

# Schmidt Family



The Schmidt name came to Frankenmuth in 1955 when St. Lorenz needed a teacher who could also serve as organist and choir director. Rudolph "Rudy" Schmidt, serving Trinity Lutheran Church in Lansing, Michigan, was called to fill this vacancy. He accepted the call and served St. Lorenz from 1955 until his death in 1968. Rudolph O. Schmidt was born June 3, 1908 in Ulm, Arkansas to Rev. Paul and Minnie nee Scharfenberg Schmidt. There were 7 more children: Hugo, Alfred, Eleanore, Flora, Theodore, Harold and Ruth. His grandparents were Johann and Wilhelmina nee Naesar Schmidt.

Rudy attended Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska and then began his teaching career in Ulm, Arkansas; Emmaus Lutheran in Fort Wayne, Indiana; Trinity Lutheran in Lansing, Michigan and finally St. Lorenz Lutheran in Frankenmuth, Michigan. Rudy married Esther Wefer June 26, 1932. Esther or "Estie", as Rudy loved to call her, grew up in Utica, Nebraska. She attended Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska, but didn't teach in the classroom because of health reasons. After their move to Lansing, a doctor there was able to diagnose and solve her health problems, which enabled her to then teach.

Rudy and Estie had two children: Gene A. Schmidt was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana on October 10, 1936. He attended Michigan State University and then was involved in sales of kitchen and bath cabinetry. He married Kathryn "Boots" Fechter August 24, 1957. They had three sons: Thomas Gene (b. 1958); John Alan (b. 1961); and Ronald Dean (b. 1963). Gene and Boots had four grandchildren: Travis, Lauren, Raechel and Lillian. Roger R. Schmidt was born August 3, 1940. He attended Concordia College in Seward, Nebraska and taught school in St. Louis, Missouri and at St. Paul Lutheran School in Flint, Michigan. He went into sales with Nystrom Company and then went into Real Estate.

Roger and Betty Schmidt had two sons: Scott and Kurt. They live in Columbus, Ohio.

Rudy's forte was always music. At Fort Wayne, Indiana he directed various choirs besides being church organist. In addition, Rudy was organist for the Fort Wayne Choral Society under the noted director, George G. Arkebauer. He became acquainted with the composer, Henry Markworth, whose music he frequently used. Rudy was often asked to be guest organist at Concordia Senior College in Fort Wayne and at special occasions at neighboring congregations. When Rudy Schmidt came to Frankenmuth in 1955, he replaced E.N. Eggen as teacher, choir director and organist. He organized the Senior Mixed Choir and the Handbell Choir. When St. Lorenz planned an addition to the church (1966), Rudy campaigned for a new organ and was instrumental in the new design for the choir balcony.

He had a sense of humor and was a master of improvisation. At one time, he came home from church and asked his sons whether they recognized the postlude. He had taken the tune "Three Blind Mice" and improvised it so that it sounded like church music. He continually brought new ideas to the music program at St. Lorenz. He loved to use instrumental music in the church service. Some of his favorite choir selections were: "Ich Lag und Schliefe", "In Joseph's Lovely Garden", "Stille Nacht", and "The Little Drummer Boy".

One of Rudy and Esther's students at Trinity Lutheran School in Lansing, Michigan, was Rev. C. William Hoesman, a previous administrative pastor of St. Lorenz and then President of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, Michigan District. A former music student, Mr. Howard Warnick, also taught at St. Lorenz and served as organist. Rudy died March 15, 1968 and Esther "Estie" died in April 1991.



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