

Joe Roth— A Time To Remember

It has been a little over five years since Joe Roth, an All-America quarterback at the University of California succumbed to cancer in 1977, just a few months before he was to complete his senior year at Cal.

Joe's on-the-field exploits have been well-documented in these pages before. He helped lead the Bears to their last share of a conference title in 1975 and completed his Cal career as the third best quarterback in school history despite playing just two seasons.

But it was the courage he displayed off the field in fighting the disease that would eventually take his life in February, 1977, that was the most remarkable thing about Joe Roth. For that reason, and many more, the University honors him once a year with a Memorial Game. And today is that day to look back and be reminded of the legacy Joe Roth has handed down to us.

"I like the cliché about looking at the glass as either half full or half empty. I see it as half full. I figure I can walk across the street tomorrow and get run over by a car. At least I know what my problem is and how to cope with it," said Roth, while in Hawaii for the 1977 Hula Bowl.

"If everyone starts coming up and feeling sorry for me, I'm afraid it will start making me feel the same way. I mean, I fear I won't be the same Joe Roth anymore. Instead, I'll be Joe Roth underdog, the guy everybody feels sorry for. I don't want that. Really, just figure I'm a normal guy. What if some guy sitting down there on the street corner got cancer? Would everybody make a big fuss?"

"Joe was a phenomenal guy, showing great courage and a great desire to live. 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," says Cal athletic director Dave Maggard.

The Joe Roth Memorial Scholarship Fund was set up in 1977. The Cal athletic department added a \$1 surcharge to the face value of tickets for one game in both 1977 and 1978. The result of that surcharge, which is no longer in existence, and additional donation, is enough funding for two athletic grands-in-aid.