

Profile Tony Portincaso

Tuesday, May 19, 2009

1:50 PM

Tony Portincaso's profile was put together by his Leyden Class of 1959 Friends. Our 50th reunion is not the same without our friend Tony. To have a classmate profile page on our leyden59 web site without Tony Portincaso would be an injustice. Tony will be our 1st classmate profile on our web page. As you read on you will see that Port in his short life has had a positive impact on many, many people. He was a family man and Port and his wife Sandy raised a wonderful loving family. Port lived his life to the fullest doing what he loved to do.

First and foremost he was teacher and a coach. He made learning fun for his students and once in any class taught by Tony they never forgot him. For many of his students he made such an impact that he was their role model. Whether it was a math problem, techniques in wrestling or Football he taught and coached his students with a passion, a twinkle in his eye and that forever smile. Tony was a Math teacher, wrestling coach, football coach at York HS for over 30 years before he retired.

Port was also an avid fishermen and hunter. He was far from average he was one of the best ever.. Some of us remember fishing and hunting with him when we were kids. He was relentless. He would not quit and somehow would always figure out what methods and or lures would work. He was even instrumental in the creation of many fishing lures we use today and also fishing methods. He also built fishing boats. He was a writer and did seminars on fishing methods and techniques. He fished with the elite fishing experts of our time. He had his own fishing radio show on WGN.

Mike Femali (also class of 59) and Port were friends since they were 5 years old. I know Mike and John Erickson (also Leyden class of 57) were Tony's lifelong friends. Some of you went to

grade school and HS with Tony. Once you were Tony's friend you were his friend for life. Port was a man's man. Some of you may remember playing sports with Port and you may remember his smile and that twinkle in his eye. Tony was one of the fiercest, toughest competitors most of us ever played with. We were glad he was on our side. I know that if you ever played with or against Tony in Wrestling, Football you know what I mean. He also played on our softball teams & Football teams after high school.

Port was a catcher and he protected the plate like no one we ever seen before. After teams started to know us they did not ever want to run into Port at home base. Holding up at 3rd base became common. Port was a blocking back on our flag football teams and once blocked by Port you knew you were hit. Tony earned the respect of all us sports guys because of his work ethic, his passion and toughness. I know I am not the only one that thought Port was the best team mate we ever had. I know Chico Cain, Rich Costantino and George Lazzaratto remember Port and our many softball and football teams after HS.

There was one sport Port (to my knowledge) never was never any good at. Swimming! Right Mike (Femali). Tony and John (Kotobra) was down to visit me when I lived in Florida and we went out in the ocean on my boat fishing. The seas were 5 ft and getting out the inlet was quite rough and we almost lost John overboard. Once out of the inlet we hooked up and started fishing. Tony's smile was gone. After a few minutes he came over and whispered in my ear "You going to get me back to shore or do I have to take over da boat?" Well, needless to say we stopped fishing and went in to the intercostal waters where it was calmer. I forgot Tony could not swim.... I am sure John remembers. Port ended up catching a 30lb Jack on his bass rod with a jig and thought he hooked the bumper of a car. We laughed and laughed.....

It's all about memories.....

There as so many Port stories we all remember and I hope this short profile does Port justice. Tony Portincaso was someone we can all be proud of. A friend we were lucky enough to know. A man who did what he did with passion, a smile and a twinkle in his eye.

I hope you will all join us Friday Nite Aug 14th at the Meet & Greet when we drink a toast to our friend Port and tell our stories about our famous friend Tony Portincaso

Salute old friend and hope we meet again.....

Attached below is just a small sample of what you find on internet when you Google Tony Portincaso. Also a few email I saved when we heard about Tony's passing. Port was known and loved by many.

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Anthony F. Portincaso

Anthony F. Portincaso, 67, of Oregon and formerly of Elmhurst, was born Oct. 13, 1941 in Chicago the son of Michael and Rosa, nee Mastroleonardo, Portincaso. Tone departed our lives Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2008 in his home in Oregon, IL.

Married to Sandra Heaslett May 29, 1964 in Franklin Park.

He completed his undergraduate and graduate work at Northern Illinois University and taught mathematics at York High School in Elmhurst 31 years, retiring in 1996, where he also taught Driver's Ed and coached football and wrestling.

Tony was a "fishing celebrity" with a weekly fishing talk show on WGN radio, articles in Fishing Facts magazine, and at one time the "Great Outdoors" fishing show on ESPN television.

He lived along the river in Oregon for the past 11 years, moving from Elmhurst.

Survived by his wife, Sandy of Oregon; son, Michael (Marisol Legis-Portincaso) Portincaso of Crystal Lake; daughter, Nancy (Joe) Campana of Huntley; grandchildren, Isabella and Iliana Portincaso and Kelly and Tony Campana; brothers, Victor (Joyce) Portincaso of West Plains, MO and Michael J. Portincaso of Glendale Heights; sisters, Marie Mougette of West Chicago, Rosalie Kotrba of Batavia and Constance Sheppard of Collegeville, PA; and numerous nieces and nephews.

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By Dale Bowman on October 29, 2008 2:30 PM

Along with such fishing innovators as the Lindner brothers, Al and Ron, and Spence Petros, Mr. Portincaso honed and taught modern fishing methods.

“He was one of the early pioneers for structure fishing for bass and Muskie,” said Petros, the Hall of Famer. “He was a good all-around fisherman.

“He was the first good structure fishermen, jig fishing weedlines. When I went fishing at the [early] BASS Master Classics, I thought I had fished with people like Tony who were better than some of the guys fishing the Classic, who only threw spinner baits on the shore.”

