

## Vince Gandolfi



### 1962 Yearbook Caption:

B.S. Morehead  
M.A. Western Reserve  
Mathematics  
Football  
Baseball  
Athletics Manager  
Varsity "R"

Born: March 9, 1919

Died: November 15, 2003

Obituary:

*Alana Baranick Plain Dealer Reporter*

*Cleveland Plain Dealer Article November 18, 2003*

*Born: March 9, 1919  
Died: November 15, 2003*

Rocky River — **Vince Gandolfi**, retired Rocky River High School athletic director, math teacher and coach of the school's undefeated and untied football team of 1955, died Saturday at his home in Rocky River. **Gandolfi**, 84, was athletic director from 1962 until he retired in 1975.

He began teaching and coaching in the Rocky River schools in 1944. As head football coach from 1953 until 1961, he compiled a record of 55 wins, 18 losses and two ties. Four of his teams won Southwestern Conference championships. Two finished second.

In 1964, he received the Greater Cleveland Football Coaches' Golden Deeds Award for his inspirational leadership as a

coach. He remained close to several of his former players and students throughout his life.

"He was my teacher and my coach, and he's been like a father to me for 50 years," said Dale Locke, a member of **Gandolfi's** record-setting 1955 team. "I lost my father when I was 16. He probably kept me from being a convict or dead. And not just me. Quite a number of young men. Boys and girls alike that didn't play sports for him thought a lot of him as a teacher. They don't come any better."

Vincent A. **Gandolfi** was born in Connellsville, Pa. He was orphaned as a teenager and was raised by his older sister.

He attended Waynesburg College in Pennsylvania, where he played football but had to drop out after one year because of finances. He worked in western Pennsylvania coal mines for two years before resuming his studies and his collegiate football career at Morehead College in Kentucky.

After graduating in 1943, he coached at Morgan Park Military Academy in Chicago for a year before moving to Rocky River. He held a master's degree from Western Reserve University.

In recent years, he took care of his wife of 59 years, Ethel, who had Alzheimer's disease. She died in February.

**Gandolfi** is survived by his son, Vincent C. of North Ridgeville; daughters, Bernadette of Rocky River and Claudia Egido of Canary Islands, Spain; and four grandchildren.

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A. D. to retire

## River hails Gandolfi

By Dick Zunt

Rocky River High athletic director Vince Gandolfi — a man who gave three decades of his life to the school — has been given something in return.

Former players and associates of his during his great coaching days at River, gathered to pay tribute to him Saturday.

Prior to the Rocky River-Olmsted Falls football game, a bronze plaque fastened to a six-ton boulder near the flag pole was dedicated to Gandolfi, who will retire after this school year.

Members of the undefeated (9-0) football team of 1955 were the prime movers in this memorable weekend for their former coach.

The team gathered to surprise Gandolfi (his wife, Ethel was in on the secret) with the presentation and a dinner, during which several gifts were presented, including a scrapbook and a caricature of their coach.

"He dedicated himself to us," said Bill Bowers, a member of the 1955 team and a member of the appreciation committee. "We wanted to show our appreciation for the leadership and pride he installed in us."

Telegrams, mailograms and letters also flooded the River athletic director. Included among the best wishes was a mailogram from retired Paul Crites, under whom Gandolfi served and later succeeded as head football coach. Crites lives in Venice, Fla.

That year's co-captains, Tom Wright and Pat Ragazzino made the presentation last Saturday.

Gandolfi grew up in Connellsville, Pa. He played guard, center and tackle during his two years at Connellsville High and two more at Uniontown, where he moved



after his sophomore year.

He then went to Waynesburg College, but financial problems caused him to drop out of school. Gandolfi got a job in the coal mines and almost lost a finger working there. After two years he obtained a tryout at Morehead (Ky.) College.

He made the football team, graduating in 1943. Gandolfi came to River in 1944. After serving as an assistant under Crites and Randall Motts, he became head coach in 1953.

Four of his teams won Southwestern Conference championships, and two finished second. Gandolfi retired from coaching in 1961 and was named athletic director the following year.

Gandolfi and his wife, Ethel, have three grown children, Vince, a teacher and coach at Fairview High, Bernadette and Claudia.