



Ronald Jay Vavra

March 9, 1935 - October 15, 2021

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EL CAJON

Ron Vavra passed away on October 15 th 2021, one month after suffering a heart attack and several strokes. It was such a surprise to his family and friends, as he had always led such a healthy and active lifestyle. Everyday he exercised, meditated and had a healthy diet. Throughout his life he carried a positive attitude.

Even in the hospital, when asked how he was doing, he replied, “Never better”. One of his great passions was spending time in nature, having an especially keen interest in birds.

He lived in El Cajon with his wife of 62 years, Gale. He fathered three sons, Mark, Kurt and Jay. He always loved and was so proud of them (and their wives; Chris, Eileen and Jean) and six grandchildren; Maya, Ellis, Shea, Trajan, Faye and Evan. His grandchildren affectionately called him “Viejo”.

Ron grew up in Glendale California with his parents, William and Mabel, and his brothers, Billy and Robert. He went to Hoover High in Glendale where he was an outstanding track sprinter. He continued his education at Glendale Community College, San Jose State and Stanford.

Ron and Gale married in 1958 and then moved to Lakeside, California where Ron was hired as El Capitan High School’s first track and cross country coach and as a P.E. teacher. In 1964, Ron was hired at Grossmont College as the first track and cross country coach, as well as a P.E and Adapted P.E. teacher. His teams at Grossmont and El Capitan were dominant, winning several C.I.F and state titles. Ron treasured his relationship with his fellow coaches; Bob Larsen, Jack Mashin and Jim Peabody and his athletes. Many of his athletes still kept in touch with “Coach”... he loved this.

In 1970 Ron took a sabbatical leave with his family to Europe to learn the German sprint techniques. It was the “trip of a lifetime”, living in a VW van for 6 months while visiting 13 countries.

All who knew this amazing man will miss him.

Comments



“ Since I met Ron in 1968, he has been a positive influence on my life. I will always love him. He was my coach and friend.

Goodbye,
Ron Swayze

Shelby Sheridan Swayze - December 03, 2021 at 11:07 AM



“ My condolences to Gail and family. We were 'next gate' up the hill neighbors of Ron and Gail's cabin on Palomar Mountain's East Grade Road. Ron was always very kind and generous to me and I tried to keep up with him in that respect. His and Robert's books that he gave me are among my treasures. Fare thee well, coach.

Rob Wells

Robert Charles Wells - November 17, 2021 at 10:32 PM



“ Ron was a people person and touched countless lives in a positive way over his long teaching and coaching career. Coach Vavra was held in such high esteem that when he retired from Grossmont College in 1995 over 75 former athletes from El Capitan High School and Grossmont College showed up for a surprise party. He lived a long and wonderful life. It was a real privilege to have known him.

Jim Heather - November 08, 2021 at 09:18 PM



“ Although I never met Ron, I have known him much of my 75 years. He and his brother were talked about in many good ways. Mom was a Vavra, her father was Frank Vavra. Pop, as we called our Grandfather, was brother to William and Jim Vavra. Through the years I have known the accomplishments of Ron and Robert. I did meet Robert when I lived in Houston, Texas, prior to my going to Hyderabad, India, in 1981. My condolences to the Vavra family at this time. Prayed for the family. Jim Betterton, eldest son of Eloise Vavra Betterton.

Jim Betterton - November 08, 2021 at 02:24 PM



“ Your words will resonate and be an inspiration to others forever. Ron was one in a million and I am honored to have known him.
Marie Zadavec

Marie Zadavec - November 07, 2021 at 03:26 PM