In the early 1970s, Mr. Portincaso and Petros teamed on fishing classes. The first ones were held at York Community High School in Elmhurst, where Portincaso taught math. They taught fishing classes for 10 years, before splitting. Petros continues his fishing classes to this day.

“ [They] taught me and countless others how to read water, weedlines and structure,” fisherman Joseph McElligott e-mailed. “I and fishermen all over have lost a great friend too soon.”

“He got me started in Muskie fishing--Sept. 19, 1973 on Bone Lake in Polk County, Wisconsin,” Petros said.

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Teacher, fishing expert

By Joan Giangrass Kates | Special to the Tribune October 31, 2008

Whether instructing how to solve a quadratic equation or demonstrating which lure might best land that elusive northern pike, Anthony F. "Tony" Portincaso made it look easy and fun.

"His goal in life was always to teach," said Sandy, his wife of 44 years. "He loved teaching people how to do something and then watching them learn how to love it."

A math teacher at York Community High School in Elmhurst for 31 years, Mr. Portincaso parlayed his other passion—fishing—into regular guest spots on WGN radio and TV appearances on [ESPN](#), as well as numerous articles he wrote for Fishing Facts magazine.

"Tony was a wonderful fisherman and cherished friend," said retired Chicago radio personality William Cullerton, a longtime host of WGN radio's "Great Outdoors" show. "He had a great voice for radio and a sense of humor that carried him well on the airwaves."

The son of Italian immigrants, Mr. Portincaso was born in Chicago and grew up in [Franklin Park](#). As a boy, relatives said he learned to fish from a family friend whose love and knowledge of the sport ran deep.

"This man was his fishing mentor, the one who gave him his first fishing pole," his wife said.

After graduating from East Leyden High School, Mr. Portincaso got a bachelor's degree in education from [Northern Illinois University](#), where he also got a master's degree in math.

In 1965, Mr. Portincaso got a teaching job at York High School, where he also taught driver's education and coached football and wrestling. He retired in 1996.

"He was a heck of a mathematician," said former York colleague Dave Aggen.

"He was the first teacher I ever observed and was absolutely brilliant in the classroom."

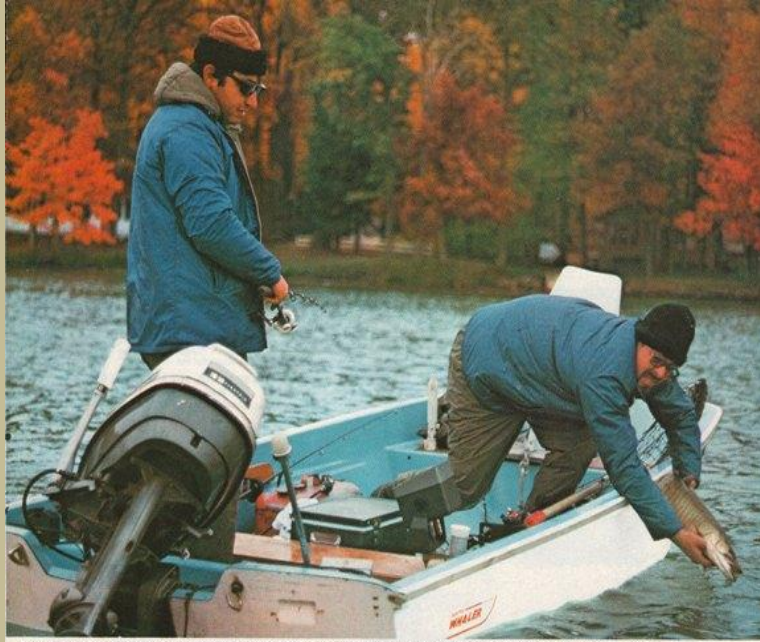
Mr. Portincaso began his weekly Saturday morning radio spots on WGN in the early 1990s and helped boost the show to No. 1 in its time slot.

"He was a font of knowledge of anything to do with fishing," Cullerton said. "And aside from that he was an awful lot of fun to work with."



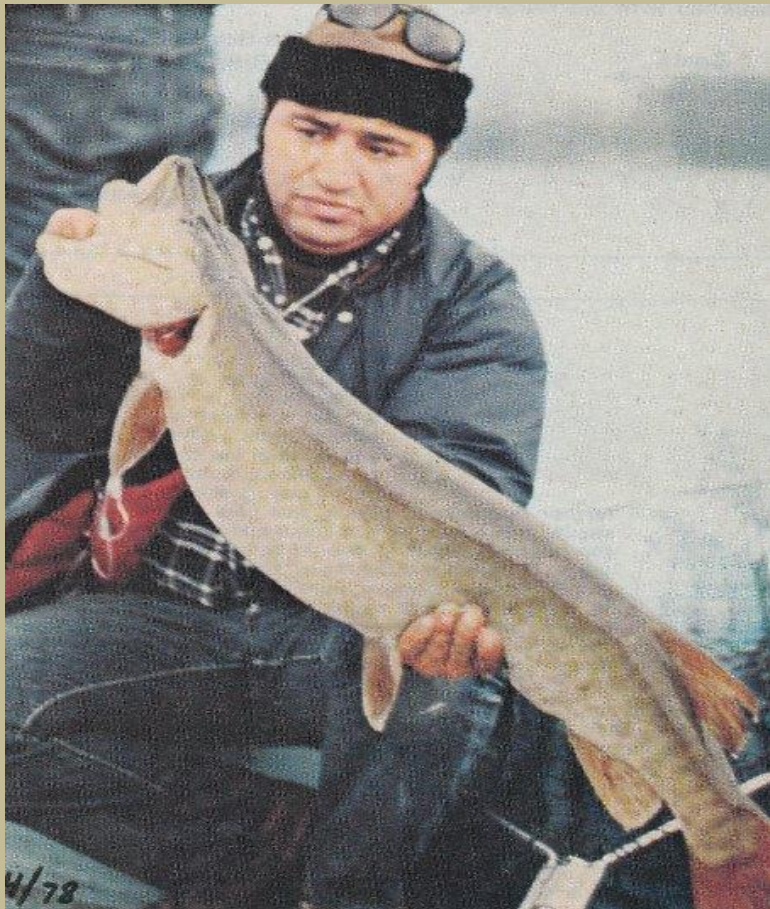
Here's the author holding two trophies caught on silver jigs during a late fall peak. The muskies were found feeding on cisco along a rock-gravel shoreline in late October. Both were landed on spinning equipment using 14 lb. test line.

