

Doran man, 67, dies in house fire

DORAN, MINN. — A 67-year-old Doran man was killed last week in a house fire sparked by an electric defrosting device, officials said Friday.

George Martin died Wednesday evening after a defrosting device in front of his refrigerator was left unattended and started the blaze, Breckenridge Fire Chief Paul Sorum said.

Martin could not get out of the house in time and died of smoke inhalation.

Doran is in western Minnesota, about 10 miles southeast of Breckenridge.

Associated Press

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Medal is blessing among so many

In the eyes of his grandparents, the gold medal that Alex Rubin will be wearing around his neck when he returns home to Minnesota represents much more than basketball excellence.

This medal is just one more blessing in the lives of David and Paula Rubin, Alex's grandparents.

"I can't really express myself on how much this means," Paula said. "But I just can't wait to hug him and kiss him. Can you imagine this? The grandson of a butcher wearing a gold medal around his neck. Only in America."

Her eyes moistened. "I can't even talk about these things," she said, dabbing tears and apologizing.

Start with the simplest part of the story: the gold medal. Alex, who will be a junior at Armstrong High, was a star guard for the U.S. junior basketball team that won gold in the Maccabiah Games in Israel last week. The games, which bring together Jewish athletes from all over the world, are held every four years.

The medal is nice. But what it symbolizes to his grandparents is triumph of the most profound sort.

This is a story that begins in the horrors of the Holo-



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caust. David Rubin and Paula Gurt were moving into adulthood when German troops overwhelmed Poland. The two, who did not know each other at the time, first were forced into a ghetto, then into concentration camps. David was 21 when he was sent to Auschwitz, where at least 1.1 million people died, most of them Jews. Paula was 16 when she was sent first to Auschwitz and eventually to Bergen-Belsen, a camp in Germany where 70,000 people died.

David, now 87, doesn't talk much anymore. But the scars of Auschwitz never have left him. He still has nightmares of those times.

For years, Paula, now 82, could not talk about her awful experiences that ended on April 15, 1945, when her camp was liberated by English troops. She recalls she was lying in the straw on the floor of the barracks, "half dead" when the English arrived.

"I was too embarrassed to

talk about it," she said. "They treated us like animals."

What she does say is that it was impossible to imagine her life would turn out as it has.

"The most you could dream of is having a loaf of bread," she said.

David and Paula met in Germany in 1946, and married soon after. Their first child, Doree, was born in Frankfurt.

A question was asked by authorities: Who wants to go to the United States?

They pinched themselves. Was this really possible? Even before the war, the United States had been a dream.

"My grandparents used to say, 'In America, they pick money from the trees,'" Paula said.

In the summer of 1950, they arrived on St. Paul's West Side.

"When we got here I was not too excited," she said, admitting that New York seemed more appealing.

But David insisted they had found the right place.

"We are staying where God has sent us," he said.

"I said, 'Why did God send us here?' He said, 'I don't know.'"

But they stayed. As it turned out, they could not



Photos provided by the Rubin family

"I just can't wait to hug him and kiss him," said Paula Rubin, at left with husband David, of their gold medal-winning grandson Alex Rubin, above.

pick money from the trees. But, through hard work at their kosher butcher shop, Rubin's Kosher Meats on Randolph in St. Paul, they prospered.

David became known as "the Baloney Man" by children in the neighborhood because he gave them slices of baloney after school. Paula worked the counter of the shop and was on a first-name basis with most customers. They sold the shop 10 years ago.

Together, they raised three

children, all of whom went on to get college educations. And those three children have produced six wonderful grandchildren, one of whom is coming back to Minnesota with a gold medal around his neck.

"Everything we do and everything we have is a blessing," Paula said. "There is not a day that goes by that I don't thank God."

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