



Bernie E. LaReau

February 26, 1937 - July 5, 2018

Bernard Ernest LaReau was born on February 26, 1937 in Kankakee, IL. He was the eldest child of three to Marsile and Maybelle (Doris) Lareau. He grew up on a farm in Beaverville, IL and attended Saint Anne High School. He graduated high school in 1955 and enrolled at Saint Joseph's College in Rensselaer, IN the same year. He graduated from St. Joe's with a degree in accounting. Bernie became St. Joe's head trainer, beginning his over fifty-year career as an Athletic Trainer.

While head trainer at St. Joe's, the Chicago Bears held their summer training camps at the school. This led to Bernie's involvement with the Chicago Bears and eventual position as head athletic trainer (1958-1960 and 1970-1973). In 1965, Bernie married his first wife, Bonnie Jacobs (LaReau), and their son Jeffrey Scott LaReau was born in 1966. In 1967, Bernie and Bonnie divorced. That same year, Bernie became the head athletic trainer for the ABA's Indiana Pacers. In 1970, the Pacers won their first championship. Soon after, Bernie returned to the Chicago Bears as head athletic trainer for another three years. In 1973, Bernie took a job with the San Antonio Spurs as the head athletic trainer, traveling secretary, and business manager. In 1975, Bernie and Bonnie remarried, but divorced in 1980. Bernie continued his career with the Spurs until 1981, at which point he began working as trainer at The University of Texas – San Antonio. Bernie married Michelle Lecoche (LaReau) in 1982. Bernie's son, Ryan Francis LaReau, was born 1984, and his daughter, Laura Ashley LaReau (Orton), was born in 1986. In 1987, he and his family left San

Antonio to work as the athletic trainer for the Los Angeles Clippers, from 1987 to 1990. In 1990, Bernie returned to San Antonio and worked at Incarnate Word College. Over the next several years, between 1991-1998, Bernie spent time working with the San Antonio Riders of the World Football League, the San Antonio Texans of the Canadian Football League, HealthSouth, and Trinity University.

In December of 1998, after a divorce from Michelle, Bernie returned to Illinois. In 1999 he began working with Riverside Sports Medicine as an athletic trainer, and in 2004 he worked with Orthopedic Associates of Kankakee. Bernie “retired” in 2004, but he couldn’t help his love of his work, so he began substitute teaching and athletic training for the local schools.

In 2008, Bernie suffered a major heart attack which required a quadruple bypass. He was slow to recover, with the discovery of untreated illnesses. After two weeks in ICU, Bernie was released and began rehab. Bernie moved back to San Antonio in 2012 to be closer to family. Between 2012 and 2018, Bernie’s health gradually declined. On Thursday, July 5, 2018, Bernie passed away at 11:15 a.m.

Bernie led an incredible life. He was the first president of the Alamo Area Athletic Trainers Association (AAATA) and was inducted into their Hall of Fame in 2011. Bernie was one of the first trainers for the very first ABA All-Star game (trainer for the East). He served as the first trainer for many sports teams and helped pave the way for future athletic trainers. He even taught athletic training in Spain. He absolutely loved being an athletic trainer. He was very well-respected, very well liked and described as a true professional. Bernie loved his family very much. His children enjoyed tagging along to many sporting events, sports clinics, or just days at the ‘office’. He is survived by his sons, Jeff and Ryan; his daughter, Laura (Andrew); his grandchildren Alli LaReau, Ashley LaReau, and Isaac Orton; his brother Joseph Lareau, sister Barbara Boudreau, and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Bernie was a beloved father, mentor, and friend. He has left a mark on this world and his legacy and memory will continue on by his children,

grandchildren, and all those friends, colleagues, and athletes whose lives he's touched. He will be greatly missed.

In lieu of flowers, please make a donation in honor of Bernie to Silver and Black Give Back: <https://sbgb.sportngin.com/register/form/762597116> <https://www.sbgb.org/>

A Funeral Service in memory of Bernie will be held on Monday, July 23, 2018 at 10:00 a.m., at Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church, 600 Oblate Dr., San Antonio, with Fr. Chris Munoz presiding.

Previous Events

Mass

JUL **23**. 10:00 AM (CT)

Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church
600 Oblate
San Antonio, TX 78216

Tribute Wall

DW

“ On behalf of the Southwest Athletic Trainers' Association (SWATA), please accept the thoughts and prayers of all who knew and admired Bernie both for his contributions to the profession and to the many young athletic trainers he tutored. He will be missed by all of us.

A donation has been made by SWATA in Bernie's honor to the Silver & Black Give Back.

Dean Weber - July 24, 2018 at 07:44 AM

KP

“ RIP, Bernie. MUCH more than a professional athletic trainer at St. Joseph's College.

A mentor and a FRIEND who went well beyond to help me become a better man.

Thanks, Bernie.

Kevin Porath 'Class of 1967

Kevin Porath - July 23, 2018 at 06:35 AM

KP

“ As an Athletic Trainer new to San Antonio in 1979 he reached out to me and gave me advice in adjusting to San Antonio and the athletic training community , I will always be grateful for his kindness and dedication to his profession. At this time he was the Head Athletic Trainer of the San Antonio Spurs with many duties but he still had time to help others. Being from the Philadelphia area the 76'ers were here playing the Spurs. At the end of the game he give me a chance to go into the 76 er's locker room too get a few autographs "Julius Erving" etc in today's NBA that would not happen. Bernie would go out of his way for anyone. A few years later he worked for HealthSouth and he asked me to join him. He had me cover events, practices and games at Trinity University and various high schools, sporting and related events. Over the years Bernie was always there if you needed advice, someone to talk too or to get suggestions from concerning athletic training. Bernie laid the ground work or foundation for the future athletic trainers in San Antonio, Texas and across the USA He was an AMAZING person who will be dearly missed. I send my condolence to the LaReau family.

God Bless

Kevin Palamarchuck LAT

Kevin Palamarchuck - July 22, 2018 at 01:12 PM



“ It was a very pleasure knowing Bernie a fun and respectful person , we love you and I'll miss you .Lora

Marius Ciui - July 21, 2018 at 07:16 PM

SB

“ Sorry to learn of the passing of our High School Classmate.
Condolences to the family.

*Bob & Sandy Bovie
Lancaster, PA*



Sandy & Bob Bovie - July 18, 2018 at 09:10 AM

JB

“ In September, 1966, I experienced a catastrophic knee injury at St. Joe's. Bernie was with me throughout the operation, the hospital stay, and the many hours of rehab in the athletic room. He never told me that I would never play football again, thus making me work harder. If I knew the truth, I must likely would have quit the workouts. The surgeon said that I would have severe arthritis in my knee by age 40. Though the injury ended my football career, I am now 71 and have no problems with my knee. I owe a great debt to Bernie. Rest in peace, my old friend.

James Bender - July 16, 2018 at 07:29 PM

WJ

“ Bernie: Healer, Scholar, Friend to coaches players and any and all who were directed to his care. We have lost an incredible friend, neighbor, ally. See you on the other side...Friend! bj

William g. Jennings - July 16, 2018 at 07:22 PM



“ So sorry t.o hear about the loss of Bernie. He will be missed by many

Anita McCartney - July 16, 2018 at 12:00 PM



“ 1 file added to the tribute wall



LaReau Family - July 13, 2018 at 04:33 PM