10/77



By combining a controlled drift (with an electric motor) and the proper retrieve, Tony Portincaso and John Kotrba were able to catch fish throughout the day. Here they return a green "tiger" (musky) to its home.

2/75



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Guest Book

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Chicago Tribune

November 18, 2008

Tony was one of my favorite wrestling coach colleagues and friends. I am truly saddened by his passing.

Tony parks,

Addison, Illinois

November 10, 2008

To Sandy: My wife Pat and I attended several of Tony's classes at York back in the 80s. We also bought some tackle at your home, where we met you. Our prayers and condolences go out to you and your family. Tony was a great guy and will be missed by everyone whose lives he touched.

Matt marciniec,
Plainfield

November 05, 2008

Sandy, Mike and Nancy, I was saddened to hear of Tony's passing. My thoughts and prayers are with you and the rest of your family.
Sue Rezny-Cousart,
Glen Ellyn, Illinois

November 03, 2008

A GREAT man, mentor, teacher, coach and friend. Tony was my math teacher, wrestling coach and "Probation officer" @ York and I am a better man for having known him. I recognize many names in this guest book, classmates and teachers with similar feelings, He was a good man who will be missed by everyone who knew him.
Roger Rowe,
Wheaton, Illinois

November 03, 2008

I was very surprised to hear of Tony's passing. I will remember him as a great fishing colleague. He always had a smile and a good fish story!
Adrienne Horvat Bolbot,
Hoffman Estates

November 02, 2008

Sandy & Family
I was shocked when I received the news about Tony. I was so looking forward to seeing him and all of my Mannheim friends at the 50th reunion. I'm so glad I had the chance to see and talk with him at one of our Mannheim Reunions and we have pictures. He will be missed. My deepest sympathy and prayers to you and the family.
Karen (Lederer) Smith,
Springfield, Missouri

November 02, 2008

Mr. P was one of the greatest math teachers. He made the class so fun. I am going to my 30th reunion this weekend and his passing is sorrowful. I wish his family and friends much compassion on this day. Please know in his student's hearts that he was well-loved and will be remembered always. Sue Suarez (Snodgrass) class of 1978
sue suarez,
Lake Barrington, Illinois

November 02, 2008

Dear Sandy and Family,

I am sorry for your loss, Mr. Port (our nickname for him) was one of the most memorable teachers that I had ever had. I likened him to a second father, and a much needed older brother. His classroom was alive with learning, wrought with laughter, and kids striving to do their best for Mr. Port. He motivated even the most stubborn of kids. I remember daily headlocks, practicing of wrestling moves right there next to the chalkboard, and his aggressive teaching method. I even remember getting up early to watch his fishing show. It was always a good sign to see his boat parked in the school lot because we knew it was Friday, Mr. Port was getting ready to go fishing that weekend, and we wouldn't have any home work. I will miss his inspiration, knowledge, and his gentle caring soul.

George C. Haenisch Jr. (York Class 1993)

Palatine, Illinois

November 02, 2008

Sandy and Kids

Great Human Being

Great Teacher

Great Coach

Great Dad

Great Sportsman

Great Memories

& Especially

Great Friend!!!

Will be sorely missed!

Paul & Mary Ciesla,

Wood Dale, Illinois

November 02, 2008

Sandy,

I was saddened by the news of Tony's passing. His charm and humor will be missed by everyone who was fortunate enough to have met him.

Michael Alberts,

Tierra Verde, Florida

November 01, 2008

Dear Sandy and family,

I was so sorry to hear of Tony's passing, and wanted to offer my sympathies to you all. I'm sure you know Sandy that everyone lucky enough to have Tony as a friend will cherish the memory. He was truly a great guy, and he will be missed. We were looking forward to seeing you both at Leyden's Class of 1959- 50 year reunion.

Please take good care of yourself, and contact me if I can be of any help.

Sincerely

Joyce Staerkel,

Northlake, Illinois

November 01, 2008

I am so very sorry to hear about Mr. Portincaso's passing. In fact I was just thinking about him last week and remembering my time in his class. He was my math teacher in 1973 and even though I was terrible in math, he made it so much fun and I loved going to class. He will really be missed.

Lisa Danfelter-Bunge,
Michigan City, Indiana

November 01, 2008

My sincere sympathy to the Portincaso family. I work at Berwyn Marine and knew Tony when we worked with him selling some of his TP boats. I remember him as such a friendly, kind and happy person. He contributed so much to so many people's lives!

