

# Late Cal Star's Exploits Recalled

Today's contest against the UCLA Bruins marks the 4th Annual Joe Roth Memorial Game. Over five years have passed since Roth first graced the football field on behalf of the University of California. His exploits on the gridiron are recorded in the Cal record books, but it is the memories of those fortunate enough to have known or met Joe that will live forever.

The statistics are easy to pick out. The Bears in 1975 had the nation's most explosive and best balanced offense, gaining 2,522 yards through the air, and the same number on the ground. Calling upon Chuck Muncie to run, Steve Rivera to catch and a talented offensive line for protection, Joe could turn to Wesley Walker to make the bomb a regular event.

Joe had four games in which he passed for 200-plus yards, and he picked Washington apart for 24 completions in 36 attempts, 380 yards and four touchdowns. Those in attendance will probably never forget Cal's most significant football victory in two decades when Roth directed the Bears to a stunning 28-14 win over the USC Trojans. Joe finished the game with 19 completions in 31 attempts, 244 yards and two TD passes.

In 1976, he picked right up in the opener against Georgia (21/36, 379 yards) and Oklahoma (27/46, 284 yards). An 88-yard play executed with Walker against Georgia still stands as the longest pass from scrimmage in the Cal record book.

Yet it was not his actions on the field that distinguished Joe, but rather his human qualities off it.

"Joe was a phenomenal guy, showing great courage and a great desire to live," said Cal's Athletic Director, Dave Maggard. "To the end, he never gave up. The awareness of how he wanted to handle his death was a help to those near him. The way he accepted things made everyone tougher and stronger. Joe Roth was an All-American boy. When I think of him, his athletic ability is inconsequential."

There are not enough adjectives in the dictionary or pages in this program to describe Joe Roth. Three words that contain a lot of meaning are faith, humility and courage. An exceptional athlete, he never wanted



*Joe was best distinguished by his human qualities off the field.*

to be thought of as anything but plain old Joe, all that talk about All-America selections and Heisman Trophies notwithstanding. His presence is still felt by those on the squad who were freshmen when Joe was a senior.

"Joe is someone you use as an example of the way you try to live your life but never do," said free safety Ron Coccimiglio. "He was someone you looked up to and who made you feel welcome. I feel fortunate to have had my life touched by Joe Roth. It's too bad everyone on this team hasn't had a chance to learn from Joe."

"Joe was a man of 21 who had lived a complete life," said noseguard Kirk Karacozoff. "I was a freshman just in awe of him. He made anyone from all walks of life feel comfortable. It was a great honor just to play a year with him. Joe was a guy who had a lot of esteem on and off the field."

"Joe Roth was an inspiration to everyone who knew him," added wide receiver Matt Bouza. "He led by example, not words. He had great faith and mental toughness. That was depicted in the way he dealt with death."

The Joe Roth Memorial Scholarship Fund annually supports a designated senior athlete who best exemplifies Joe's qualities.

Not that the winners haven't been deserving, but nobody has come close.