

**Paul Parker "Parker" Prether** was Head Custodian for Okemos School from about 1946-1955. The 1949 OHS Tomahawk yearbook was dedicated to "Paul Parker Prether," "friendly, helpful, willing and cheerful, he has contributed to the pleasantness of our activities in Okemos High by smoothing the way, whenever it was possible."

### *Dedication*



PAUL PARKER PRETHER

We, the Senior Class of 1949, dedicate this yearbook to Paul Parker Prether, a true friend, whom we have known throughout our years of high school life.

Friendly, helpful, willing and cheerful, he has contributed to the pleasantness of our activities in Okemos High by smoothing the way, whenever it was possible.

His friendly services will never be forgotten.



## STUDENTS REWARD A FRIEND

# Okemos School Honors Given Janitor

By CARLISLE CARVER  
(Journal Staff Writer)

There's nothing unusual about being a janitor.

But when one is honored by having a high school year book dedicated to him—well, that's a little different.

This is the unique laurel bestowed this year by the senior class at Okemos Consolidated school on Paul Parker Prether, 50, congenial janitor in that institution for the past five years.

It is an innovation because usually the recognition goes to some well known graduate or teacher who has excelled in the eyes of the students.

Always smiling, the 6-foot Prether was happy about the honor of being known as "a great favorite among the students."

### No Problem Too Big

All through their scholastic careers, the youngsters had no problems too difficult or too small for Prether to help in solving.

They say he was always on hand to console the students in their grief, defeats in sports or their difficul-

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## Reward

KALAMAZOO, June 4 (UP)—A professor's lifelong ambition will be realized this summer through the efforts of his many former students.

Dr. Milton Simpson, a member of Kalamazoo college's faculty for 30 years, said tonight that he will visit "Shakespeare county" and other places of literary interest in England with \$2,000 he was given by former students. The presentation was made at an alumni banquet.



Being helpful and friendly to others has brought distinction to Paul P. Prether, janitor at Okemos school. Youngsters like Russell Roosa (displaying elbow) and Robert Bell have come to look upon Mr. Prether as the one to turn to in case of trouble ranging from skinned shins to poor grades. (Journal photo).

ties in "making the grade" in their studies.

He also was on hand to cheer the loudest in athletic victories.

Prether never failed to administer a "pat on the back" for a deserving student, his admirers point out.

### "A True Friend"

This is the way the seniors sum up their affection for the man who formerly worked at Oldsmobile division of General Motors corporation and Atlas Drop Forge:

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"His friendly services will never be forgotten."

The laudatory preface appears under a picture of the senior class "hero".

In their appraisal of Prether, the students and their sponsors, Mrs. —Joy Clemow and Norman E. Dunn, principal, sum up their feelings this way:

"He's just perfect!"



Parker Prether, son of George (1866-1910) and Mary Jane (Bennett) (1877-1948), was born 2 November 1895, Montgomery County, Ohio. Parker was raised in a farm setting among his 5 siblings. In 1910 Mr. Prether died and Parker, as oldest son, left school and helped work the farm.

On 13 August 1917, Darke County, Ohio, Parker married Grace Lucille Swank. Not long after marriage the couple took in and tried to raise the 2

*The Greenville Journal, August 16, 1917*

Parker Prether, 21, farmer, Gordon, son of George Prether, and Grace L. Swank, 17, Arcanum, daughter of Clarence E. Swank.

younger Prether brothers, George and Roy. In 1919 Parker and Grace lost their first born child, Raymond Elmer, at 3 months of age. By 1920 the two younger Prether brothers became increasingly unhappy living with Parker and Grace.

*Dayton Daily News (Dayton, Ohio) Thursday 30 December 1920*

## YOUTHS CAUGHT IN LOUISVILLE AFTER SKIPPING WITH AUTO

Troy, O., Dec 31 - Particulars regarding the arrest of George and Roy Prether, Arcanum youths, aged 14 and 17 years, respectively, accused of taking an automobile at Arcanum two weeks ago, mention of which was made in Wednesday's issue, have been made public in West Milton.

