

Virginia Ocasek

Mrs. Virginia Mae *Hejduk* Ocasek taught in the Revere School system for 33 years. She graduated from Baldwin-Wallace College and then started at Richfield Centralized School where she served as a Latin and English teacher along with serving as the librarian. After the consolidation of Bath and Richfield, she continued to teach English and Latin as well as running the school newspaper, The Lantern and serving as a class advisor. She retired in 1974. She was involved in a car accident and later passed away [April 8, 1983](#) and is buried in Northfield-Macedonia Cemetery along with her husband, state senator Oliver Ocasek. Mrs. Ocasek was later recognized with the [Distinguished Educator Award](#) given by the Revere Alumni Association. The Summit County Fairground have a building named after her: *The Virginia Ocasek Building serves as the Administration Building; housing the fair office, a kitchen, and a beautifully remodeled reception hall that is used for meetings, wedding receptions, and many other special events.*

REVERE LANTERN

APRIL 1983

Former teacher

dies tragically

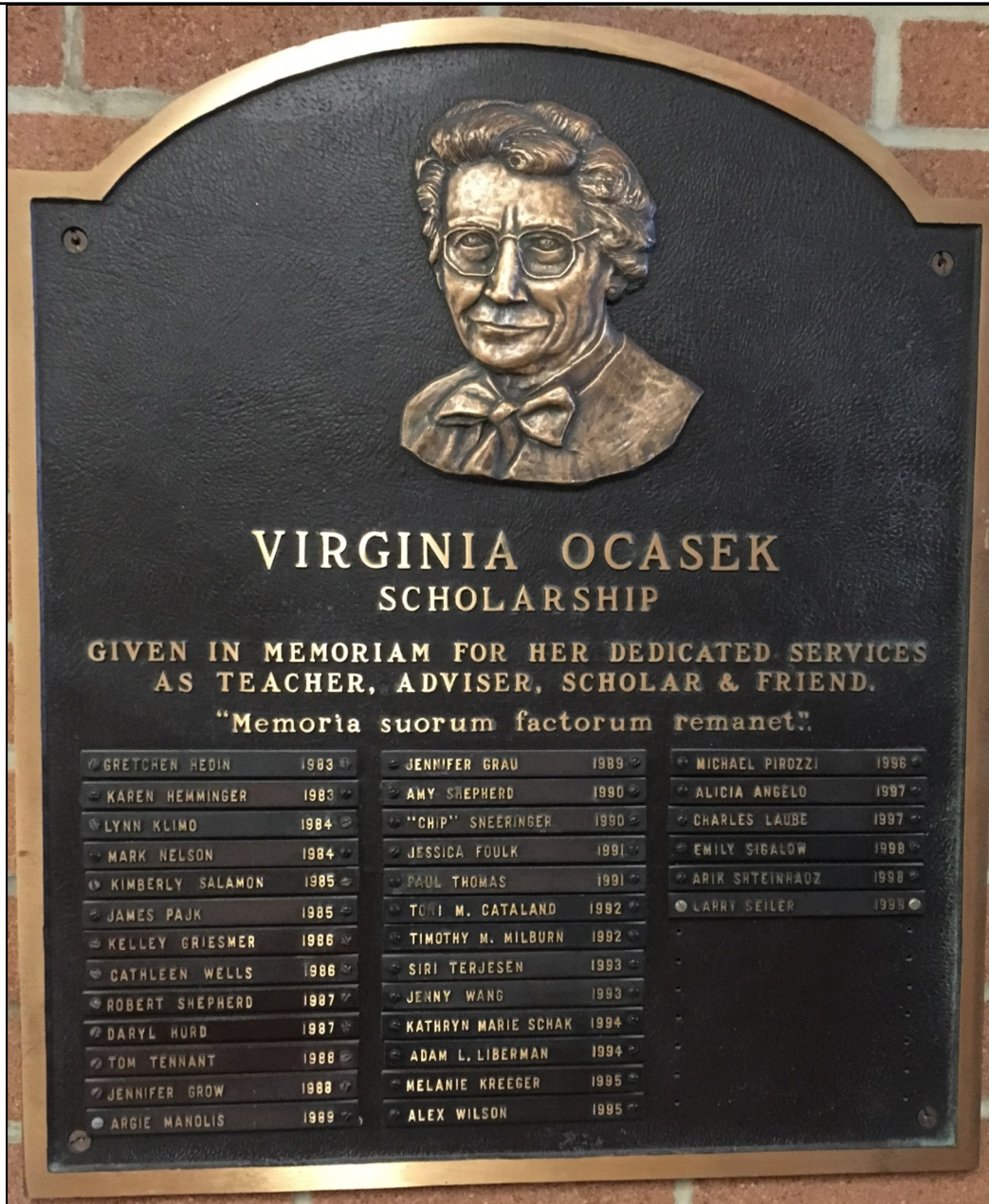
Former Revere teacher Virginia Mae Ocasek passed away Friday, April 8 from injuries caused by an automobile accident she suffered in Hollywood, Florida.