Ellyn Nicodem,
Cicero, Illinois

November 01, 2008

We will all miss Tony; a true gentleman, an outstanding sportsman, and a dedicated family man. He was an inspiration to many.

Jerry Pabst,
Amboy, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Unlike many of the posts in this guest book, I was not a student of Tony's at York. I was a student in his fishing classes many years ago. I re-met him last year at O'Hare airport. He and your son were on their way to the Northwest Territories fishing. My son and I were on our way fishing in Saskatchewan. As always, he was a gentleman and he expressed how happy he was to see a dad and his son fishing together. May God hold him in the palm of His hand and may perpetual light shine upon him. Tight lines, Tony. Rest in peace.

Dan Jaconetti,
Park Ridge, Illinois

October 31, 2008

My deepest sympathy to the family of Mr. Portincaso. As we get ready to gather for our 30th class reunion next week the class of 1978 will share many memories of being in his class and what a great teacher he was for us during our years at York. Of course I will always remember those days when I did not feel like learning and would ask Mr. Portincaso a fishing question and for the next 40 minutes or so he would entertain us with his fishing stories. He was a wonderful man and will truly be missed by all who knew him. God Bless Tony Portincaso and his family and friends

Randy Lubbering,
Elmhurst, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Mr. . . . Portincaso was my freshman algebra teacher at York in 1970-71. He was one of the most entertaining and talented teachers I've ever had, and one of my fondest memories of high school. My condolences to his family and friends. May he sleep peacefully in the Lord's safe landing net, and be judged as big enough to keep.

Caryn Cochran Zull,
Deerfield, Illinois

October 31, 2008

I'm so sorry; Tony was a good friend of mine for many, many years.

Herman Kunz
salmonark@msn.com
Herman Kunz,
Fairfield, Illinois

October 31, 2008

My prayers go out to you and your family. I was shocked to hear about Coach Portincaso passing. He was my wrestling coach at York from 1968 to 1970. Some of my best memories from York were wrestling for coach Portincaso. He was always so positive about the way he taught us wrestling and LIFE lessons.

Thanks
Ron Lichty,
ELMHURST, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Sandy-

I am sorry to hear about Tony. Our deepest sympathy and prayers go out to you and your family.

Love,
Diana Pulido and boys
(Jim Barry's Assistant)
Bensenville, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Sandy and family, my deepest sympathy goes out to you. I will always remember Tony as a man with a true zest for life. He was a Good Man in a world with too few good men. His passing has created a void in every heart he ever touched.

John Marino,
Sherrills Ford, North Carolina

October 31, 2008

Sandy,

I was saddened to hear from Lenny H. that Tony had passed....way to young. We went to Leyden together, hung out, were on the football squad, and use to kid Port that he spent more time fishing than going to school.....there was a quarry on Grand and County Line that held his

interest more than typing class. I used to call him when I heard his voice on the WGN fishing program early Sat. mornings and asked to speak to him off the air.....he was one of a kind! He will be missed by all of his friends, students, and his old classmates.

"podge"

Russ Pagen,
Cable, Wisconsin

October 31, 2008

My sincere sympathy to the family of Tony. I only knew him thru mutual friends. When I did talk to him I knew that he was sincere in all he did and I admired him greatly. He will be missed.

Brian Johnson,
Rockford, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Sandy and Family: My deepest sympathy and condolences on all our loss. I haven't been able to see Tony for far too long and was looking forward to the reunion. He was and always will be a great teammate and friend. God Bless

Michael Cain,
Las Vegas, Nevada

October 31, 2008

Sandy-

I am sorry to hear about Tony. Our deepest sympathy and prayers go out to you and your family.

Love,
Dave, Wanda and Amanda Siiro
Wanda Siiro,
McHenry, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Sandy and Family,

I'm sorry to hear about Tony. You have my deepest sympathy. He was loved by everyone who knew him. I was fortunate enough to have him as a math teacher, wrestling coach and to have the experience of fishing with him. Speaking for everyone who had early morning math, we all looked forward to Monday class as we ate breakfast and he discussed the results of the weekend athletic events. He had a sincere interest in all of his students and loved his profession. What a GREAT MAN.

Steve Giannini,
Saint Charles, Illinois

October 31, 2008

I was lucky enough to have Mr. Port my freshman year and my senior year (1990-1994). Some of my most favorite academic memories involve Mr. Port. His classroom was always so much

fun. I actually went on to major in Math in college which I always attributed to Mr. Port. Mr. Port was truly an inspiration. Thank you Mr. Port!

Amy (Berebitsky) Huber,

Huntley, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Deep Regrets at the news of Tony's passing. His integrity, knowledge and sense of humor will be missed by all who have known him.

Harden Family,

Algonquin, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Sandy, Mike and Nancy:

I received a phone message this morning down here in Florida regarding the passing of your husband and father. Sue and I send our condolences and prayers to everyone.

I only had two great short years to coach with him on the sophomore level at York where he was an outstanding offensive and defensive line coach. Many offensive and defensive linemen benefitted from his teaching and coaching skills.

His love for fishing was undeniable and I was always amazed how he could coach a football game on Friday or Saturday, leave right after the game and head to Wisconsin, fish the entire weekend and return to York to teach math and coach on every Monday.

I will forever remember Tony Portincaso: math teacher, football and wrestling coach, and friend. He will be dearly missed.

