



Samuel Nager

April 24, 1930 ~ November 6, 2008 (age 78)

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Obituary

Madison -- Sam Nager was a Holocaust survivor who found the strength to make his way to the United States -- alone -- after losing the majority of his family to the Nazis. He was a practical man who recognized the love of his life only two weeks after he met her and stayed by her side for nearly 60 years. He was a successful salesman who supported four children with only a third grade education and a few English classes as his credentials. Sam Nager, 78, died Thursday, November 6, 2008 of natural causes in his home. He was a remarkable man and he will be greatly missed. Sam was born in Dynow, Poland on April 24, 1930, the youngest of twelve brothers and sisters. He was 9 years old when World War II broke out. His parents sent him to live on a farm with a Christian family when they realized his life was in peril. He was eventually discovered and taken to Buchenwald concentration camp, where he survived four years before being liberated by American soldiers. Once free, he spent almost a year searching for family members in Poland and Russia. He found one brother, but his parents and most of his other siblings did not survive. In 1948, at age 17, he came to the United States under the Orphan's Quota. He settled in Duluth, Minnesota and met Fay Passon, who agreed to marry him, even though he had backed out on a promise to take her roller-skating. While taking English classes, Sam worked as a baker, a Fuller Brush

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salesman and a fireman for the railroad. He found his niche in furniture sales, managing stores in Duluth and later in Rice Lake and Green Bay, Wisconsin. He eventually operated his own furniture store in Green Bay, appropriately named "Sam's Quality Furniture." He was highly regarded by customers, all the people he worked with and his fellow congregants at Cnesses Israel synagogue. He was also active in Green Bay city politics, serving four terms as Alderman and Brown County Board Supervisor. Though he didn't win a race for mayor, he did place a respectable third out of 10 candidates. After all four of their children had grown up, Sam and Fay moved to Madison. Sam worked for American TV Furniture store until health problems forced him to retire. He joined a gym, volunteered with other seniors and became a regular at Old Country Buffet and local Burger King. Fay cared for Sam in their Fitchburg home throughout his last years of severely failing health. They were looking forward to celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in January with a trip to Miami Beach, their favorite vacation spot. Sam's wife and four children -- Ronda Ross of Clifton Park, New York; Susan (Steve) Hirsch of Middleton; Elizabeth Nager (Charles Greenberg) of Minneapolis; and Dr. Alan (Nancy) Nager of Calabasas, California -- will always remember the dry sense of humor and charming personality he shared before falling sick. He will also be missed by his seven grandchildren -- Aaron & Deborah Hirsch, Jeremy, Rachel & Zachary Ross, and Jared & Sarah Nager. A funeral service will take place Monday, November 10, 2008 at 10:30 am at CRESS FUNERAL HOME, 6021 University Avenue, Madison, with Rabbi Joshua Ben-Gideon officiating. Burial will follow at Forest Hill Cemetery. Donations may be made to the charity of your choice.

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