

**Ed Sanclemente(1924 - 2016)**

Ed Sanclemente January 8, 1924 - January 29, 2016 La Mesa As a youth, Ed Sanclemente shagged balls for Ted Williams at University Heights playground and played on San Diego's 1941 national championship American Legion team. Later, as the baseball coach at San Diego City and Mesa colleges for more than three decades, Sanclemente prepared hundreds of players for four-year collegiate and professional careers. The native San Diegan was also a Navy veteran, a graduate of the University of California-Berkeley, a top amateur tennis player and a devout member of St. Didacus Catholic Church, where he weekly attended the Mass conducted by Father Mike Sinor. And more, so much more. "I knew him since I was 10 years old," said Bob Cluck, who played for Sanclemente at San Diego City College. "I met him as his paper boy," continued Cluck. "But he became like a surrogate father to me. He was a mentor. Two decades after Ed, I went to the same elementary, junior high and high school. He was like the biggest guy in North Park." "As a coach, he was a joy to play for," said Tom Whelan. "Playing for Ed at San Diego City College was the best time I ever had in baseball. He drove his players, he took care of his players. He was a man of detail who taught you how important it was to tend to all the details in your life." Ed Sanclemente passed away peacefully in his sleep from natural causes early in the morning of January 29. He was 92. Up to the last weeks of his life, Sanclemente regularly visited with former players and friends every Thursday morning at 7 sharp at DZ Akins in La Mesa. Sunday Mass at St. Didacus in Normal Heights was always followed by dinner at the Chicken Pie Shop on El Cajon Boulevard. "That was one of the great things about Ed," said Whelan. "You could set your clock to him. He loved discipline. And he taught that value to his players. There are so many of us who owe a lot to Ed." Louis Edward Sanclemente was born on January 8, 1924, at Sisters of Mercy Hospital (now Scripps Mercy Hospital) in San Diego to Micaela and Francisco V. Sanclemente. Ed's parents were from Northern Spain and were members of a small group of Basque Spaniards living in San Diego County. The Sanclementes were devout Catholics and founding members of St. Didacus, which opened in 1925. Ed's older brother Frank Alfonso Sanclemente was born on September 6, 1914 and died on May 22, 2001. Ed's father passed away in 1965 at the age of 82 and Micaela passed in 1990 at the age of 100. Ed Sanclemente attended Jefferson Elementary in North Park and Roosevelt Junior High before graduating from San Diego High in 1942. At San Diego High, he starred in baseball and tennis and also played basketball. Years later, he was honored as one of the "athletes of the century" at San Diego High. On the recommendation of Mike Morrow, his high school baseball coach, Sanclemente enrolled at the University of California in Berkeley, although he entered the Navy during his first year at Cal. He returned to Berkeley after being discharged from the Navy at the end of [World War II](#). Sanclemente was the starting third baseman on the 1947 California team that won the first College World Series. Sanclemente hit .369 during the regular season and was 4-for-10 and drove in four runs in Cal's two-game College World Series sweep of a Yale team that featured future President George H. Bush. After graduating from the California-Berkeley, Sanclemente played two seasons of professional baseball in Spokane, Wash., before teaching at South San Francisco High while doubling as the Athletic Director at the Olympic Club in downtown San Francisco. Sanclemente returned to San Diego and taught at La Jolla High before rejoining Morrow as the assistant baseball coach at what was then called San Diego Junior College. Sanclemente became the Knights head coach in the late 1950s. As the head coach at San Diego City College, Sanclemente won several championships in the Metropolitan Conference, which at the time was regarded as the strongest junior college conference in the United States. After winning the 1964 Metropolitan Conference title with a doubleheader sweep on the final day of the season, Sanclemente became the first baseball coach at San Diego Mesa College, where he won more titles until retiring in 1989. As a coach at San Diego City and Mesa colleges, Sanclemente was beloved by his players although he ran a "tight ship." He was a stickler for players being on time and wearing their uniforms properly. He once benched a player for having the wrong pants and another time left a player in Brawley because he was late for the bus. "If you wanted to play for Ed, you followed his rules," said Whelan. "But you learned the game and so much more while playing for Ed. He put you on the right path for life. And although he was tough, he made it fun. Anyone who ever played for Ed loved the man." "Ed was an incredible baseball teacher," said Cluck. "But he also taught many life lessons that changed his players in a positive way forever." Sanclemente lived his later years in La Mesa. His hobbies included the stock market and college and pro football. Ed was known to make small wagers on football games over the years. He also loved watching Padres games and his beloved California Golden Bears on television. And every Thursday morning, Sanclemente was joined by up to 18 of his former friends and players for breakfast at the far corner of DZ Akins. Former players and friends will gather again at 1 p.m. on Friday, February 12, to bid a final farewell to Ed Sanclemente during Mass at the Chapel at Holy Cross Cemetery, 4470 Hilltop Dr., San Diego.

**Published in The San Diego Union Tribune on Feb. 7, 2016**