

Bill Hicks

 Bill Hicks William "Bill" Hicks was born in 1922 to Velma and Lee Roy Hicks, the first of nine children, in Glendale, California. He grew up in Wilmington, and he and his brothers were active playing sports locally. In 1943 he was drafted into the Army and served in the Europe 156th Infantry Regiment. His unit landed in Normandy after D-Day, and took part in the Breakout from the Normandy Peninsula. Bill advanced to the rank of First Sergeant and was the Chief of Section for the unit artillery. His decorations include the World War II Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal, and the European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal. After the war, Bill decided to advance his education at UCLA using the G.I. Bill, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education. He also played Varsity Baseball, beginning a lifelong interest in the sport. He met Jaquelyn "Jacque" Blau at Compton Junior College, who he married in 1949, cherishing a relationship that was to span 65 years. Bill played minor league professional baseball in the northern Midwest. It was during his time in minor league ball he realized he wanted to coach. After returning to Southern California, Bill began working in coaching at the junior high and high school level while pursuing a Master's Degree at Cal State Long Beach. In 1958, he and Jacque moved to San Luis Obispo with their two young sons, Geoffrey and Michael, to begin a career teaching and coaching at Cal Poly that would last almost 30 years. Bill served for a short time as an assistant football coach, but his first love was always baseball. He was the head coach at Cal Poly for 20 years. After resigning as baseball coach, several players on the golf team approached Bill to act as coach to keep the program going. He agreed, and began a second coaching career at Cal Poly. Though moderately funded in the days before TV, Bill always enjoyed the challenge of working with the student athletes and competing. He was also proud of coursework he developed at Cal Poly for Physical Education for Elementary Students, which he developed with Jacque, a first grade teacher. In 2009, Jacque passed away, and in early 2011, Bill moved North to Rohnert Park to be closer to his sons. He passed away December 12, 2014, at 92 years old of natural causes due to age. Bill is predeceased by his beloved wife, Jacque; brothers: Frederick, Joe and Victor; and sister Rose. He is survived by brothers, Robert (Wilma) and Allison; sisters, Eva (Bill) and Emma (Scotty); sister-in-law, Patricia and her daughter, Carole (Joe); his sons, Michael and Geoffrey; daughter-in-law, Wendy; his grandchildren, Clinton and Hayley, and numerous nieces and nephews of the Hicks family. He is fondly remembered by the students, baseball players, and golfers, for whom he will always be, Coach. A Celebration of Bill's Life will be held on Saturday, January 10, 2015 at the Community Grace Brethren Church Fellowship Hall in Long Beach, California commencing at 1:00pm. In lieu of flowers, Bill would have appreciated donations to college scholarships at Cal Poly or the educational institution preferred. Sign his guestbook at sanluisobispo.com/obituaries

Published in San Luis Obispo Tribune on Dec. 21, 2014
