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**Deceased: GARFIELD MOURNS LOSS OF ROSSI FORMER STAR ATHLETE, LONGTIME COACH LEFT MARK ON AREA ATHLETICS, PEOPLE**

**Date: February 21, 1998**

The news of Marion "Madeo" Rossi's death spread around Akron quickly yesterday.

And it made for hundreds of heavy hearts around town for his family and all the friends, students and co-workers who knew Garfield High's long-time teacher, athletic director, baseball, wrestling and assistant football coach.

Rossi, 68, died early yesterday morning after experiencing chest pains at his home in south Akron.

"He was just the best man I ever met in my life, and not just because he was my father. I think everybody who knew him felt that way," said Melissa Schinaberry, one of Rossi's two daughters.

Aside from Schinaberry, her mother, Mary, and sister, Michelle Freeman, no one probably was closer to Rossi the past 28 years than Garfield football coach Bill McGee.

"We spent a lot of time working out together after school," said McGee. "We probably didn't get home most evenings until 6 or 7 o'clock."

McGee said he and Rossi used to run together for years. But in the last few years, they would walk the halls and stairs and lift weights together to stay fit.

" Most of the time I was the first one out, and he'd put our stuff in the washer," McGee said. "And if I was the first one to get to school in the morning, I'd put our stuff in the dryer. This morning, it was tough to accept that I was putting his stuff in the dryer for the last time."

Rossi first began teaching and coaching at Garfield in 1955 after graduating from the University of Akron. And the only time he left Garfield was for a five-year stint (1964-68) as the head football coach at Buchtel.

"From 1969-75, we coached together as assistants (under legendary Garfield coach Babe Flossie)," said McGee. "Then when Babe decided to give it up, we were the two guys on staff most likely to take over for him.

"When it turned out to be me, the first thing I did was go to Madeo and ask him to stay. And he didn't hesitate a second. We spent a lot of good times together over the years. And I can't tell you how good he was with the kids."

Rossi retired as a health and driver's education teacher in 1993, but continued at the school as athletic director and assistant football coach.

"With him as athletic director," said Garfield principal Fred Schuett, "I never had to worry about athletics, because he just did it all."

Schuett said that administrators called all the Garfield football players together yesterday morning to inform them of Rossi's death.

"I watched their faces, and it seemed like everyone of their chins just hit the floor" Schuett said. "He always had such a positive attitude. I just feel badly for the kids. They've lost a role model on how they should behave."

Rossi had an outstanding amateur and professional athletic career before beginning his teaching and coaching career. He played minor-league baseball in the Dodgers organization, and played college football at Akron.

Long-time St. Vincent-St. Mary High athletic director and football coach John Cistone was a football teammate of Rossi's at Akron, and an amateur baseball teammate.

"Madeo always was joking. He was just a good person," said Cistone. "I hadn't seen him for a while before (Tuesday night's Garfield-St. V-M basketball game) at Garfield. He was fun to be around. He was always upbeat. I don't think I ever saw him down."

Schinaberry said that arrangements, to be handled by Kucko-Anthony-Kertesz Funeral Home, will be announced today.

*Author: Roland Queen, Beacon Journal staff writer*

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