



## Milosh Popovich

September 3, 1917 - April 18, 2011

Milosh “Poppy” Popovich of Corvallis passed away at home after suffering a stroke the previous week. He was 93.

A first-generation American, he was born on a houseboat in Pittsburg, Calif., to Nicola and Milka Popovich, Serbian immigrants from Yugoslavia who had arrived in America as teenagers prior to World War I. He grew up in Portland in a close-knit Serbian-American neighborhood, attending Vernon Elementary and Jefferson High School.

In 1935, he enrolled at Oregon State College, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering in 1939 and a master’s degree in mechanical engineering in 1941.

He was one of the few undergraduates at that time to get married while still a student: After throwing a water balloon at the sister of his friend Robert Hartman, and learning that the pretty blond girl celebrated her birthday on the same day he did, he took the plunge and married Jeanne Hartman in 1939. They produced two children, Judy and Jim, and had a long and happy marriage, each entirely supportive of the activities of the other. She died in 2008, a few months before their 69th anniversary.

But they had not been married long when World War II intervened. Milosh entered military service in 1941 as Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps, and advanced to the rank of Major by the end of his active service in 1945.

He saw action in North Africa, Sicily, Corsica and France, and was decorated

with the Legion of Merit and Bronze Star medals by the U.S. Army, and with the Croix de Guerre by the French army. As an officer in the Army Reserves after the war, he had advanced to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel by the time of his retirement in 1977.

In 1945, he returned to Corvallis, just as other veterans of the war were beginning to take advantage of the G.I. Bill, and he was appointed to the faculty of the Mechanical Engineering Department at Oregon State. In 1949, he was elected chairman of the department, a position he held until 1954, when he was appointed assistant dean of engineering.

He was a registered professional engineer in the state of Oregon. A life member of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers, he was elected Fellow in 1968. He received the College of Engineering distinguished Alumnus Award in 1993, and was inducted into the College of Engineering Hall of Fame in 1999.

But his true career path lay in the central administration of the university. In 1959, he was appointed dean of administration, a position he held until 1975, when he became vice president for administration. By the time of his retirement in 1979, he had overseen a period of substantial growth and development, during which student enrollment doubled, many new buildings were erected, and Oregon State became internationally known as a major research university.

Although he found most of his administrative duties interesting, he especially delighted in overseeing construction projects from planning stage to completion. During his career, he supervised more than 40 new construction projects, and he continued to lend his expertise after retirement by guiding development of the LaSells Stewart Center, the CH2M Hill Alumni Center and the Trysting Tree Golf Course.

Individual buildings were one lasting result, but his fundamental contribution in this area was the development of a long-range plan that made possible the beautiful campus we see today.

Milosh's loyalty to the university as administrator and after his retirement went

well beyond campus development, for he also served as a trustee of the OSU Foundation for 23 years, among many other activities on behalf of the institution he loved. In recognition of his continuing involvement, he was awarded the Dan Poling Alumni Service Award in 2003, and the Lifetime Trustee Award in 2007.

His commitment to OSU also extended to financial support. He and Jeanne were generous donors whose contributions were designed to create opportunities for students. Their gifts included establishing funds to support the College of Engineering, the College of Education, the College of Liberal Arts, Presidential Scholarships, and numerous other initiatives. His most recent gift established a significant endowment for the forensics program. About 20 years after retirement, he took on new responsibilities of the sort that interested him most: He was among a small group of senior citizens who wanted to develop a new retirement community within Corvallis that would include private houses, apartments in a lodge, and an assisted living facility together in a single neighborhood. The result was Stoneybrook Village. And Milosh and Jeanne were among the first to move into one of the private houses.

Milosh's daily walks until the day of his stroke encircled the block where he lived and the water feature, with its fountains and waterfall.

Milosh was an avid fisherman who liked to take his children blueback fishing on the Alsea River and trout fishing at Elk Lake. But he also braved the bad weather for steelhead in a drift boat with his friends.

Beginning in 1960, Milosh and Jeanne loved spending weekends at the beach cabin near Waldport that he built largely with his own hands. During the proper season, they would launch their crabbing boat into Alsea Bay, throw in their crab nets, and gather nature's bounty of Dungeness crab.

Their many friends and their daughter, Judy, and her family enjoyed the bounty as well, and some still tell of the exciting times when they were invited to ride along in the boat and help pull in the nets. After his retirement, Milosh

and Jeanne also enjoyed spending a winter month each year on Kauai, Hawaii, basking in the sun, exploring the island's lovely beaches, and sampling its tropical fruits.

Milosh is survived by his daughter, Judy Aikin, and son-in-law, Roger of Bend; his grandson, Thomas Aikin of Santa Monica, Calif.; his sister, Olga Gulan of King City; and many nieces and nephews. He was predeceased by his son, Jim; his wife, Jeanne; and his sisters, Sophie Lushenko and Zorka Haftorson. At his request, there will be no memorial services. In lieu of flowers, he would be pleased with donations "in memory of Milosh Popovich" to the Popovich Mechanical Engineering Endowment at the OSU Foundation, 850 S.W. 35th St., Corvallis, OR 97333, [www.osufoundation.org](http://www.osufoundation.org), or to the hospice that served him so well at the end of his life, Samaritan Evergreen Hospice, 1046 Sixth Avenue S.W., Albany, OR 97321.

# Tribute Wall

CW

“ I fondly remember as a teenager spending a few weekends with the Popovich's at the coast (and crabbing) with my father, Dr. David King. To this day, I still use their heated crab on toasted english muffin recipe. Thanks for sharing your love of the ocean with others which produced some great memories. My condolences to the family.

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**Chris Wong** - April 26, 2011 at 08:18 PM

CT

“ Poppy was a true Oregon Stater. working with him over the years was very special; he was always willing to listen and to give advice and support. He and Jeanne had a special relationship that many admired. His contributions to OSU will be long remembered. Jo Anne and Cliff Trow

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**Cliff and Jo Anne Trow** - April 26, 2011 at 12:46 PM