North Redington Beach, Florida

Del Webb/Sun City, Huntley, Illinois

Marv and Sue Carlson,

Del Webb/Sun City, Huntley, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Coach Portincaso - this world is a better place for all you have done to inspire those you have touched. My years at York & after seem like yesterday - whether on the football field, wrestling mat or in the then brand new pool where you learned to swim (necessity for a fisherman), that smile and attitude shined on us all. God blessed us with you.

Jim Kaysing,

Elmhurst, Illinois

October 31, 2008

Condolences to the Portincaso Family. As my wrestling Coach, he literally gave his coat off his back to help me make weight. This is characteristic of the man he was and a lesson learned in my life. As Teacher and Coach he impacted many lives!

Tom Bosworth,

Elmhurst

October 31, 2008

My deepest sympathies. Wrestling "Coach Porty" was not only a game-changer but a life-changer for me. I have always remembered him for the positive influence he had on me in an impressionable time of my life.

Scott Currie,

Downers Grove, Illinois

October 31, 2008

I remember the morning we were warming up to play Riverside Brookfield. Tony told me to get set in the center position and pretend to snap the ball. He was trying to show me how a linebacker should use a forearm shiver on the face mask of the center to open up a direct lane to the quarter back. I distinctly remember him saying POP THAT DUMMY as my helmet came ripping over my ears and I ended up flat on my back. I guess T used to get a little excited before games. Thanks Al

ALAN TINNON,

ELMHURST, Illinois

October 30, 2008

Sandy and Family,

You have our deepest sympathy and prayers. Tony will be missed. I will never forget our HS years at Leyden and the fun times we all had together. Tony was special and I was fortunate to have him as a friend.

Love,

Len & Barb Hofmann

Fountain Hills, Arizona

October 30, 2008

My sincere condolences to the Portincaso family. Tony will be missed greatly by all those he shared his knowledge and sense of humor with over the years.

Chuck Heidt,

Beloit, Wisconsin

October 30, 2008

Mr. Portincasco was my Freshman Math teacher at York High School from 1968-1969 and a truly great man. Everyone loved him and respected him and he made Math as well as high school extremely enjoyable.

I also played Freshman Football and he was a Football coach. I then chose a career in basketball and played all 4 years at York--Tony always wished me luck and was always smiling with this huge grin--I'll never forget that face--one full of the love of life--Coach--you will be indeed be missed by all who knew you.

David Atlas,

Wilmette, Illinois

October 30, 2008

Condolences to the Portincaso family. I had "Mr. Port" for 2 different Math classes at York, and sincerely enjoyed each of those classes. He was a fine teacher who openly shared his views on Math, football, and even a little fishing from time to time - and always with a smile. He left some lasting memories for many students at York.

All the best to the Portincaso family!

George Valaika,
Oak Park, Illinois

October 30, 2008

Sandy, I am so sorry to hear about Tony's passing. I have not talked with you or Tony for many years but I will always have wonderful memories of my many years working with Tony at York. He did everything with such great passion. I will never forget his wonderful sense of humor. My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family.

Bill Leensvaart,
Wheaton, Illinois

October 30, 2008

Mike, my thoughts are with you and your family. Your Friend Randy

Randy Yaffe,
Long Grove, Illinois

October 30, 2008

Sandy,

You and your family have our deepest sympathy. Tony was a wonderful man. Always a kind word. In the short time we have known him; he was always kind to us, as you and the rest of your family always are. He will be missed. Gloria, Tracy and Adam Jasper. Chyrel Prausa

Gloria, Adam, Tracy Jasper,
Mishicot, Wisconsin

October 30, 2008

Sandy, I was truly shocked and saddened when I saw the article in Mike Jackson's notes. I have enjoyed Tony since high school and it brought back memories when you and I were kids. They were some great times. Thinking of you at this time.

Michael Granger,
Elk Grove Vlg, Illinois

October 30, 2008

While it's been sometime since I spoke to Tony I remember him well. Just a great guy. My sympathies to his family and friends. God bless, rest in peace.

Paul & Bev Jaeger,
Canton, Georgia

October 30, 2008

Sandy you and your family are in our prayers. We are so sorry to hear of Tony's passing. He was such a good person. He will be missed by everyone. Please let us know if there is anything we can do. Your Wisconsin friend's Roger and Donna
Roger & Donna Landt,
Two Rivers, Wisconsin

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| Sent | Tuesday, October 28, 2008 3:44 PM |

