

Heart attack fatal to 'Paly' coach

Howard Clifton (Hod) Ray, whose firm hand guided the community's youth for more than 30 years while he taught and coached at Palo Alto High School, died of a heart attack this morning.

The dean of the Peninsula Athletic League coaches—known and beloved by thousands of Palo Altans simply as Hod—was also supervisor of physical education for the city school system.

Death came to Hod shortly before dawn at his home at 259 Santa Rita Ave. He had risen once after feeling pains, but returned to his bed and refused to let his wife, Frances, call his doctor.

Less than three weeks ago his Viking football team had com-

pleted the second of two consecutive undefeated seasons. His teams' all-time record, averaging about .715 in football and nearly as high in other sports, was a tribute to his coaching skill.

But as tributes and messages of sympathy from the countless persons he taught, coached, worked with, and befriended began to pour into his home and the Times today, it was evident that Hod will be remembered for his great spirit and character and his selfless devotion to the welfare of Palo Alto young people.

Only a few close friends of the Ray family knew that Hod had suffered a severe heart attack six years ago. At that time his

physician advised him to give up coaching entirely.

But coaching was Hod's life. He compromised by giving up guidance of the Paly basketball team, but continued to tutor the football and track squads in addition to his other activities.

"Only Dr. Granville Wood's care made it possible for him to live a normal life for the past six years," Mrs. Ray said today, "but I'm thankful that he was able to continue for that long."

Friends pointed out that Hod was a tireless worker, and that he put in far more effort to achieve the results he did than most people realized.

Hod was born in Roslyn, Wash., where his father, a coal miner

had settled after coming to the United States from England. His mother died when he was 10, and from the time he was 11 he earned his own way in the world.

At Roslyn High School, the seven-man squad he played on won the state basketball championship. After earning enough money to go to college, Hod chose Oregon State, where he became one of the school's all-time athletic stars. He majored in animal husbandry, as no coaching course was then offered.

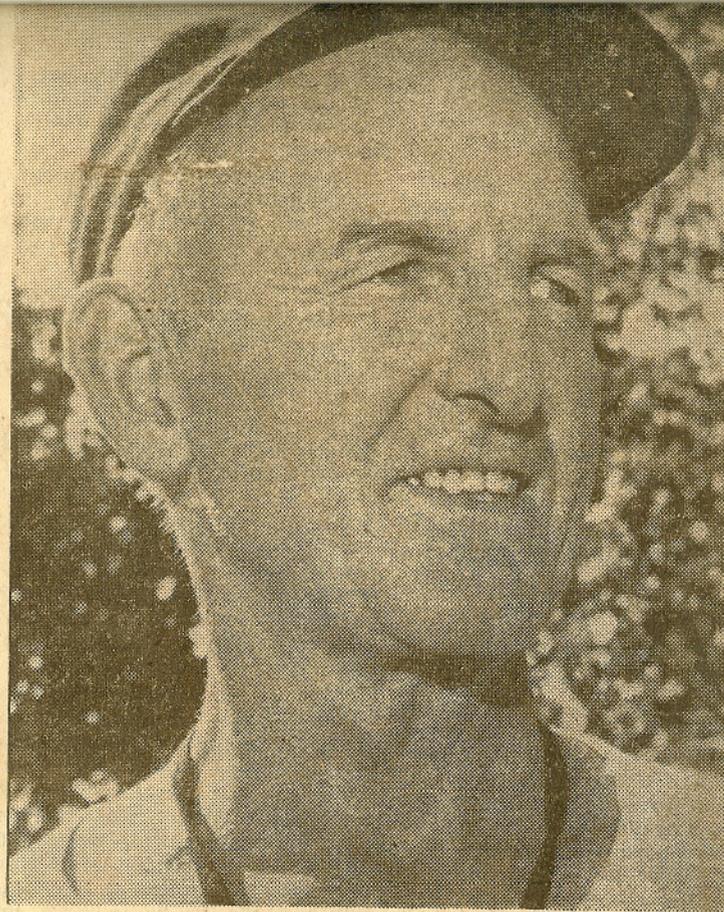
He made the varsity basketball team as a freshman, and for four years played running guard for the Beavers. During his junior and senior years he captained the team and won all-conference honors, and as a senior he coached both the varsity and freshman teams.

Hod also played halfback on the OSC football team for one year and took part in other sports when his part-time work permitted. Last year he was honored by the college when the new Beaver pavilion was opened.

Frances Bowie, his Roslyn sweetheart, became Mrs. Ray early in 1918, not long before Hod went overseas to serve in France with a machine gun battalion during World War I. After returning he managed a sheep ranch in eastern Washington for a short time.

In 1921 he came here to attend a coaching school at Stanford, and before long joined the Palo Alto High School staff.

During the 31 seasons that followed, his grid teams ran up a record of 221 wins, 24 ties, and 63 losses, taking eight PAL championships. Up to 1946 his basketball squads won 12 titles, and 108 games against 45 losses. His baseball and track squads fared almost equally well.



HOWARD C. (HOD) RAY

... whose death this morning stunned his thousands of friends here.

... youth. We always had at least one youngster living at our home, and often two or more," Mrs. Ray said. "Hod started that even before we came here. He usually found a kid who was not getting enough to eat and brought him home for a few days. Sometimes it turned out to be six weeks, sometimes three years.

"I called a halt to that six years ago because it meant he was on the job 24 hours a day. He loved it and I think he missed it.

"He had two ambitions that were not fulfilled," Mrs. Ray said. "One was to have a PE teacher in every elementary school. The other was to have athletics considered part of the educational program, so that coaches would not only be paid but would be responsible for educational standards. He wanted them to be paid so that he could expect that the educational standards would be fulfilled.

"In 30 years he's done 50 years' work. I don't think the public realizes how much teaching energy goes into it. It was through sports that he

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Howard (Bud) Ray Jr. was a top-flight halfback at Paly in 1948, and Hod could justifiably have pushed his son into the starring role, but he didn't. Bud instinctively called someone else's signal when the glory was to be had, too. He was probably the most underrated player in the league that year, though he made second-string all-PAL.



HOD RAY ATHLETIC FIELD at Palo Alto High School will have its Churchill Ave. entrance marked by this sign. Members of the current graduating class, Miles Johnson (left) and Bill

monies in the school auditorium. Ray died of a heart attack Dec. 17, after more than 30 years as coach at Paly High. The field marker is a gift of the graduating class of '52.