



Ephraim "Red" Rocha

September 18, 1923 - February 13, 2010

Ephraim Joseph "Red" Rocha of Corvallis died peacefully Saturday at his daughter's home in Philomath after a three year battle with cancer. He was 86.

He was born in Hilo, Hawai'i to Stephen and Philomena Rocha.

Going to Hawai'i is a dream get away for many but the beautiful islands where Red grew up was the place he called home. In fact, even though his profession took him all over the United States, to him there was only one true home, Hawai'i. He loved the beauty, the people, the music, the food.... Oh the incredible food!

Even though he was 6'8" he wasn't good enough to make his high school basketball team. He kept at it however, even after he graduated from high school. Eventually, he got the hang of it and after World War II, he caught the attention of Slat Gill who extended an invitation to play for him at Oregon State College. So, in 1945, at the age of 21, he left his beloved home. He traveled by ship, and it was no luxury liner, to the mainland to pursue a college degree and play a game that became his lifelong passion.

By the end of 1945, he had acquired another passion. Her name was Ginger. He was a soft spoken, star basketball player and she was a hardworking drugstore clerk. They were very different yet the pieces of their lives were a perfect fit. They fell in love and by the summer of 1946 they were married. By the end of the following year, they were on a new journey as he joined the ranks of professional basketball and eventually pro and college coaching. St.

Louis, Baltimore, Syracuse, & Fort Wayne were all stops in his incredible pro career which included a World Championship in 1955.

Finally he made it back home to Hawai'i where he finished his basketball career as the head coach of the University of Hawaii Basketball team, a team he built out of something that was not much more than a club team. He turned it into an NCAA Tournament contender in 9 years. His most cherished memories were of a group of players who made it to that NCAA 24-team tournament. They were nicknamed the "Fabulous Five" and they were very special to him. They still remained in contact with him until the day he died. He was the father of three girls who worshiped their father, not because he was an athletic star but because he was the most honorable, reliable, and incredible role model a child could ever have. If you did well he praised you if you were wrong he would tell you so but he would also explain why you were wrong. He was our life teacher. To say his girls were proud of their father was an understatement.

Pages could be written about Red and his career but he was never one to boast or brag about himself. He was a very humble man. However, if one of his daughters or grandchildren excelled at something or did something he thought was outstanding, that was something he would boast about but never about himself. He always let his actions speak for themselves.

As a husband he excelled too. As we all know, life is not always fun and games or perfect. Ginger's health slowly deteriorated and he gave up almost everything he loved to care for her. That kind of love is rare but it was the kind of love that they shared for almost 58 years.

Two months after Ginger had passed away, their neighbor Molly lost her husband to cancer. Red and Molly shared their grief and their common road drew them closer. For the last five years they have shared their lives with each other and brought each other a happiness they thought they had lost forever. His shoes are ones that can never be filled. Being the humble man he is, he would never guess how many lives he has touched or how much he meant to so many. We will all miss him so very, very much,

He is survived by his daughters, Kay Mosher and her husband, Paul of Highlands Ranch, CO, Terry Bannon of Strawberry Plains, TN, and Cheryl Narver and her husband, Bill of Philomath OR; brother Stan deRocha and wife Sabra of Squim, WA; nine grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren and 7 great great-grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Ginger Rocha; brother Damien Rocha and sister Blanche Rocha. He is also survived by Molly Bloomfield with whom he shared the last 5 years.

A memorial service will be held at 10 a.m. on Saturday, February 20, at St. Mary's Catholic Church, 501 NW 25th Street, Corvallis, OR. Burial will be at Oak Lawn Memorial Park followed by a Celebration of Life at 1 p.m. at the Clubhouse at Adair Village.

Contributions can be made to the Red Rocha Memorial Scholarship Fund in care of McHenry's Funeral Home, 206 N.W. Fifth St., Corvallis OR 97330.

Tribute Wall

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“ I well remember a wonderful talk Red gave to the Corvallis Notary Club about 45 years ago at the old Benton Hotel. I associate him with Hilo where I spent some time in the little Carnegie library when I was in the service in 1944. He led an exemplary life, and left the world a better place. Craig

Craig and Nancy Leman - February 20, 2010 at 01:39 PM