

June 2005

Smokejumper Obituary: Phifer, Gregg L. (Missoula 1944)

National Smokejumper Association

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Smokejumper Obituary

Phifer, Gregg L. (Missoula 1944)

Gregg, 87, a retired professor of communications at Florida State University, died June 2, 2005. He was born May 17, 1918, in Cincinnati, Ohio, the son of the editor of publications for the Methodist Book Concern. Gregg lettered in Track & Field for three years in high school and headed west to College of the Pacific in Stockton, CA.

He was on the debate team for four years, lettered in Track & Field placing in the conference meet and was editor of the school newspaper. Gregg graduated with honors with a double major in history and public speaking and received a scholarship for graduate work at the University of Iowa in 1940. He received his Master's Degree the summer of '41 and secured a teaching position that fall.

Gregg was drafted into Civilian Public Service and worked at several camps before being selected for the smokejumper unit at Missoula in 1944. "We reported to the base camp at Nine Mile. Many prospective jumpers were hardened Mennonite farm boys." He had three fire jumps in 1943 and seven in 1945.

After the war Gregg got a teaching position at Baldwin-Wallace College in Ohio followed by a position at Iowa where he earned his doctorate degree. From there he went to a position at Florida State University where he spent the rest of his career teaching for 45 years. He served on many national committees on parliamentary law.

Going back to his days as a Track & Field athlete, Gregg became a Nationally rated Track & Field official working two national and one international championships. He specialized in the long and triple jumps.

Gregg was an NSA Life Member.

(end of excerpt)