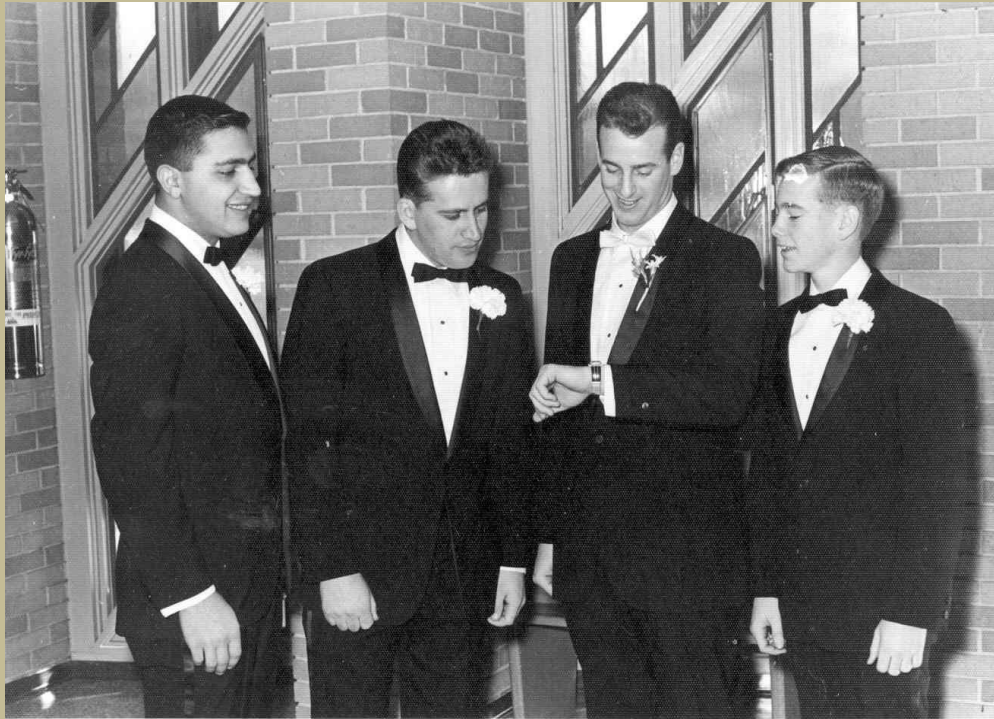
John Ericson just called me today with the bad news. Tony died today. He just came in from a walk with Sandy and he died. I do not know the details on funeral, etc yet. John is calling me tomorrow with the details. When I get them will email to you all..

In our wedding pictures above (2/8/1964) from left to right. Tony, George Lazzeratto, John Erickson, Barb, Len, Mike Femali, my brother Jim.

Tony was a good friend and I will never forget our HS days and also our softball and football days after HS. Those were some awesome times....

Tony will be missed.....

Len Hofmann



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| Subject | Re: Tony Portincaso |
| From | Russ Pagen |

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| To | Len Hofmann |
| Sent | Wednesday, October 29, 2008 6:51 AM |

Len,

Thanks for the information on Tony.....not suppose to be this way.....only good news! I heard he was having some health problems in the past, but one never knows....shows us all how fragile life is.....and at our age, the ice becomes thinner every day.....if you hear of any details, or have his wife's address, please pass it along as I would like to send a card, or something to his favorite charity.....podge

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From: Hofmann, Jim
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2008 5:41 PM
To: Len Hofmann
Subject: RE: Tony Portincaso Update 10/29/08

I'm sorry to hear about Tony's death. He was one of the "good" guys. Who would have thought he would have been a Math teacher and famous fisherman when he graduated High School?

Will you be going to the funeral? I will not be able to make it.

Cheers!
Jim Hofmann –

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| Subject | Tony Portincaso |
| From | Deanna Stuart |
| To | lhofmann@cox.net |
| Sent | Thursday, October 30, 2008 11:20 AM |

Hi Lenny,

John Kness forwarded me the sad news about Tony. I saw him a couple of years ago when some Mannheim Grade School alums got together for pizza. Sandy drove him in as he was no longer driving. If you hear anything more, please add me to your list. I'll heck the

newspapers here. Tony was a great guy, and I've enjoyed knowing him since we were 10 years old!

Hope all is going well with you. Thought you left AZ. I just returned from a week in Sedona with Vicki Melowitz, and Donna Lubway drove up for two days; we had a great time talking and laughing nonstop. Also visited my cousin who lives at Pebble Creek in Goodyear for a few days. Look forward to seeing you at the Leyden 50th.

Best regards,
Deanna Kirschbaum Stuart

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| Subject | RE: Info on Tony from the Chicago Trib. |
| From | Michael Cain |
| To | Len Hofmann |
| Sent | Friday, October 31, 2008 8:14 AM |

Thanks Len, I won't be able to make it to the funeral either. I have been trying to contact Tony for several years and was looking forward to seeing him at next year's reunion. He was definitely "one of the good guys", and it is truly a sad time.

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| Subject | RE: Info on Tony from the Chicago Trib. |
| From | Len Hofmann |
| To | 'Michael Cain' |
| Sent | Friday, October 31, 2008 8:25 AM |

Hi Chico,

Yea, sad times. I was able to see Tony at least once a year. However, have seen him just once since he had a stroke two years ago. Tony & Sandy picked us up at the RV Resort we were at in Sycamore and we went to dinner and John and Mike were there with their wife's. It was like old times again. Have not laughed so much in past 40 years.....

I keep remembering more Tony stories..... He and John Kotabra (Rose's ex) came down to Fla when I was living there in the 70's and I took them out in my boat ocean fishing. Tony can't swim and he did not like the waves.. However, he loved to fish and caught a large Jack that took us about 1/2 hour to land. When we got back to my place we went out and partied.. Have many fond memories.....

Maybe, he can get the old baseball and football team started? Next time we see him we will be in shape again and he will have spot on his rooster for us....

Take care,

Len

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|----------------|--|
| Subject | Tony P. |
| From | pciepal@aol.com |
| To | lenhof@gmail.com |
| Sent | Friday, October 31, 2008 1:15 PM |

Hi Len & Barb

I know it's been a long time...too long and I hope all is well with the both of you. Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but I thought you should be informed of the passing of our friend Tony Portincaso last Wednesday. I haven't been in touch with Tony for some time..He & Sandy moved to Oregon, Il. Some time ago..We kind of lost touch. But I can't forget all the great times we had together. For more info ...you can "GOOGLE" Tony Portincaso and you'll find more info. By the way...I found your Email address in the East Leyden Alumni site. So let me know if this address is valid.

My best to the both of you

Paul Ciesla

P.S. Still on Central Ave. in Wood Dale,Il.

