



Joseph J. Mueller

May 11, 1932 - November 2, 2025

Joseph “Coach” Mueller passed away at his home on November 2, 2025. Born May 11, 1932 in San Bernardino, California, Joseph was the youngest child born to Joseph and Emma Mueller, both originally from Switzerland. Joseph was an extraordinarily talented athlete. He starred as a 3-year Varsity letterman in baseball at San Bernardino High School (a three-year school), where he also played football and basketball. At his 25th class reunion, SBHS recognized him as the “best all-around athlete.” After graduating high school in 1950, Joseph attended Cal Poly San Luis Obispo on a baseball scholarship. While at Cal Poly, he also played freshman basketball. During his summers, he played ball for the San Luis Obispo Blues, a semi-pro team.

In December 1954, the U.S. Army drafted Joseph and after two years of active duty, Joseph received an honorable discharge. While stationed in Alaska for his Army service, Joseph played baseball for the Army and also for a semi-pro Alaska team. He was selected to the Army’s Fort Richardson All-Star team. After his release from the service in September 1956, Joseph started work on his Masters at Cal Poly, where he completed one quarter before signing to play ball for the Lake Charles Giants, an independent pro-team. During the summer of 1957, Joseph had a 21-game hitting streak, but, perhaps more notable, he met Frances Gennuso, a dark-haired beauty who oozed southern charm and graciousness. As fate would have it, Frances’ brother Sammy, the Sports Editor of the Lake Charles American Press, was

writing a piece on the Giants. One of the players he interviewed was Joe and he later introduced Joe to Frances. Joe and Frances quickly began what would become a three-year courtship during which Joe traveled the country playing minor league baseball and completing his Master's Degree in Education, which he earned at Cal Poly in 1958. During his minor league baseball career, Joe played in the Evangeline and Texas leagues, among others. In 1958, the Yankees signed Joe as an infielder to a AAA contract. His first assignment was to a Yankees team in Greensborough, North Carolina in the Carolina League.

On August 18, 1960, Frances and Joe married in Las Vegas, Nevada and moved to San Luis Obispo with Frances' two children from a previous marriage. Joe began his teaching and coaching career at Morro Bay High School where he coached Varsity baseball and basketball. Joe also resumed playing ball for the Blues during the summers of 1960-1965. After 6 years of coaching and teaching at Morro Bay HS, the family (which now included a baby daughter) moved to Santa Barbara in 1965 when Joe accepted a teaching and coaching position at San Marcos High School.

In 1992, Joe retired after 21 years as the head baseball coach at San Marcos (1965-1986), and 6 years as the baseball program coordinator (1987-1992). His teams went to the CIF playoffs eight times and won three Channel League championships, as well as a Santa Barbara County title. The school honored Mueller's retirement by dedicating the baseball field to him and naming it Joe Mueller Field. Official recognition came in a pregame ceremony on March 4, 2011 where Mueller was invited to throw out the first pitch, the opening day of the Royals' 2011 season. On that day, San Marcos officially revealed the field in his name.

In addition to 27 years as a head baseball coach (Morro Bay and San Marcos), Joe's coaching career included basketball and football. While at San

Marcos, Joe taught physical education, driver education/training and life science. He chaired the P.E. Department for 6 years. Over the years, Joe also officiated baseball, basketball and football and was a member of the Channel Coast Officials Association.

Joseph was involved in the community. In addition to memberships in various teaching and coaching organizations, he was a member (1990 inductee) of the Santa Barbara Athletic Round Table Hall of Fame. His civic service included ushering at St. Raphael's Catholic Church for more than 50 years (1968 to 2020). After retirement, he joined the Lions Club International participating as an active member for 20 years, with several years devoted to the sight and hearing board. The Lions honored Joe's service with a life-time membership and awarded him the President's Award, Lion of the Year and Melvin Jones' award. Joe also volunteered as a credit committee member for the Santa Barbara Teachers Federal Credit Union.

Joe stayed active after retirement. He joined the Santa Barbara Golf Club and played golf weekly into his 90's. Joe enjoyed gardening and tinkering with home improvement projects. He liked to barbeque and enjoyed family meals at home and at the beach. His life-long passion for baseball never waned. He enjoyed watching MLB games on TV and following his grandsons' on-field pursuits from Little League to College.

He was a dedicated husband, father and grandfather. Joe and Frances' love story endured for more than 60 years until Frances passed away in 2021. Joe often referred to Frances as his inspiration and the "wind beneath his wings." He adored her and selflessly cared for her when her health declined. He was a very principled man and believed in working hard but having fun too. He always had a twinkle in his eye and a zest for living a full, rich life. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him and endless stories and memories will

continue to be shared.

Joseph is survived by his daughter, Anna Mueller-Ellis (Scott), children by marriage, Ron Rollosso and Jane Wagner, 4 grandchildren who adored him and numerous nieces and nephews. He is predeceased by his wife Frances, parents Joseph and Emma Mueller and sisters, Josephine Slee, Anna Poland and Emma Woodward.

A Visitation will be held from 4:00-7:00 p.m. followed by a Rosary at 7:00 p.m. on December 28, 2025 at Welch-Ryce-Haider in Goleta. A Funeral Mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on December 29, 2025 at St. Raphael's Catholic Church. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the UCLA Jonsson Cancer Center Foundation.

Cemetery Details

Calvary Cemetery

199 North Hope Ave
Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 687-8811
http://www.archdiocese.la/directories/cemeteries/info.php?cemetery_id=3

Previous Events

Rosary

DEC **28**. 7:00 PM (PT)

Welch-Ryce-Haider - Goleta
450 Ward Drive
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
(805) 965-5145
info@wrhsb.com
<https://www.wrhsb.com>

Funeral Mass

DEC **29**. 10:00 AM (PT)

St. Raphael Catholic Church
5444 Hollister Ave.
Santa Barbara, CA 93111
<http://www.straphaelsb.com/>