

WPJ “The Time Machine” Article #2

“T. Edison Smith”

by Jebb Willis – volunteer

Wadena County Historical Society

As promised, I am back with a story about a WHS alum that I think will surprise you. When I first heard the story of T. Edison Smith ('36), I found it hard to believe. But I was told Smith's story by his nephew, Tom Smith (WHS '57). Tom played football for WHS and baseball in the summer. He went to Moorhead State Teachers College and later taught math and held various coaching positions at St. Cloud Technical High School for over 30 years. Tom was a straight shooter. Yet, I needed verification. T. Edison's story just seemed so improbable.

Here is what I found out about the man. After WHS he had continued success as a student-athlete at Moorhead State Teachers College where he earned multiple letters in football, baseball, and track. He graduated in 1940 and after a military tour of duty in the United States Air Force he returned to MSTC to teach in the physical education department and coach the Dragon baseball team. He later coached the men's golf team for 22 years. During that tenure his golf teams won 6 NIC Conference championships, an appearance at the 1977 NAIA National Golf Championships and development of several future golf professionals. He was inducted into the Moorehead State University Hall of Fame in 1979.

All the above accomplishments pale in comparison to what he did during his retirement. I don't know the year of his retirement, but I do know that in 1984 he was 68 years old and for the first time in his life he golfed his age. For those that don't know, golfing one's age is a coveted measure of excellence that few golfers ever achieve. T. Edison Smith lived to be 95. The last time he golfed his age he was 94. He told his nephew Tom Smith it was a lot easier to golf his age while in his 90's as opposed to his 60's. In that 26-year span T. Edison Smith golfed his age 3,359 times, an achievement that is documented in *Golf Digest* magazine and is a world record!

Until next time!