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| Subject | RE: FW: Tony Info in the Trib today |
| From | Len Hofmann |

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|------|------------------------------------|
| To | 'Strauch1231@aol.com' |
| Sent | Sunday, November 02, 2008 12:28 PM |

Nice to hear from you Bill. Was wondering where you ended up after "M". It is now 10 years (9/15/1998) retired for me now. I never thought I would stay retired. However, never got bored and just kept fishing, hunting, golfing and camping. I just got back home from Roosevelt Lake and seen your email. We have our camper and boat on a camp site there and it is a hour away from our home in Ftn Hills. I try to get up there every week. I talk to Curt once in awhile and he now has a cabin in white mtns so he gets up there quite a lot in summer. Life has been good but now looking to downsize and spend more time in summer in IL with kids and grandkids.

I wish I would have moved to AZ in the 60's when I had a chance. We sure love AZ.

Tony was one of my best friends and we stayed in touch thru the years. He will be missed....

Take care and Hi to all,

Len

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From: Strauch1231@aol.com [<mailto:Strauch1231@aol.com>]
Sent: Sunday, November 02, 2008 10:30 AM
To: lhofmann@cox.net
Subject: Re: FW: Tony Info in the Trib today

Hi Len,
Yep, this is a good email address for me.
And yes, I do remember Tony One of the GOOD ones at York High, for sure.
I just ended about 10 months of "retirement" from MOT - did some travel, visited family, played some golf, and just goofed around.
Almost move back to Florida (Naples area - we spent 10 days looking at real estate) - to get away from Chicago winters; but, decided to hang here a few more years. So, I took an IT project management role at Underwriters Lab to keep busy, and have some fun.

Thanks for the note - great to hear from you.
Take care,
Bill

In a message dated 10/31/2008 10:31:29 A.M. Central Standard Time, lhofmann@cox.net writes:

Bill,

Not sure if this email address is correct? However, I remember you went to York and my good friend Tony I believe was one of your teachers...

Take care,

Len

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| | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| Subject | RE: Tony P. |
| From | Len Hofmann |
| T | |

Hi Paul,

Yea, John Erickson called me last Tuesday with the bad news. I was able to get a hold of Chico, Rich and some other class of 59 folks plus some of Tony's students with the bad news. I CC'd Rick, Chico and John. Rich reads emails but has yet to learn to type.... LOL.... He see's George once in awhile and both are still down in South Fla. Chico is in Las Vegas. John still in Elk Grove. Mike Femali is in Bensenville not far from your place.

My Daughter (Deanna) went to the funeral for me on Sat. Dee now lives in Genoa and Scott lives in Kaneville. We have 3 grandkids now. Dee has Cody (age 9) & Jenna (age 8) and Scott has Chase (age 3).

I know Tony would understand why I could not make it back to IL. I was on Roosevelt Lake bass fishing on Sat at Tonto Basin, AZ and had one of my better days. Caught 5 large mouth and biggest was 5lbs. While I was fishing I kept asking myself "What would Tony do?" The bass were down deep in 30-40 ft of water and my typical way of fishing did not work. I remembered how he loved to jig and put on a jig with a fluke and Walla I stated catching fish..... True Story....

I have been trying to get Tony to come to AZ and fish since I moved here but he was always so damn busy he never made it here..... I do remember when he came down to Fla to fish with me in da Ocean tho. Ha. Ha. Got to tell that story some time. Almost as funny as when you came down to Fla and we went snorkeling and bass fishing on same day... I still laugh about that one... Only a Pollack would think he has one breath of air in a snorkel.. LOL...

However, John, Mike Femali and I did get together with Tony over the years and we kept in touch. Mike never lost touch with Tony and they fished, hunted and have been together

since grade school. John also was in touch with Tony over the years. I have bounced around the USA and tried the best I could.....

We sure do have some memories tho don't we..... Those sure were fun time in the 60's and 70's....

Barb & I are doing OK here in AZ. After 2 new knees and 2 new hips I get to go to Jiffy lube every month for grease jobs tho..... LOL...

Take care and keep in touch,
Len

PS: Next year is class of 59 50th..... Time sure does fly by.... Check the wed pic from 1964 when Tony and the rest of us were young, in shape and had hair... I put all old pics on digital for our 40th wed annv in 2004..

PSS: I got to get some of you guy's down here to fish or golf before I am to damn old.....

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| | |
|---------|--|
| Subject | RE: Guest Book for Anthony F. Portincaso |
| From | Len Hofmann |
| To | 'sandyport@wildblue.net' |
| Sent | Sunday, November 02, 2008 2:31 PM |

Hi Sandy,

I will be sending you some emails I have got from Tony's many friends and students the past week in a few weeks.

I was on Roosevelt Lake Sat bass fishing (here in AZ) and Tony was on my mind all day. I kept wishing I pushed more to get him to come to AZ and fish with me.....

It was an awesome day on Lake Sat. 74 degrees, lake was calm and blue skies. I was having trouble catching fish and then I asked myself "What would Tony do?". I remember how he loved to jig. I put on a jig and went deep to 30-40ft and Walla I starting catching some bass. I caught 5 bass Sat. The biggest was 5lbs. I knew he was laughing at me.....

Life is too damn short... I got email today from Paul Ciesla and have gotten emails from so many people.... Tony made an impact on many, many people.

As you know, he was one of a kind.... We have such great memories....

If you ever need to get away please come on down. We got da room.

