

# JOE ROTH ..... More Than A Quarterback

Over four years have slipped by since Joe Roth first trotted onto the football field on behalf of the University of California. An academic degree from Cal was a high priority with Joe, as well as the exciting, pass-oriented offense the football Bears ran, and so he arrived in the winter of 1975 to enroll at Berkeley. Two games into the 1975 season, his performance in football had established him as the latest quarterback par excellence at Cal.



The statistics were easy to pick out. The Bears in 1975 had the nation's most explosive, and best-balanced offense, gaining 2522 yards BOTH rushing and passing, and Joe Roth was the trigger. Calling upon Chuck Muncie to run, Steve Rivera to catch precision passes, and a talented line for protection, Joe could

turn to Wesley Walker to make the streak, the long-gainer a regular event. Seven times during the season, the pair hooked up for gains of more than 30 yards.

Roth tied Morton's Cal season record for touchdown passes with 14. He had four games where he passed for 200-plus yards, and picked Washington apart for 24 completions in 36 attempts, 380 yards, and four touchdowns. In 1976, he picked right up against Georgia (21/36, 379 yards) and Oklahoma (27/46, 284 yards). An 88-yard play executed with Walker against Georgia still stands as Cal's longest pass from scrimmage, and a look at his two-year numbers easily puts him among the all-time Bears.

	1975	1976	Total
Passes attempted:	226	295	521
Passes completed:	126	154	280
Touchdowns:	14	7	21
Yards:	1880	1789	3669
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Yet the statistics alone were not what distinguished Joe as a unique individual; after all, his tenure at Cal totalled less than two full seasons, less than 20 games. On the field, Joe was more than a nominal leader, more than a signal-caller. Teammates pointed to his poise, calm confidence and lack of conceit that brought the squad together, headed toward a single purpose.

Off the field, he remained unassuming. He hadn't been highly recruited coming out of Granite Hills HS, but blossomed physically at Grossmont College into a tremendous prospect, sought by a number of major colleges. Yet, even as a "star" quarterback, he wanted people to know him as just Joe.

Sports reporters, that often difficult-to-please group whose duty it is to quiz and describe events and personalities in the athletic world, found Joe cooperative, patient, and polite, answering questions as long as they were asked. The media folk seeking the in-depth report came away highly impressed with Joe, who was merely being himself.

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Ten members of California's 1979 squad were around in 1975 and 1976. Eric Anderson, Greg Bracelin, Paul Jones, Joe Rose, and Daryle Skaugstad were freshmen in 1975, while Darnell Chapman, Ron Coccimiglio, Kirk Karacozoff, Holden Smith, and Pat Turner arrived in 1976. They were on hand during Joe Roth's two seasons at Cal. They and others, since-departed from the campus, can look back and remember.

What remains in memories of Joe is not just **what** he did on or off the field, nor the manner in which he handled impeccably his own personal crisis. No, it is even more the style, the grace, the class, and most of all, the courage and integrity of Joe Roth that leaves something to be treasured by all of those who were fortunate to know him.

Joe Roth passed away in February 1977, after a battle with malignant melanoma, a form of cancer. In his memory, the 1977 USC and 1978 UCLA games in Berkeley were designated the Joe Roth Memorial games, and a \$1.00 ticket surcharge provided funds for an annual scholarship in his name. Gary Graumann and Rich Campbell were the first two recipients of the scholarship, chosen as the most fitting individuals to carry on in the spirit of Joe.