

# 1960 football Falcons fly again

## Alumnus chronicles Divine Child's first championship

By MARY FRANCIS MASSON  
FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

For one moment, Dwayne Kremko was back in school. He was transported to an era of cheerleaders with bouffant hairdos and long skirts, boys with crew cuts who nicknamed their cars Red Rocket and the Green Onion and nuns in full habits waving pom-poms at football games.

He was back on the field, wearing No. 72 for Divine Child High School's first varsity football team. He was back in that 1960 championship game, celebrating the nail-biting victory that no one thought they'd gain.

But it's 1999 and Kremko is attending his niece's graduation at Divine Child in Dearborn. A friend of hers asked a question. "So you went to Divine Child. Did you ever win a football game?"

That question was the catalyst for Kremko's "Falcons: The Lost Year," a book detailing the beginnings of Divine Child High School and its 1960 football season.

Not only did that first football team win games, it was undefeated. The team ended up the champion of the parochial league of the Catholic High School League.

The school didn't have a year-book for the 1960-61 year. So there's little documentation of the season, inspiring the "lost year" in the book's title, said Kremko, who was a junior in 1960.

"What made it so special was that we had no seniors," said Kremko, who took more than four years to write the book, which he published himself.

The school, which was founded in 1958, was so new that it didn't have a mascot. When the team found out it had been accepted

**"What made it so special was that we had no seniors," said Kremko, who spent years writing the book.**

into the parochial league, the school had to come up with one. The Dearborn school chose the name of a new Ford Motor Co. vehicle, the Falcon.

Kremko, who sells automobiles at Gorno Ford in Woodhaven and lives in Dearborn, describes himself as the big guy on the team, coming in at 6 feet 2 inches and 205 pounds. He usually played defensive end.

The team had talent, no question, he said. But much of the credit should go to Coach Tony Versaci, who at 22 wasn't much older than the players. He'd never coached a varsity football team.

"He taught us how to handle ourselves when we were winning and he pushed us and kept us in line, kept us humble and hungry," Kremko said. "At no point in that season could we take the foot off the gas. And he had a great football mind."

The Rev. Herman Kucyk was assigned to the Divine Child parish in the early 1960s and was associate pastor during that first football season. Kucyk is now the pastor of the parish.

"They believed in each other; the coach made them believe they could do it," Kucyk said. "He put us on the map. . . . We made headlines all over."

In Kremko's senior year, the team was city Class C champs and also state Class C champions.

Divine Child has grown since its first graduating class in 1962. Kremko's class numbered 69. Last year, the school, located at 1001 North Silvery Lane, had 212 graduates.

But not everything has changed, Kremko said.

"It's wonderful to see the traditions and values are still being taught today at Divine Child in Dearborn," Kremko said.

Kremko likes to say he was a senior at Divine Child for nine years. He started there in fourth grade, the highest grade offered at the time. Each year the school added a grade until Kremko graduated with the first senior class. He's remained involved with the church, and even has a pew from the original church in

the living room of his condo.

His book is full of pictures from his high school experience and the football season. He also details some of the pranks he and his teammates pulled — some of which Kucyk said he never knew about until he picked up the book.

Even so, "he captured the spirit beautifully," Kucyk said.

Kremko is donating about half his book profits to the Divine Child Alumni Association. He said he's presented the association with \$400 so far. Kucyk said the money will be used for the school's teacher endowment fund and the retirement benefits it provides.

► "Falcons: The Lost Year" is available for \$21 through the Divine Child Alumni Association by calling 313-562-1990 or online at [www.divinechildhighschool.org/alumni/lost\\_year.php](http://www.divinechildhighschool.org/alumni/lost_year.php). The book also is available at the Little Professor Book Center, 22174 Michigan Ave., Dearborn.

## FALCONS The Lost Year

Dwayne W. Kremko

Foreword by  
Rev. Monsignor  
Herman W. Kucyk



The year was 1960 — and the Falcons were league champs



**Author Dwayne Kremko, the big guy who wore No. 72 on his jersey when he played for Divine Child's football team.**