



Joseph Thomas Wells

July 9, 1947 - April 16, 2015

Joseph Wells, 67, of Corvallis died of cancer Thursday at Samaritan Evergreen Hospice House in Albany.

Joe was born in Aberdeen, South Dakota, where he briefly lived before moving to St. Paul, Minnesota, with his parents, Walter and Genevieve; three brothers; and three sisters.

His interest in wrestling began in high school; he quickly excelled and eventually attended and wrestled at the University of Iowa. After graduating he pursued international freestyle wrestling; he was a silver medalist at the 1974 USSR National Championships in Russia, and the 1976 U.S. Wrestling Federation freestyle champion. He then dedicated the rest of his life to coaching the sport.

For many years, he served on the USA Wrestling Board of Directors, and also was chairperson of the Freestyle Sports Committee. He also was active as a freestyle coach, leading a number of U.S. teams in international competition, including serving on World Team and Olympic Team coaching staffs.

He spent 17 seasons as an assistant coach at Iowa and Michigan before going to Oregon State University, where he served 14 years as the head coach and never had a losing record. This past year he was inducted into the

Wrestling Hall of Fame. He also had an incredible life outside of wrestling: He volunteered at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Habitat for Humanity and the Crescent Valley wrestling team.

He loved being a husband to Cindia, and a father to Kalli and Garrett; he constantly cheered them on in all of their endeavors.

His hobbies were working out, "a little steam, a little sauna," gardening, and walking Copper.

He married Cindia on Aug. 9, 1986, in Ann Arbor, Michigan. She survives him.

Other survivors include his son, Garrett, 23; daughter, Kalli, 25; brothers Jack, Jim and Terry; and sisters Mary, Kay and Trudy.

A wake took place Monday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Corvallis. A funeral is set for 1 p.m. today, Tuesday, at St. Mary's, followed by a reception in the church gym.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to Habitat for Humanity, St. Mary's Catholic Church, or the Humane Society.

Tribute Wall

MT

“ Hello Cindia, Garret and Kalli,
I was a classmate of Joe's at Cretin, and had not seen him since about 1978 or so when he lived on Hartford in Highland Park. He was one of my favorites, and it is always sad when distance makes keeping in touch so difficult. I still remember how one day in Prof Horyza's Algebra class, Joe and Jim Ryan, who was also a stud wrestler, held the push up position for about an hour, just to get in that extra workout. By the time the bell rung, their uniforms were soaked with sweat, but one of the advantages of an all boys school, was that no one minded a little BO. May Joe rest in peace and may you have a great future knowing how much he loved you and misses being with you.
Sincerely,
Mike Tracy

Mike Tracy - June 18, 2015 at 03:06 PM

PS

“ Wells Family,
I wanted to express my deepest condolences and prayers to the entire family. I met and worked with with Joe and Michigan Wrestling beginning in 1983. He was a great mentor and friend to myself as a young man. I always enjoyed our interactions and remember them fondly. He will be missed.
Paul Schmidt Athletic Trainer University of Michigan

paul schmidt - April 23, 2015 at 04:16 PM

SF

“ I sat in the sauna at Timberhill with Joe nearly twice a week for the last year. We shared much information including family wrestling hobbies etc. not once did he tell me he was sick. I truly felt like we had become friends and his passing is a huge shock to me. He was a real gentleman and I will miss him. Scott Fewel

scott fewel - April 21, 2015 at 11:36 PM