Graduation Party Ends In Tragedy

By Jack Redmond
Journal Herald Staff Writer

TROY — The festivities of a graduation night ended in a fiery death for an 18-year-old Troy high school student yesterday and his father who tried to rescue him.

Despite rescue efforts by firemen, neighbors and his father, Robert Theodore (Ted) Updike died of suffocation in his first floor bedroom.

His father, Robert F. Updike, 56, a Concord township farmer, died only a few feet from his son when he attempted to pull him from the burning home. His body was found in the clothes closet.

Troy Fire Lt. Robert Counts said at least 45 minutes elapsed from the time the fire started until the fire department was summoned at 5:04 a.m. He said effective rescue operations were hampered by intense heat and thick smoke.

Awakened By Smoke

Mrs. Helen Updike, 51, told the chief she and her husband were awakened by smoke and crawled through a second story window when their exit down a staircase was blocked by flames.

Updike jumped from a porch roof and ran to the home of his brother, George Updike, several hundred yards away. After telling his wife to call the fire department, George Updike, drove to his brother's farm.

He said he saw Mrs. Updike perched on the porch roof and her younger son, Johnny, 15, on the ground. Truck drivers, who saw the flames from nearby Interstate Route 75, grabbed a ladder and helped Mrs. Updike down.

To No Avail

She said she and Johnny had both called to Ted, but to no avail. Her husband had then re-entered the bedroom to find their son.

A neighbor, Max Kerr, said, "I broke a window with a 4-by-4 and tried to crawl in, but it was too smoky and hot and I couldn't stay in; it was an inferno inside."

Johnny told officers he woke up, saw the smoke-filled room and then awakened his brother. He said he slipped through a bedroom window and thought his brother followed him.

A school chum of Ted, Galen (Tufty) Thompson, 18, of 916 South Clay street, said he and three other graduates were playing cards at Updike's house until about 3 or 4 a.m. yesterday.

About eight graduates of the 214 who graduated from high school Wednesday night came to the home to celebrate the graduation at midnight.

Excited About Trip

Thompson said Ted talked of the coming Trojanair cross-country singing trip. He was excited about the trip and the thought of going to Miami university next fall where he was to begin his teaching career. His mother is presently a first grade teacher with Concord school.

"I just don't believe it happened, because it happened so soon after we left his house," Thompson said.

Mrs. Updike and her son, Johnny, escaped injury. A fireman, Maurice Rudy Jr., suffered minor burns on his ears and a cut hand. He was treated and released from the hospital.

Lt. Counts said the fire department dumped about 10,000 gallons on the home. Tipp City volunteer fire department also answered a mutual assistance call to aid Troy.

Friends may call after 2 p.m. today at the Fisher & Sons funeral home here. Funeral services are set for 2 p.m. tomorrow at the Congregational Christian church.



TROY—A group of Troy high school graduates, one of whom (second from left) was the last to see Ted Updike alive early yesterday morning, survey the gutted home of the Updikes on Monroe-Concord road south of here. The 18-year-old student and his father, Robert Updike, died in a fire that swept their farm home at 4:30 a.m. (Staff photo by Jack Redmond)



TROY FIREMEN worked for seven hours yesterday to smother the fire and clean up debris at the Updike farm. The bodies of the father and his son were found in a downstairs bedroom about two hours after the fire alarm was turned in. Firemen estimated damage at from \$15,000 to \$20,000. (Staff photo by Al Wilson)



Robert Theodore Updike

Girl, 16, Hurt As Auto Hits Tree Stump

TROY—A 16-year-old Troy girl was in fair condition last night after ramming her mother's car into a tree stump along the driveway of the Troy country club.

Carole Michele Reese, daughter of Mrs. Audrey Reese of 940 Fairfield road, Troy, was held at Stouder Memorial hospital with cuts about the eyes and a possible fractured right arm.

Sgt. Chen Paulus of the Miami county sheriff's office said a passenger in the car, Lynne Woodrow, 16, of 6 Tamplin drive, told him she was picking up a piece of paper from the floor of the car and that this attracted the attention of Miss Reese.

Paulus said the auto side-swiped one stump and then collided head-on with another off the right side of the driveway a few hundred feet from Peters road about 3:30 p.m.

Miss Woodrow and another passenger, Mary Pat Fabian, 15, of Mary Robin road, were treated at the hospital and released.

7-County Legion Parley Due At Piqua Sunday

PIQUA—Legionnaires from seven area counties will visit Piqua Sunday for the Third Ohio district American Legion conference.

Slated to get under way at 9 a.m., the conference will be held at the Veterans Memorial home, West Water and North Downing streets.

Business at the conference will include election of district officers. Richard Sullenger of Piqua is current commander of the Third Ohio district.

A parade including military drill units, bands, color guards and baton twirlers will form at 3 p.m. at Central high school, according to Herbert Ketting of New Madison, parade grand marshal.

The parade will march east on

Valley Briefs

Jamestown.

Preble county: Eaton, West Alexandria, West Manchester, Lewisburg, Camden, New Paris.

Montgomery county: Dayton, Oakwood, Miamisburg, Trosswood, Englewood, Northridge, Brookville, Germantown, Vandalia.

Greenville - Supt. B. D. Hensel of the Greenville city school district has appealed to parents of the district who have children who will enter kindergarten in the fall to register them at the school office June 7 through 9.

Logan Youth Named

7-County Legion Parley Due At Piqua Sunday