



Kenneth LaCrosse - Aug. 22, 1939- Apr. 18, 2018 - Burlingame, CA

Kenneth Irwin LaCrosse died peacefully on April 18, 2018 in Oakdale, California surrounded by his family. He was widely known as Coach LaCrosse and was 88 years old. Ken was born in Oakland, and his family later relocated to Grass Valley. Ken attended Grass Valley High School and graduated valedictorian of the class of 1947. He received his Bachelor's degree in 1952 from Stanford University, where he was a member of the Sigma Chi Fraternity, and his Master's degree in Education in 1954, also from Stanford University. Mr. LaCrosse began his teaching career in Stockton before moving to Capuchino High School, where he spent the majority of his teaching years. Ken taught History and the Humanities and was known for his eloquent and enlightening lectures. He was passionate about The Civil Rights Movement and about human rights in general. Upon his retirement at age 75, Ken had taught for a total of 57 years. A lifelong sportsman, Ken was captain of the Grass Valley High School football team, where he was nicknamed "Slippery Hips," and also played football for Stanford University. He began coaching boys' basketball in Stockton and developed a deep and abiding interest in mentoring young athletes. He was an early organizer and commissioner of the not-for-profit American Youth Soccer Organization, which has introduced more than six million children to soccer across the United States. At Capuchino, Ken coached boys' basketball, baseball, and football, focusing on what he called "the fundamentals" and celebrating several championships. His tenure at Capuchino contributed to what became known as the Peninsula's "Golden Age of Sports." He was inducted into the Capuchino Coaching Hall of Fame in 1997. Coach LaCrosse finished his career at Burlingame High School, where he coached boys' freshman and sophomore soccer, leading them to five first-place seasons. Ken loved the great outdoors; he traveled and camped all over the western United States. His favorite place of all was the Grand Canyon. He loved to fish and hike and was a dedicated supporter of the conservation movement. He also traveled internationally and twice studied at the University of Tel Aviv in Jerusalem. He went to Egypt, throughout the Holy Land, to the Red Sea, the Gaza Strip, the border of Lebanon, and spent many happy hours on the Mediterranean Sea. In retirement, Ken was devoted to his two granddaughters, Kelly and Josie, to whom he was a loving companion, teacher, and support.

They will always remember “Papa’s” affectionate guidance and quiet strength, as well as his famous loyalty to their soccer teams. Ken was an avid reader and gardener and walked several miles a day. In 2015, he moved to Oakdale to live with his brother, Gary, where he continued his daily walks up until the final weeks of his long life. There, Ken most enjoyed nostalgic visits from old friends, time with his family, and going on long drives. A man of sterling character, Ken was a role model to many and will be remembered with love and gratitude by his family, friends, former students, and fellow athletes. Mr. LaCrosse is survived by his sons Kier LaCrosse and Bret LaCrosse, his stepson Milo Shearer, his granddaughters Kelly Ryan LaCrosse and Josephine Ryan LaCrosse, his daughter-in-law Sharon Ryan, and his former spouse and cherished friend, Pauline LaCrosse. He is also survived by his brothers Robert LaCrosse and Gary LaCrosse, his niece Denise LaCrosse, his nephew Lance LaCrosse, and his great-nephews Hunter LaCrosse and Matthew Sahlit. **Please join us for a Celebration of Life service on Saturday, June 23, at Sharon Heights Golf and Country Club in Menlo Park, from 3 until 5 pm.** Donations in memory of Ken LaCrosse can be made to the Nature Conservancy at support.nature.org, or to a charity of your choice.