

LOCAL AUGUST 28, 2016 7:47 PM

Stephen J. Korcheck, former MCC president and baseball player, dies



Korcheck

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MANATEE — Dr. Stephen J. Korcheck, former president of the then-called Manatee Community College, died Friday. He was 84.

Born Aug. 11, 1932, Dr. Korcheck was a professional baseball player with the Washington Senators and also became the third president of MCC, which is now the State College of Florida. According to the SCF website, Dr. Korcheck came to MCC as a part-time instructor of health and physical education. He served as chair of that department and went on to hold positions as dean of instruction and dean of academic affairs prior to becoming president.

According to Dr. Korcheck's daughter, Stephanie Korcheck, the former athlete died of heart failure. Dr. Korcheck had a myriad of health issues that kept him away from his Bradenton home over the last year, she said.

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“But he was determined to come back and his incredible strength and determination won over and he literally, physically walked through the door,” she said of her father’s return to his house.

Stephanie said her family held a belated birthday celebration for her father, complete with some of his favorite foods: barbecue ribs, corn on the cob, potato casserole, and some wine. The gathering, she said, was perfect.

“He was the president of the community college for 17 years. He was a professional athlete, a baseball coach, he worked at the college in different roles,” Stephanie said. “I always knew that he had a tremendous impact, of course, on the community.

“I’m just more and more hearing stories from people who literally had their lives changed because of him and almost always it starts with ‘I went to see your dad and he made a phone call.’ What the phone call was was different for each person. They all say ‘that phone call put my life on a completely different path.’ That’s the power of his life and he did that for the guys that he coached, he did that for students, he did that for the faculty and staff at the college. He knew every single employees’ name at that college.”

It’s who he was as a man, she said.

Dr. Korcheck earned bachelor’s, master’s and doctorate degrees from George Washington University in Washington, D.C., where he also served as head baseball coach for three years, according to a gallery of past MCC presidents. In 1975, he was elected into the university’s Letterman Hall of Fame and received a Distinguished Alumni Award nearly two decades later in 1993.

As a student at Cumberland Township High School in Carmichaels, Pa., Dr. Korcheck was an award-winning athlete and, in college, was named in the 1954 edition of Who’s Who in American Colleges and Universities.

In addition to being a past president of Manatee Community College, Dr. Korcheck was also a past president of the Florida Community Colleges Activities Association and past chairman of the Presidents’ Council, according to SCF. A committed public servant, he is a past chairman of the United Way of Manatee County; past capital campaign general chair of the Easter Seal Society of Southwest Florida; and served as a member of the Workforce Development Planning Board.

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Jeanne McMahon

Steve and I went through 12 years of school together. We were good friends. I'm sad at his passing. I've read all the good things he did in his life, let me add one more. When my oldest son was ready for college, and after seeing him play baseball once, he offered him a baseball scholarship to GW. When he decided to go elsewhere, he was instrumental in getting nother coach interested in him which resulted in a baseball scholarship at another school. My son became Superintendent of Schools in North Carolina thanks to the chance his education gave him. He was such a good guy.

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A class act, a great neighbor and great guy.

Steve LeBlanc and Family

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He helped make that school my favorite of all the colleges I ever attended. MCC was a little gem of a college.

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Dr. Korcheck was the nicest physical education coach I had when attending MJC in 1971. I'm sure sorry to hear of his passing.

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