

# Patrick J. Smith

Share

[E-mail](#) [Visit](#) [Guest Book](#)

Patrick J. Smith

1923 \* 2009

Patrick J. Smith passed away peacefully at his home Monday, Dec. 7, 2009, at age 86.

He was born Nov. 10, 1923, to Martin and Elizabeth Emily Smith in Birmingham, England.

Pat joined the British Marines in 1941 and proudly served for 12 years. He served on the HMS Sirius, a British cruiser that traveled to various parts of the world, including North Africa, Sicily, Italy, Normandy and Malta. He also was stationed in Berlin during the blockade of 1948.

Pat and his wife, Maureen, immigrated in 1953 to the United States, where together they raised three daughters in Dayton, Ohio. He often told the story that he didn't bring his soccer shoes with him to America as he had heard there was no soccer. He was thrilled to find there actually was a soccer team in Dayton and thus began his participation in American soccer at his club called Edelweiss. This was a multicultural and diverse team with German-Hungarians, Austrians, an American, a Swiss, an Italian and Pat, who was the lone Englishman, bringing up the rear. He played until age 35, when he said "his heart was still willing but his legs were not." Pat moved to coaching, taking the helm of the first university team at the University of Dayton in 1958.

The need for referees was acute, however, and it was not long before the coach became an official, contributing four decades of refereeing service in several organizations.

At the college level, he worked for 15 years, which included six NAIA semifinals, two NCAA finals and numerous semifinals. His success on the field earned him election as the first president of his state's college referee chapter. In 1972, he was elected the first president of the newly formed NISOA. Pat continued to serve NISOA over the years, acting as an instructor in its regional and national camps for several decades and as an assessor for numerous college tournaments, including the NCAA finals.

With the arrival of the top-class professional game in 1967, Pat moved into the North American Soccer League. He refereed the first NASL match at Fenway Park, plus two "Bronze Boot" games at Busch Stadium in St. Louis. Professional teams that heard his whistle include Santos of Brazil, Verder Bremen and Borussia Dortmund of Germany, Independiente of Argentina, Bristol City, Manchester City of England and the Israel National Team.

One of Pat's mentors was Eddie Pearson. When Eddie started building a national training program for referees, Pat was included among the first senior instructors, for already he was the director of officials for the American Soccer League, the feeder league of the NASL. In 1977, Pat became the director of assessment for the NASL, a position he held until the league folded, where he played a major role in the process of selecting the referees to represent the USA on the FIFA list.

When the national instructor and assessment positions were created in late 1980, Pat was one of the first in the U.S. to be named a USSF national instructor and assessor. Soon thereafter, he was appointed national director of assessment and a member of the National Referee Committee of the United States Soccer Federation, positions he held for seven years.

Pat was a very active and well-known national referee instructor and assessor in the history of the United States Soccer Federation, teaching numerous state referee certifications, including but not limited to the first of such clinics to be held in Georgia and Florida. He assessed and managed officials at 10 USYSA regional tournaments, six Olympic Festival Tournaments, the Armed Forces Tournament, the national amateur finals and the finals of the U.S. Open Cup. He was a video inspector in 1994 for the World Cup and MLS stadium assessor and video assessor until 2006.

Many of the officials whose referee careers have taken them to the FIFA list have attributed their success to the sage advice and wise guidance of Pat. One of his students who went on to referee a World Cup

describes him as being "The Patron Saint of the Referee Community."

He has been honored by his colleagues, his students and his friends for his years of service on and off the field. He is a member of the National Soccer Hall of Fame, the College Soccer Hall of Fame, The Adult League Hall of Fame, The Southern Ohio Hall of Fame and the High School Coaches of Ohio Hall of Fame. He also is a recipient of the S.A.Y soccer gold boot award, College Coaches Appreciation Award, the NISOA honoree award and was most proud and honored to be the first recipient of the Eddie Pearson Award. He was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Earlham College for his contribution to the sport of soccer.

Pat's "regular" job was as an industrial plumber for General Motors in Dayton, where he retired after 33 years of service. When Pat retired from General Motors and moved to Panama City to be close to his grandchildren, he continued working at the local level where soccer was not very well known and even until last year he was a volunteer coach at Rutherford High School in Panama City. Besides his soccer accomplishments, he was an avid reader and believed in the importance of reading. He volunteered at the federal prison at Tyndall Air Force Base, teaching prisoners to read. He later volunteered every day at Parker Elementary School for more than 10 years. He cherished the friendships with teachers and students alike and Gov. Jeb Bush honored him with the Point of Light Award in 2001 for his unselfish dedication.

The other love of his life was his family. He made spending time with them a priority and he enjoyed his grandchildren immensely. He took them to the library, went to their games and other things they were involved with. His sense of humor and his joyous spirit always will be with them. He was greatly admired and respected by his family and enjoyed their deep love for him in his final weeks. They will miss the unconditional love he afforded them and cherish the memories they created together.

Pat is survived by three daughters, Helen Mitchell (Chuck), Julie Ahmed (Alla) and Jennifer Bell (Bob); and five grandchildren, Emily Bell Davila, Helen Mitchell Adami, Ronald Bell, Sarah Ahmed and Chris Mitchell. He also is survived by three great-grandchildren, Peyton, Parker and Noel Davila. He also is survived by a sister, Julie Warom of Birmingham, England; sister-in-law, Joan Clarey (Don) of Dalton, Ga.; brother-in-law, Robert Kingdom (Pat) of Norfolk, Eng-land; special niece, Debby Algren of Dayton, Ohio; and numerous other nieces and nephews. Pat was predeceased by his wife, Maureen Louise; and great-granddaughter, Bayleigh Brooke Adami.

A Pat Smith Soccer Scholarship Award has been started in his honor. In lieu of flowers, for those desiring, donations can be made to the Pat Smith Soccer Scholarship, 6226 Seminole Drive, Panama City, FL 32404.

A memorial service will begin at 6 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 12, 2009, in the Wilson Funeral Home chapel. Before the service, the family will receive friends from 4:30 to 6 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home.

**Wilson Funeral Home**  
**Family Owned Since 1911**  
**214 Airport Road**  
**Panama City, Fla.**