



*George Chelini*

\* Story credit to Santa Barbara News Press \*

George T. Chelini, Santa Barbara native and former director of the Santa Barbara Boys and Girls Clubs, passed away on June 17, one day short of his 89th birthday.

George grew up just off Milpas on Alphonse Street; graduated in 1949 from Santa Barbara High School, where he played basketball and football; served with the U.S. Air Force in the Korean War; and attended Santa Barbara City College (where he was Student Body President) and UC Santa Barbara.

He started working for what was then the Santa Barbara Boys Club in 1956. He spent 37 years with the organization, eventually unifying all the Clubs in Santa Barbara County and becoming their overall Director. George mentored many well-loved staffers at the Clubs who became local legends in their own right, including Sal Rodriguez, Pat Wargo and Donnie Yee.

He also drummed up lots of donations, improved the Clubs' facilities and ran sports leagues, all while keeping in close touch with the children who came to the clubs for entertainment, exercise and guidance. He was one of the first directors in the country to invite girls into the Clubs, leading to a renaming of the organization as the Boys and Girls Club of Santa Barbara.

Even long after retiring in 1993, there weren't many times when George went out in public in Santa Barbara when he wasn't recognized by several people who'd been kids at the Boys Club during his years there. Nearly all, now grownups, would express how much George and the Boys Club had meant to them in guiding them into leading worthwhile lives.

Somehow, even while raising his family and steering his nonprofit, George also found time to spend multiple terms on the Goleta School Board.

George leaves behind his beautiful and loving wife Margie, four children — Karen, Eric, Marilyn and Remy — 9 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren, and a stepdaughter, Polly Frost.

\* Story credit to Santa Barbara News Press \*