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Thomas Hesketh, 75, shop owner, firefighter

Ex-minor leaguer also trained horses

By Rebecca Goodman
The Cincinnati Enquirer

GREEN TOWNSHIP - Thomas F. Hesketh Jr., co-owner of Brogan/Hesketh Formal Wear & Bridal Shoppe in Price Hill, died Tuesday at University Hospital.

His death resulted from a head injury he suffered after falling on ice Feb. 12. "He seemed to be recovering, then he got pneumonia," his wife, Susan E. Johnson Hesketh, said. Mr. Hesketh was 75.

He had been partners in the formalwear business with friend Dave Brogan of Delhi Township for 27 years. "It was a real venture," Brogan said.

"We had some good times (and) bad times. Our relationship lasted longer than some marriages."

At one time they operated four stores around Greater Cincinnati.

"It was a wonderful experience for me," Brogan said. "I was 20 years younger than Tom, (so) he sort of showed me the way. I looked up to him as a father image."

After growing up in Mount Auburn and graduating from the old Woodward High School (which was in the building that now houses the School for the Creative and Performing Arts), he attended Michigan State University with the goal of becoming a veterinarian.

But he left his studies and became a pitcher in the New York Yankees farm system. "At one point Mickey Mantle was his roommate," his wife said. "But Mickey Mantle didn't stay too long down in the minor leagues."

Mr. Hesketh came home in the late 1950s and joined the Cincinnati Fire Department. "He spent almost all of his career at Engine Co. 5 at Vine and McMicken," his wife said. He retired in 1981.

He also owned and trained race horses. "That was his dream," his wife said. At the time of his death he was a part-owner of several horses including Suddenly Gone, with whom he had some success at Turfway Park.

Mr. Hesketh was devoted to his seven children and was a "big-time Elder fan," his wife said.

"He coached grade school when I was young," said his daughter, Linda Froehlich of Pleasant Ridge. "He just loved young kids. He enjoyed going to high school athletic events more than college or pro. That and his horses were it."

In addition to his wife of 36 years and his daughter, survivors include: another daughter, Patty L. Bloomfield of Batavia; five sons, Thomas F. Hesketh III of Camden, Ark., Robert S. Hesketh of Louisville, Charles E. Hesketh of Newtown and Timothy A. and Anthony T. Hesketh, both of Green Township; two brothers, Stanley Hesketh of Anderson Township and Bruce Hesketh of Monfort Heights; 15 grandchildren; and seven great-grandchildren.

Visitation is 4-8 p.m. today at Radel Funeral Home, 650 Neeb Road in Delhi Township. Mass of Christian burial is 10 a.m. Saturday at Our Lady of Visitation Church, 3180 South Road in Mack.

Memorials: Panther Athletic Complex Fund, c/o Elder High School, 3900 Vincent Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45205.



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