



## Joe Felipe Class of 2012

Joe Felipe was born in Portola, CA and raised and educated in Oroville. While a student at Oroville High School (OHS), he was an outstanding four sport athlete, active in several associated student body activities, class officer, a Boy Scout, delivered newspapers, and upon graduation from OHS in 1936, was awarded a basketball scholarship to Santa Clara University (SCU).

He was on the Bronco varsity basketball team three years, earned high point honors several times, and the 1940 championship team was honored as one of the most successful hoop squads in school history, losing only one game the entire season. Joe went on to earn his bachelors degree from SCU, and his teaching credential from University of California, Berkeley.

Upon graduating from SCU in 1940, Joe was on active duty in the United States Navy from 1941-1945 during World War II. He attained the rank of Lieutenant Senior Grade, served as an officer on the USS Mellette and USS Ramapo, and was an active participant in the initial landing and occupation of Iwo Jima, Nagasaki, and Okinawa. His war experience also included serving as Debarkation Officer on an Attack Transport Ship, transporting Marines to Iwo Jima and picking up Marines wounded in combat.

In 1946, Joe was hired by OHS principal Chester Nisbet to teach citizenship, history, and English. He also experienced great success as head varsity baseball, basketball, and football coach at OHS until 1954 and then continued his winning ways coaching all three sports at Yuba Junior College. His 1955 Yuba football team was Golden Valley Conference champion, Alfalfa Bowl champion, and the entire team was inducted into the Yuba College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2000.

Joe next moved up to NCAA Division One University of Santa Clara, where in 1956 he became head freshman basketball coach and assistant varsity coach. Following two successful years and a best season 19-3 record at his alma mater, Coach Felipe gave up coaching and in 1958 returned to his hometown to enter the business world as a salesman for Las Plumas Lumber Company, that was later owned by the Di Giorgio Corporation.

Over next 32 years, Joe used his abilities to teach, train, and mold his staff into professional industry leaders. He rose from salesman up through the ranks to president. He was a key player in the development of the company into one of the most successful distributors of pre-cut materials in the north state and in two other branches in southern California. He was well known and highly respected throughout the industry, retiring in 1990.

Throughout his life, Joe gave back to his beloved Oroville by coaching and sponsoring youth sports, being active in local service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, and the community in general. He founded Pop Warner youth football in Oroville in 1967 and proceeded to coach the Oroville team to several championships. As a member of St. Thomas Catholic Church, he found time to coach its boys and girls basketball teams and also sponsored local Little League teams.

Joe played baseball for the Oroville Olives, was inducted into the Northern California Sports Association Hall of Fame in 1978, served as its president, and received the Business Leadership Award from the DiGiorgio Corporation. He was also a member of the University of California Alumni Association and a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Oroville.

He was a man of great integrity and is best remembered for his ability to organize and motivate others in sports, business, the classroom and life. He openly taught honesty, hard work, discipline and integrity.

Joe was married to Ruby Gould for 53 years and they had four children: Nancy, Joe Jr., Donnie, and Paula. He is also survived by his two sisters, Mary Hill, of Yucaipa and Helen Wittmer of Berkeley. Aside from his family, his loves included his dogs, birds, gardening, and cooking for his family. Joe passed away at his home in Oroville on April 1, 1995.