

Eugene Feerick (1934 – 2002)

Born April 29, 1934, died June 6, 2002. Eugene Michael Feerick, 68, a loving husband, father, and grandfather, died in his home on Thursday in San Diego. He was born in New York City, N.Y. to Irish Catholic immigrant parents. He was raised in the Sunnyside section of Queens, N.Y. along with his three brothers and sister. He honed his basketball skills on the playgrounds of New York City and became an All-American basketball player at Phoenix Junior College and later at Arizona State University. Strong religious conviction, dedication to his family, and unbridled desire to "shoot for the golden ring" were the bookmarks of his life. He obtained a bachelor's degree in education in 1956 and began his teaching career in the small town of Seligman, Ariz. From 1957 to 1959 he served in the United States Army, Armor Division. He returned to Arizona in 1959 and obtained a master's degree in education in 1961 from Arizona State College. He met the love of his life while living in Arizona, Betty Jean Birchfield. They married in 1961 and had five children, Eugene Jr., Theresa, Thomas, Coreen and Maureen. In that same year he took a teaching position in the desert town of Barstow. He was elevated to assistant principal of Barstow High School in 1966 but was told he would not be promoted further without a doctorate degree. Adhering to his "golden ring" philosophy, he took his children, two of them in diapers, quit his job at Barstow High School and returned to Arizona to pursue a doctorate degree. In 1970 he received a Ed.S in administration from Northern Arizona University and returned to Barstow to continue his career

in education. In 1980 he was appointed the superintendent of Barstow Unified School District. He served the Barstow community as a superintendent for 12 years and retired to San Diego. He was very grateful to the Barstow community and all its wonderful people. He spent his retirement traveling, body surfing, golfing, substitute teaching and imparting his philosophy of life to his family. He enjoyed the yearly visits with his beloved family from New York. He has gone to a better place but his family will miss him so. He is survived by his wife of 40 years, Betty Birchfield; five children, Eugene Jr. Theresa, Thomas, Coreen and Maureen; 10 grandchildren; sister, Maureen Shannon and her five children; brother Thomas Feerick; 14 nieces and nephews and 12 grand nephews and grand-nieces. Viewing is at Clairemont Mortuary Chapel, 4266 Mt. Abernathy Ave., San Diego, Saturday from 3 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. with a rosary at 5 p.m. at Clairemont Mortuary Chapel. Funeral Mass is Monday, June 10, 2002 at 10 a.m. at St. Mary Magdalene Catholic Church. Interment is at Holy Cross Cemetery.

Published in the Daily Press on June 8, 2002