



*In Memory of*  
**Thomas Robert Becic**

**July 5, 1932 - May 5, 2016**

Becic, Thomas Robert - 83, July 05, 1932 May 05, 2016

On July 5, 1932, Thomas R. Becic, Sr. was born in Portland to Croatian immigrants at their home in the NW section of town then known as Slabtown.

When Tommy entered grade school at St. Patrick's, he couldn't speak English, as was the case with most of his Croatian classmates. The sisters at St. Pat's taught them English, and they spoke Croatian at home.

His boyhood home was in the shadow of the Vaughn Street ballpark, where he and his Croatian friends spent many summers as clubhouse boys for the Portland Beavers where his love of the game and skills were developed. Baseball and sports would become a defining part of his life.

In high school at Lincoln, he played basketball and was named all PIL in baseball in 1949. He was inducted into the PIL hall of fame in 2006. After high school, he went to the University of Portland on a baseball scholarship and after 2 years, turned pro, receiving a large signing bonus from the Cleveland Indians organization. After a 3 year stint in the pros, Tommy returned to Portland, earned his teaching degree and became a legend in the Portland amateur baseball scene. Later, he became an agent for the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company and enjoyed a successful 35+ year career in the insurance industry where he mentored many new agents.

In 1957 he married his wife of 59 years, Marilyn (Burman) who he met at the Quality Pie Shop in NW Portland. Together they had 3 children. Tom Jr. (Robin), Steve (Susan) and Anne-Marie Rosa (Charlie).

As an amateur baseball player, Tommy played for Norgan's Beavers, Archer Blower

and Dr. Bernard's with players usually made up of players with Croatian backgrounds that had played together for years. Tommy was a slick fielding, good hitting first baseman and would pitch when the team needed a big win. He had "really good stuff", according to his teammates. The highlight of his amateur career came in 1962, when he led the Archer Blower team to the 1962 AABC national championship, being named the outstanding player in the tournament. He played on teams that won 16 city and state baseball championships over his career.

After baseball, Tom turned to golf, becoming a low handicap player, and volleyball for his athletic pursuits. In the 1970's, he earned an athletic membership to the Multnomah Athletic Club for his volleyball ability. He went on to lead the club program to national prominence, with the team in the top 5 in the nation regularly. Additionally, he staged volleyball exhibitions in Portland, bringing Wilt Chamberlin and his Big Dippers to Portland to face the MAC team, and the USA women versus Japan in the Memorial Coliseum, drawing over 7,000 fans for the event when the Japanese women were #1 in the world.

In 1981, he established the Columbia Empire Volleyball Association and served as the first commissioner and later was treasurer for the USVBA. He staged the USVBA national championships in Portland in 1980 and the national co-ed championships in 1984.

Once he retired from volleyball, he joined Columbia Edgewater Country Club where he enjoyed the golf competition and comradery with many members who became close friends.

Aside from his great athletic ability, Tom was a family-first guy who enjoyed family vacations to the Oregon coast in the early years, and later an annual camping trip to Shasta Lake that his family still enjoys since first going in 1971 with as many as 50 people attending.

He was proud of his Croatian heritage and passed on that heritage to his family. He visited his homeland several times and connected with cousins and relatives still there.

He was a charming guy who was loved and respected by all who met him, with both friends and opponents describing him as "a gentleman". He enjoyed a wide circle of lifetime friends from his school days, college, baseball, volleyball, golf and business. Tom passed away from natural causes on May 5, 2016 with his wife by his side and surrounded by his children and brother.

He is survived by his wife, Marilyn, children and 8 grandchildren: Steve Becic, Jr., Abby (Becic) Wood, Matt Becic, Joe Becic, Melanie Becic, Nick Becic, Kealia Rosa and Kealani Rosa and one great grandchild, William Wood, Jr., as well as his brother John Becic and sister Lucille Martin of Brentwood, CA.

In lieu of flowers the family suggests donating to St. Patrick's Church or your favorite charity.

The Rosary will be recited Tuesday may 10th at St. Patrick's at 6:30 pm. A funeral mass will be Wednesday may 11th at 11:00 am followed a reception for family and

friends at the St. Patrick's parish hall.

Arrangements under the direction of Caldwell's, Hennessey, Goetsch & McGee Funeral Home, Portland, OR.

### **Rosary Service**

**Tuesday, May 10, 2016 | 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm**

St Patrick Catholic Church

1623 NW 19th Ave, Portland, Oregon 97209 | (503) 222-4086

**Driving Directions**

### **Funeral Service**

**Wednesday, May 11, 2016 | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm**

St Patrick Catholic

1623 NW 19th Ave, Portland, OR 97209 | (503) 222-4086

**Driving Directions**