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*MEI/C**

November 29, 1976

Dear Pop:

I was happy to notice in the November 25 edition of the "Grand Rapids Press" the article concerning your 90th birthday. Let me be among the many who wish to congratulate you as you celebrate another special day.

I will remember the many things you did for me when I was a young man at South High School. I will never forget the things you taught me--both on the field and off.

May I wish you the best of health in the years to come as you continue to enjoy your retirement.

Under separate cover I am arranging to send to you a set of cuff links with the Presidential seal. Please accept these with my sincere thanks and warmest wishes.

Warmest personal regards,

JERRY FORD

Mr. P. L. Churm
314 Griswold, S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49507

GRF:Downton

cc: Marge Wicklein, Gift Unit

50 20th B'day

NOV 29 1976

CENTRAL FILE



Dear Pop.
cup

Pop Churm at 90: Slowed Down, but Still Going Strong

By Doris Berglund

P.L. Churm doesn't quite sprint to the grocery store as he once did.

But he does drive to do the weekly household buying. For a man who celebrates his 90th birthday Sunday that's a pretty good track record.

Affectionately known as Pop to all of his former students, Churm might also be called "Mr. South High." As a member of the original South High School faculty, track and cross country coach and senior adviser for 38 years, he is a familiar figure to virtually every South graduate through 1953, the year of his retirement. And he keeps in touch with many of them, including President Gerald R. Ford.

Ford's defeat was a bitter disappointment to Pop, who has followed Ford's career since his graduation from South in 1931, as he has with other outstanding graduates.

It was in 1915 that Churm left his post as principal and coach at Alpena High to accept the position of athletic director of the new South High.

He learned of the job at South from the late Arthur W. Krause, then faculty manager of Central High. They had met when Krause took his basketball team to Alpena.

At the beginning, Churm coached football, basketball, track and cross

Entrants and we took the old interurban to Wayland and played that school to a tie score. That was pretty good for an inexperienced team."

Track always was Churm's first love. He sparked a new interest into the sport which had waned here in the years prior to World War I. He remembers that "for 10 years we didn't lose a dual meet until Union finally broke the string."

"We had balance," Churm said. "Not many stars, but all good runners."

As a student at Evansville (Wis.) High, he competed in track, football and baseball. He received a scholarship to Lawrence College in Appleton, Wis., where he competed in track and was student manager of the football team.

Churm taught American history and government and presided over the senior session room, named Churm Hall by the Class of 1948.

Churm's initials stand for Percival Leopold, a name he is rarely called.

He probably has attended as many class reunions as anyone in Grand Rapids, receiving invitations from all classes through 1953.

"The school and its reputation were always good," Churm said. "I'm proud that I was there. It's the big thing in my life."

He was saddened when South was converted to a middle school in 1969.

Pop still loves to read. His sister, Mrs.



Grand Rapids Press Photograph by JIM STARKEY

POP CHURM relaxes at home in his easy chair

Pop still is active in many social and Angeles in June to live with her brother, is planning a small reception to cele-

