

NATIVE OF COUNTY LOSES FIGHT

QB Roth Dies Of Cancer At 21

University of California quarterback Joe Roth died yesterday at his Berkeley apartment after a long fight against a rare form of cancer, a University of California Medical Center spokesman reported.

Roth, 21, died at 3:55 p.m., surrounded by members of his family, friends and Cal coach Mike White.

Suffering from a highly virulent form of cancer called malignant melanoma, Roth, a former Granite Hills and Grossmont College passer, was hospitalized at the Cancer Research Institute at San Francisco Feb. 10. At his own request, he was discharged Thursday and allowed to go home, where he remained under

the care of his physician, Dr. Michael A. Friedman.

A medical center spokesman said there will be a Mass of Resurrection and memorial services Tuesday at 7 p.m. at Newman Hall at the university, followed by private burial services.

Roth is survived by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Roth of Jerome, Idaho, and two brothers, Tom of Seattle and John of La Jolla.

The family has requested that contributions be made to the Joe Roth Melanoma Research Fund in care of the UC-San Francisco Cancer Research Institute.

Roth's oldest brother, John, acting as the spokesman for the family said, "It



JOE ROTH
... dies in Berkeley

was probably for the best. Joe had been very, very sick ... he was in so much pain the past week."

Roth's doctors, family and Joe, himself, had kept the seriousness of his affliction from the general public.

"We were holding on to a five-to-ten per cent hope that Joe might be able to beat this thing and we didn't want to say anything that might jeopardize Joe's chances for a career in pro football," said John Roth.

Joe Roth was optimistic almost until the end of his three-year battle against the disease.

"It didn't come as any great shock. You always
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(Continued from Page H-1) know once you have it that there's a chance it may crop up again.

"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 Roth was not a normal young man.

Three years ago, when Roth was a freshman at Grossmont College, he noticed a mole he nicked shaving would not heal. He thought it was caused by his football helmet rubbing against his skin.

It was his first brush with cancer.

Surgery was performed and the only ostensible remnant of the disease was a four-inch scar.

Roth was philosophical at that time, too.

"It didn't have any physical effect. I felt good the whole time. That's what made it so odd, though. To know that something is happening in your body, maybe threatening your life, while as far as you can tell, you're subsisting so well. . .

"The experience really changed me. It made me realize how lucky I am to be physically capable. I see kids who are mentally retarded and I get very sad. I realize how close I was to being like they are."

Roth went on to lead Grossmont College to the state junior college championship and transferred to Cal after turning down bids from almost every major college in the country.

In 1975, Roth's first season for the Golden Bears, he broke several school passing records. He finished the year with a 55 per cent completion average, 1,880 yards and 14 touchdowns passing as Cal tied UCLA for the Pacific-8 championship.

The Bears talked of the Rose Bowl for themselves and the Heisman Trophy and Joe Roth was always mentioned in the same press releases.

Cancer was virtually forgotten.

But late in the 1976 season, a disappointing one for Roth after his brilliant junior campaign, the quarterback noticed a lump on his chest. An examination revealed it was a recurrence of the cancer, and he began receiving chemotherapy treatment under the direction of Dr. Friedman.

"I'm just amazed at the amount of courage he's shown under the circumstances," said coach White.

Roth, in a weakened condition because of the chemotherapy, suffered back spasms which kept him out of the post-season East-West Shrine Game Jan. 2. He was able to play some, however, in the Hula Bowl game in Hawaii the following week.

He then returned to San Francisco for more treatment before finally being hospitalized earlier this month.

Roth left his mark in the Bay Area.

University Chancellor Albert H. Bowker issued a statement saying:

"Joe Roth's humility and quiet courage in triumph and now in tragedy showed him to be an extraordinary young man. They deepen our feeling of loss and our sympathy for his family and friends."

All-American running back Chuck Muncie, comparing Roth to All-American Steve Bartkowski, who quarterbacked Cal in 1974, said: "Joe's the best. Bartkowski had some great days but Joe's surpassed him."

Cal faced a tough schedule in 1976, opening with Georgia and Oklahoma, and Muncie was among the players gone from the 1975 team. Roth passed for 379 yards

and 284 yards in those games, both losses, but totaled only 1,789 yards on the season in which his top receiver, Wesley Walker, was sidelined most the time with an injury and Roth himself suffered a lamed knee.

Jim Symington, who was Roth's coach at Granite Hills and later an assistant at Grossmont College, tried his best to put Joe Roth in perspective.

"He's the type of guy who exemplifies everything a coach enjoys working with. He always has been excep-

tional . . . He was such a mature young man, capable of handling all the honors he received and still keep everything straight—a typical All-American-style kid, but not like the heroes of today, or so many of them, who think about only what's in it for me.

"After his first year at Cal, he came to our awards banquet and didn't talk about what he had done, but what others had done to help him along in his career. That's typical of the attitude he's always had."

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