Mrs. Ocasek, wife of Senator Oliver Ocasek (D-Northfield), was an English, Latin and Journalism teacher for Revere. She also taught for a time at Richfield School where she met her husband. After teaching for 33 years, Mrs. Ocasek retired in 1974.

"She was a great teacher and was dedicated to education. She was a real lady," states Librarian Mrs. Shepard. "She really knew what she taught." Mr. Dave Dickson, one of Revere's history teachers and former student of Mrs. Ocasek stated, "People complied because she was so nice. It was like an inner control."

While at Revere, Mrs. Ocasek was involved in such activities as the memorable Roman Banquets stemming from Latin classes and the school paper which won national awards.

The Ocasek family has suggested that a memorial scholarship fund be set up in Mrs. Ocasek's name for Revere High School. Mrs. Ocasek will be greatly missed but her contributions to education will never be forgotten.



Virginia Ocasek

Akron Beacon Journal-April 9, 1983

Friends mourn Virginia Ocasek as 'fine, fine lady' and teacher

By Barbranda Lumpkins,
and William Hershey
Beacon Journal staff writers

Virginia M. Ocasek was remembered Friday by colleagues and friends as a "fine, fine lady."

Mrs. Ocasek, wife of state Sen. Oliver Ocasek, D-Northfield, died shortly after noon Friday at University Hospital in Columbus. She was 63.

She had been in a coma since Jan. 23, following a car-van collision in Hollywood, Fla. Ocasek, his sister and Mrs. Ocasek's cousin were injured.

Mrs. Ocasek, a retired school teacher, had been treated at Memorial Hospital in Hollywood un-

til Feb. 26, when she was flown to Columbus aboard Gov. Richard F. Celeste's state airplane.

Celeste and others who worked with Ocasek in Columbus expressed sorrow at her death.

"Dagmar and I are deeply saddened by the death of Virginia Ocasek," the governor said. "Her enthusiasm and pride in her teaching profession were only matched by her enthusiasm and pride in her husband's public service."

Senate President Harry Meshel, D-Youngstown, called Mrs. Ocasek a "sensitive and charm-



Virginia M. Ocasek

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Friends lament loss of Virginia Ocasek

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ing lady who in her own way was a great asset to Oliver's career."

House Speaker Vernal Riffe, D-New Boston, who first was elected to the Legislature in 1959 with Ocasek, called Mrs. Ocasek a "fine, fine lady."

"I feel sorry for Oliver," Riffe said. "There's no one who can take her place with Oliver. There was no one like her."

State Highway Safety Director Kenneth Cox, the former state senator from Barberton and Ocasek's close friend, said "the whole thing was a tragedy."

"She was just a rare person, one we all thought of as our favorite school teacher. I don't know anyone who didn't like Virginia Ocasek. She was always warm, cheery and well-liked."

