



Roger Koopmans

LANDSCAPE & DESIGN, BAND LEADER

FHS Class of 1949

“I grew up in the best of times,” states the gregarious Roger Koopmans. He is an inspiration and tenacious in everything he accomplishes. Koopmans was born, raised, and still lives on the east side of Faribault. He is a visionary with many talents.

Koopmans starred in high school athletics and music. He was captain of the basketball and tennis teams, making it to state in tennis and leading the Big 9 in individual points scored for basketball. He received the “Outstanding Athlete of the Year” award as a senior and later was inducted into the Faribault Sports Hall of Fame. How did he have time as a busy sophomore in high school to start a swing band? This band eventually became “Buddy Koopmans & His Orchestra,” a 20 piece band entertaining for 60 years all over southern Minnesota.

After starting out his college education at the U of M, he was called to service in the Korean War. His bravery in combat was rewarded by receiving the Bronze Star.

Roger Koopmans continued with his success by accomplishing so much with his expertise and passion in design and landscaping. Roger started his career as a hybridizer and grower at Lehman’s Gardens. Next he managed a Bachman’s in Rochester, building the organization from one to 50 employees. Returning to Faribault, he established the highly successful Koopmans Landscaping and Design business. Through his leadership, his crews were known for pulling up to a house or business, exiting the vans like a SWAT team, accomplishing their work with speed and efficiency and then disappearing with the grounds looking spectacular and not a weed in sight!

In his “spare” time, Roger and Kak, his hard working wife of 73 years, kept immaculate gardens at home, which were visited by garden clubs from all over. Huge tour buses were known to drive down their neighborhood street to stop and tour their gardens, which were featured in national magazines and catalogs.. His speciality was hosta, showcasing over 350 varieties. He was also known to design stately and grand garden features like waterfalls, stairs, and planters.

Roger was involved in many more civic clubs, church committees, and garden organizations... Always with a smile on his face and a sparkle in his eye!