The boys had been living with an elder brother, Parker Prether, at Arcanum, for some time. They were out of work and had been unable to obtain employment, and following a slight disagreement with their elder brother, they took an automobile belonging to Albert Doll, of West Milton, and started south, with the intention of going to Florida, where they expected to find employment in the orange groves. They got as far as Columbus, Ind., when the car refused to function, and

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Special to The Daily News.

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The boys were returned to West Milton and transferred from the mayor's court at that place to the juvenile court here. The younger boy was released after a preliminary hearing and placed in the care of his brother at Arcanum, while the older is held over for action by the grand jury.

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More hard times were ahead for Parker and Grace. In 1927 they lost a purchased home in Winchester, Indiana to bank foreclosure and moved back to Darke County, Ohio.

Parker to maintain his growing family sought employment where there was an opportunity; farming, teamster in a saw mill, motor car company, Lansing, a drop forge plant, Lansing and by the middle 1940's as custodian at Okemos Consolidated Schools. In 1952 Parker, as head custodian, was assisted by Milton Eicher, John Showers and Mrs. Parker (Grace) Prether.

1949 Okemos Tomahawk



The Prether's had 5 more children after the death of their first born; Herman (1920-1993), Ruby (1923-2007), Berman (1932-2017), Kathy and Sharon. **Berman, Kathy and Sharon became OHS alumni.**

Parker died 1 March 1958, Lansing, Ingham County. Grace, born 7 November 1901, died 9 April 1999, Gratiot County, Michigan. Parker and Grace were interred Glendale Cemetery, Okemos.

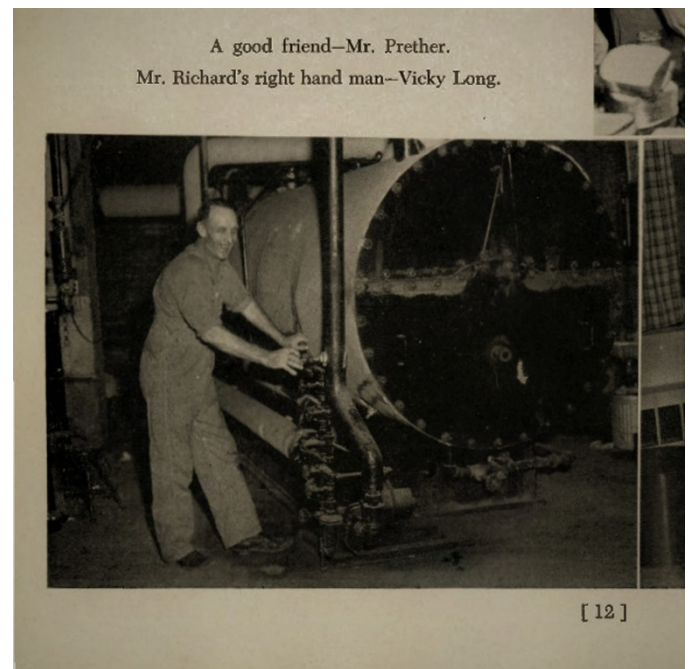
Lansing State Journal (Lansing, Michigan) Sunday 2 March 1958

## PAUL T. PRETHER



Paul T. Prether, 62, 5008 N. Okemos rd., Okemos died Saturday at a local hospital. Born Nov. 2, 1895, in Montgomery county, Ohio, he had been a resident of Okemos for 17 years. Survivors include his widow, Grace; three daughters, Mrs. Ruby Cannon, Sharon Prether and Kathy Prether, all of Okemos; two sons, Herman and Berman, both of Lansing; one sister, Mrs. Lucrieta Blumenstock, Dayton, Ohio; two brothers, John Prether, Ohio and Roy Prether, Texas; and 10 grandchildren. Funeral services will be held at 2:30 p.m. Tuesday at the Gorsline-Runciman funeral home with burial in Glendale cemetery, Okemos.

*Editor's Note: The LSJ obituary misidentifies Paul Parker Prether as "Paul T. Prether" I remember my sister's mentioning him and Dad also talked about Mr. Prether. Thought a write up on him was most deserving. He made enough impression on the seniors at OHS to have them dedicate the yearbook to him!*  
*Sherrie Paty Barber '66*



1952 Okemos Tomahawk