Mrs. Ocasek was born in Cleveland, but grew up in North Royalton, where she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class in 1937.

In 1941, she graduated with honors from Baldwin-Wallace College in Berea with a bachelor of arts degree. She attended graduate school at Western Reserve University.

Mrs. Ocasek began her teaching career in 1941 at the former Clinton High School, where she taught Latin and English. She later taught at Richfield and Revere high schools.

at the old Richfield High School was to meet and win the love of another teacher, Oliver Ocasek.

They were married in 1955. After a honeymoon in New York state, the Ocaseks moved to Sagamore Hills Township, where they have lived since. They had no children.

Mrs. Ocasek retired from Revere High School in 1974 after having been a Latin and English teacher 33 years.

She said she retired to spend more time with her politician-husband.

More than 150 people paid tribute to Mrs. Ocasek at the University of Akron's Gardner Student Center.

"I never thought of going to school as going to work," she told her well-wishers. "It was being with friends."

BESIDES being the wife of an influential state senator, Mrs. Ocasek was a public figure in her own right.

In November 1975, she ran for a seat on the Nordon Hills school board and was the top vote getter among three persons seeking two seats. She also was the top vote getter when she was re-elected in 1979.

Guy M. Sconzo, Nordon Hills superintendent, said Mrs. Ocasek's absence since the traffic accident had created a void on his school board.

"She was one sincere, dedicated individual — probably unlike any school board member I'll ever work for," he said.

MRS. OCASEK, who was elected school board president this year, would have completed her second four-year term in December.

Mrs. Ocasek was Nordon Hills' representative to the Cuyahoga Valley Joint Vocational School.

She was elected by other area school board members as a member of the executive committee of the Northeast Region of the Ohio School Boards Association.

Harold Rivers, a Nordon Hills school board member, said he had gotten to know Mrs. Ocasek well over the past three years.

"You couldn't ask for a nicer person," he said. "Her whole life was education. She was a part of the family in the schools."

Board member Nancy Fike said she and her husband, Paul, have known the Ocaseks for years. Ocasek was Tallmadge High's principal when Fike was a student there.

"She was a fine lady," Mrs. Fike said. "She'll be badly missed on the board because she dedicated her life to kids."

MRS. OCASEK also was president of the Revere and Summit County education associations, worked in the National and Northeast Ohio teacher associations and served on the State Teachers Retirement Board since 1973.

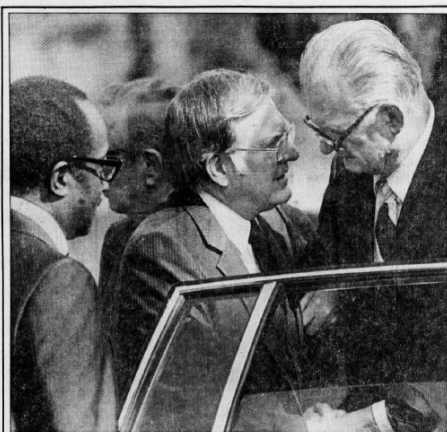
She taught in her church school for 27 years at the North Royalton Christian Church, where she was a member.

In 1971, the Ohio Education Association gave Mrs. Ocasek its "Doer's Award."

Friends may call Sunday and Monday from 2 to 9 p.m. at Johnson Romito funeral home in Northfield.

Funeral services will be 1 p.m. Tuesday at Northfield Presbyterian Church, with the Rev. Richard Seawright officiating. Burial will be in Northfield-Macedonia cemetery.

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Sen. Oliver Ocasek (right) with House Speaker Vernal Riffe at cemetery. At left is Sen. Morris Jackson

An Ohio tribute for Mrs. Ocasek

By Brian Usher

When an hour of the final graveside service Tuesday for his wife, Oliver Ocasek moved to return to the Statehouse to finish the work he and Virginia Ocasek started in 1953 when they married.

