

Ric Tombari Passes Away September 14

Monday, 18 September 2006

Henry "Ric" Tombari, professor emeritus of management and finance, died suddenly of an apparent stroke at his home in Hayward on Sept. 14. His wife, Joan Sieber, emerita professor of psychology, was with him at the time of his death.

"He loved teaching and was a cherished teacher," Professor Sieber said.

Professor Tombari taught at the university from 1975 to his retirement in 1992. During his tenure, he taught many courses, including "Business, Government and Society" and "Establishing and Managing a Small Business." Prior to joining CSUEB, he taught at George Washington University.

He grew up in a non-English-speaking family and was the first male in his neighborhood in Cohoes, New York, to graduate from high school. After high school, he joined the U.S. Navy and sent his salary home to his grandparents.

He won a fleet appointment to the Naval Academy and later completed two master's degrees, in civil engineering and operations research. He was chief engineer of a project that built the first nuclear power plant in Antarctica and constructed roads in Vietnam. He was shot down by Viet Cong on take off when flying from one construction site to another. When he ended his naval career, he earned a doctorate at the University of Maryland.

He had just finished the last chapter of his autobiography the evening before his passing, Professor Sieber said. She and at least one grandson will be writing the epilogue to his book. His next book was going to be about the remarkable young immigrant men with whom he grew up who were so intelligent, led such remarkable lives, but did not have the good fortune to make it through early schooling because of language problems.

He was dedicated to education in so many ways, Professor Sieber said. The couple has supported scholarships, the Wayne and Gladys Valley Business and Technology Center fund, and have set up endowments.

"Ric was a thrifty person who believed what he had earned should be given back to higher education at CSUEB," said Professor Sieber. "He was loved by many and will be missed greatly."

He is survived by his wife; three sons, Ric, Jr., Joseph, and John; and four grandchildren, Jesse, Jacqueline, Lauren, and Enrico.

In lieu of flowers, please make contributions to the Joan Sieber-Tombari and Ric Tombari Scholarship Fund at California State University, East Bay. Checks can be sent to Cal State East Bay, University Advancement, 25800 Carlos Bee Blvd., Hayward, CA 94542. For more information, please call Maryann Annunziata at 510 885.2674.

A "Celebration of Ric's Life" will be held at Cal State East Bay at a later date.

Former colleagues, students and friends are invited to share their memories and tributes .

Comments

Professor Emerita : Jodi Servatius

Ric had a special sparkle. I loved the way he took such pleasure in sharing his enthusiasm with others—a tour of his hillside garden, a recommendation for a great place to shop for office supplies, a tip on making homemade bread. His New York accent, his razor-sharp wit, his funny stories, all stand out in my memory. His love for all things Italian was unbounded. So was his generosity; he was especially very proud of the scholarship program he and Joan had established at CSUEB. Most of all, I think I will remember Ric for the way he talked about Joan when she wasn't around, of how he loved and admired her, how proud he was of her accomplishments and how much he treasured their partnership.

September 27, 2006

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