

George L. Young

July 24, 1937 – November 8, 2022



George L. Young, 85, a longtime Casa Grande resident, passed away peacefully November 8, 2022. George suffered a massive stroke September 8, 2022 and never fully recovered.

George was born July 24, 1937 to Glen and Esther Young in Roswell, New Mexico. His family moved to Silver City, New Mexico when George was in second grade. George often recalled his education and how good all of his teachers were. They expected the best and George gave it. George competed in all sports; basketball was his favorite. His father put up a hoop outside and George often had to be made to come in at dinner time. Besides basketball, George participated in football and track at Silver High. It is said that during the state basketball championship George missed the winning shot. Maybe this contributed to his drive for excellence. After high school George received many in-state scholarships to play basketball. He turned all of these down to attend the University of Arizona. He worked several jobs to help pay for this. When the time came to pledge to a fraternity, George picked Theta Chi. As part of pledge week, all new pledges were required to run in an intramural cross-country meet. In his cut-offs and Keds, George won, beating out all student athletes. This caught the attention of the Athletic Director and Track and Field coach. This was the beginning of his running career. He graduated from the U of A with several school records and was named Outstanding Male Athlete.

After college George enlisted and started his journey in the Army. Along with officer training, George was assigned to Special Services, where his assignment was to train. He competed for the Army during his enlisted years against other branches and in worldwide meets. His son, Joel, was born during this time. After the Army, George and his family looked for a place to settle down and returned to his hometown of Silver City. He earned spots in the 1960, 1964, 1968 and 1972 Olympics. In 1963 George and family settled down in Casa Grande. George's college buddy, Jim Henness, convinced him this was the place to be. George started teaching and coaching at Casa Grande Union High School. His daughter, Pamela, was born in 1966.

During his career he traveled to Rome, Tokyo, Mexico City, and Munich to represent the USA. The town of Casa Grande rallied each time he qualified, helping with the expenses of getting him to each meet. He was always humbled at how the town came together to help. He competed in the Steeplechase, 5000 meter and in one Marathon. He earned the bronze medal in the 1968 Olympics. Throughout his career he held many records including the "First track and field athlete to compete in 4 Olympics" and at age 34, he became the "oldest person in the world (at that time) to run a sub-four-minute mile", with a time of 3:59.6 in Los Angeles, CA. In 1972 George became the Athletic Director and Head Track and Field Coach and later Cross-Country at Central Arizona College. He coached many athletes, mentored many students, and touched many lives.

George married his wife, Nancy, in 1983. They were together for over 40 years. They loved going to their cabin in Rocky Point. This is where he would catch those "Whoppers". They also enjoyed their summers at their cabin in Lakeside, Arizona. They were best friends and cherished their family. Together they have four children: Joel Young, wife Pat of Lampasas, Texas; Pamela Kimberlin, husband William of Casa Grande; Kenny Bates of Surprise, Arizona; and Kelly Kinch, husband Roy of Northglenn, Colorado. He is also survived by seven grandchildren who affectionately call him "Poppy": Justin Kimberlin; Austin Kimberlin, wife Jocelynn; Daniel, David, Kristie and Katie Kinch; and Becky Passmore; and great-grandchild, Ryder, who was George's new "Best Buddy". George is also survived by brother, Terry Young, wife Donna of Conroe, Texas; and his first wife, Shirley Franks of Silver City, New Mexico. He was preceded in death by his parents; sister, Jonell Darling; and brother, Ted Young.

Celebration of Life will be held at the Pence Center at Central Arizona College on December 11, 2022 at 2 p.m.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Central Arizona College-George Young Scholarship, 8470 N. Overfield Road, Coolidge, Arizona 85128 or by calling Craig Kurtz at 520-494-5215. This scholarship will be awarded each year to a deserving student athlete.