"I'm going back to Columbus next week and work on my education bill," said the Democratic state senator. "I'm going to try to get more money for education. It was the last thing Gino and I talked about in January."

Ocasek has long been a champion of education in Ohio. But so was Virginia Ocasek, the teacher and school board member who was buried in the wooded hills of Northfield, where she and her husband had lived.

Mrs. Ocasek, 63, died last Friday in Columbus of injuries suffered in a Jan. 23 car-van crash in Florida.

After services at the Northfield Presbyterian Church and the Northfield cemetery, Ocasek rested at a church reception with family and friends and spoke at a new crusade for school aid.

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Virginia Ocasek is buried

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many state representatives, state officials like Attorney General Anthony J. Celeste, who chairs the Ohio State University President Edward J. Connelley, business people, labor leaders, friends, relatives and former students of both Ocaseks.

A surprise visitor was former Gov. James A. Rhodes, who joined Celeste and House Speaker Vernal G. Riffe in helping Ocasek from the funeral car to the graveside canopy. With Rhodes and Celeste holding the arms, Ocasek walked over and knelt by the casket for a final prayer.

Doreen of Akron and Summit County officials and area legislators, including legislators from Northfield to Cincinnati.

"I've never seen so much power concentrated in one spot in Summit County before," said state highway safety director Kenneth Cox of Barberton, a longtime legislative ally of Ocasek's.

"It's a real tribute to Virginia."

Ocasek and others described her as a warm, gentle, helpful, always supporting the senator in the background and never seeking the limelight.

But as a teacher for 33 years, three decades at Revere High School — and a Northfield school board member since 1975, she established a reputation that was as strong and respected, if not as well-known, as her husband's.

"She had that special gift from God to address her life and values in the lives of others," the Rev. Richard Seawright, a family friend, said in the eulogy. "She was a teacher. But she didn't just teach Latin and English and journalism. She helped people to live, not just pass subjects."

Richard Wright, a family friend and University of Akron official, noted that when Mrs. Ocasek retired from teaching at



Sen. Oliver Ocasek flanked by Gov. Richard Celeste and ex-Gov. James Rhodes

top aide when Ocasek was Senate president.

Acron Councilman Robert O. Lerman, a friend and Ocasek's adviser, said, "I think the senator will push himself harder, not only for education but for her sake."

ALTHOUGH she responded somewhat, Mrs. Ocasek never fully regained consciousness after the accident that also hospitalized her cousin, Andy Benson of North Royalton.

Both women were flown from Florida to Columbus Feb. 24 aboard the governor's plane, which had been converted into a flying hospital.

She really felt isolated in Florida," said Ocasek's niece, Cindy Peters.

While in Columbus, Ocasek maintained his hospital watch, but also began a light work schedule, including introducing a bill to increase school aid beyond levels proposed by Ocasek.

"I'm bringing him out of this, this issue will do it," said Robert McQuinn, who was his

Virginia Mae Ocasek

SAGAMORE HILLS — Virginia Mae Ocasek, 63, of Sagamore Hills, died Friday at University Hospital in Columbus.

Mrs. Ocasek was born in Cleveland and had lived in Sagamore Hills for the past 30 years.

She is survived by her husband, State Senator Oliver Ocasek, D-27, of Sagamore Hills; four sister-in-laws, 28 nieces and nephews; eight cousins; and one aunt.

It is suggested by the family that memorials be made in her name to the Scholarship Funds of Nordon Hills and Revere High Schools or Cuyahoga Valley Vocational School. Services Tuesday, April 12, 1983 at 1 p.m. at the Presbyterian Church, Rt. 82 and S. Boyden Rd., Northfield, Ohio. Friends will be received 2 to 9 p.m. TODAY at the Johnson-Romito Funeral Home, Rt. 82, west of Olde Rt. 8, Northfield Center, Ohio.

