



Efrain (Coach) Vela

September 30, 2023

McAllen—Efrain (Coach) Vela passed away peacefully at his home on September 30, 2023. He was 93 years of age. He took his last breath surrounded by people he loved most. Coach Vela was born in McAllen. He attended McAllen schools where he would excel in sports. Vela, a 1949 graduate of McHi, lettered in football, baseball, and track. He was named to the 1948 “Iron Man Team in the State of Texas” as center and linebacker. After his career at McAllen High School, he played football at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas. He came back to the Valley after graduating from Sul Ross and began his coaching career at Rio Grande City High School. He then came to McAllen ISD in 1970 as an Assistant Coach. He coached successful football and track teams at the 9th grade level. In 1982, Coach Vela was named Assistant Athletic Director until his retirement in 1995. Once retired, he and Steffie chose to live in Red River, New Mexico until 2014 when they, again, returned to the Rio Grande Valley, their home. He is preceded in death by his parents Luis H. and Conchita Vela, his daughter, Norma Linda, and Steffie, his wife of almost 70 years. He is survived lovingly by three sons Efrain (Patsy), Bobby (Steffenie) and Richard (Linda), nine grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren. He often reminisced of his most memorable wins and losses. He touched the lives of many athletes throughout the years. Many wonderful stories are told about the tremendous positive influence he had on so many of them. He enjoyed the last years of his life spending time with good friends, his family—especially, his grandchildren.

The family will gather to celebrate his life with a religious service on Saturday, October 14, 2023.

Memorial donations honoring Coach Vela may be made to Our Lady of Sorrows Church Capital Campaign at 1108 Hackberry, McAllen, Texas, The Boys and Girls Club of McAllen, 2620 Galveston Avenue, McAllen, Texas or the charity of your choice.

Tribute Wall

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“ *Coach Vela, such a wonderful Man, that I had the pleasure of knowing when he was Athletic Director at Rio Grande City High School. His smile, was contagious and was always so supportive of all the athletes and students. My sincere condolences to all his family...may he rest in peace...BB Garza*

BB Garza - October 13, 2023 at 06:58 PM

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“ *My deepest condolences to the Vela family. I had the pleasure of meeting him at Memorial High School during his coaching years. Great and friendly person...*

Aurora Monteagudo Cantu



Aurora Cantu - October 12, 2023 at 04:01 PM