Love,
Len & Barb

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| | |
|----------------|---|
| Subject | Re: Guest Book for Anthony F. Portincaso |
| From | SANDRA PORTINCASO |
| To | Len Hofmann |
| Sent | Tuesday, November 04, 2008 7:59 PM |

Hi Len, We have been reading and printing the Guest Book from the Chi Tribune too. Thank you as I believe that you paid to keep it open. There were at least 400 friends, family, fellow teachers, fishermen, gardeners, neighbors [etc.at](#) the church on Saturday for a very moving mass memorial. It was overwhelming. I have hundreds of cards as well. I've responded to those on the guest book with our thanks and Mike Cain then contacted me by email this evening. I'm in a confused state right now with so many things to do and think about. Tony did not suffer as he was out for his morning walk which he had almost completed when he collapsed on his own property and died. We were leaving for a Mexican vacation on Sat. and he was happy about it. My Mike and Nancy are being very loving and helpful. You're caring and kind words mean a lot to us. Love Sandy

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| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Subject | FW: Tony Portincaso |
| From | Len Hofmann |
| To | tonyport@wildblue.net |
| Sent | Friday, November 14, 2008 10:17 AM |

Sandy,
I will send you all emails I received. This is the first one and many more to follow.

Hope all is going OK. I don't know if you remember Penny Hansen-Wisher? Penny & Bill have been friend of ours for many years. Penny went to grade and HS with Barb. All of Penny's kids (Billy, John, Michelle & Kim) went to York and had Tony as teacher and/or

coach. One of the best guy's I ever had working for me at Motorola (Bill Strauch) was big time basketball player at York and later at Miami of Ohio. One day at work I had a great idea (my ideas were always great... lol) and I got the motivational video done by Jim Valvano the basketball coach at North Carolina. The video was called "Ripping down the nets". Jim later died of cancer but he was a special guy. I showed this video to all the folks that worked for me. This was in the late 80's. We had a major IT project going on that was planned for implementation in plants all over the world. I needed to get the team hyped up and also understand what it means to commit. The video was a success and we went on to implement the MFG system we developed in 30 plants around the world. opps..... now what was my point??? Oh yea, after the video Bill came into my office and Bill being an ex jock and basketball player we had something in common. We talked for a few hours and he told me about his HS years at York and mentioned a math teacher he had that was also a coach. After listing to him I said I bet his name is Tony Portincaso. Bill's jaw dropped. Yep, Tony was his math teacher and made a big impression on Bill. Small world.... Bill went on to be Director of Info Tech at Motorola in Fla and also Georgia. He ended up back in Schaumburg in 2005 and took an early out from "M" last year.

Take care,
Len

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OutdoorFirst Muskie
Wednesday, May 13, 2009
8:31 AM



[THE #1 SOURCE IN ALL OF MUSKIE FISHING](#)

Muskie Discussion Forums

Moderators: [Slamr](#), [lambeau](#)

| | |
|---|---|
| Message Subject: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away | |
| sworral |  Posted 11/5/2008 11:29 PM (#343989) |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>Subject: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> |
|  <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> | <p>http://blogs.suntimes.com/bowman/2008/10/portincaso_dies.html</p> <p>He'll be missed. Tony encouraged me to sell boats back in 1976, and we worked together for a few years at Glasway, Inc, then builder of Tuffy Boats. He was a fishing buddy of my Dad's, a family friend, and an exceptional angler. He was also Zach's math instructor in high School, and was a strong influence on him, as well.</p> <p>He was a Fishing Facts author, fishing educator, and was involved with the Rosemont show when it was the best out there.</p> <p>Without Tony's direct influence, I would not be typing this right now.</p> <p>Godspeed, my friend.</p> |
| <p>woodieb8</p> | <p> Posted 11/6/2008 5:58 AM (#343992 - in reply to #343989)</p> <p>Subject: Re: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> |
| <p>Posts: 587</p> <p>★</p> | <p>Its truly sad when a mentor ,, friend moves on. The good thing is he passed on his thoughts and beliefs, sharing his moments.. the world needs many more folks like that.</p> <p>Sorry for your loss.</p> |
| <p>Mauser</p> | <p> Posted 11/6/2008 10:02 AM (#344027 - in reply to #343989)</p> <p>Subject: Re: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> |
| | <p>Steve</p> <p>If he taught others to fish and enjoy the outdoors, then he is a loss to</p> |

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|---|---|---|--|
| <p>Posts: 686</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>Location: Southern W.Va.</p> | <p>all of us. My heart goes out to his family and friends for I know he will be missed.</p> <p>Mauser</p> | | |
| <p>Binkelman</p> | <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 562 1123 779"> <p> Posted 11/6/2008 10:10 AM (#344030 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1123 562 1253 779"></td> </tr> </table> | <p> Posted 11/6/2008 10:10 AM (#344030 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | |
| <p> Posted 11/6/2008 10:10 AM (#344030 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | | | |
| <p>Posts: 10</p> | <p>Tony was indeed one of the early writers/educators-- along with the likes of Spence Petros, Bill Binkelman, Lindners and a handful of others-- who have shaped the modern course of freshwater fishing.</p> <p>Had the opportunity to fish with him twice, many years ago and he was an excellent stick and fine character of a man. Sorry to hear of his passing.</p> | | |
| <p>Partycrasher</p> | <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1165 1123 1381"> <p> Posted 11/7/2008 1:19 PM (#344209 - in reply to #343989) Subject: Re: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1123 1165 1253 1381"></td> </tr> </table> | <p> Posted 11/7/2008 1:19 PM (#344209 - in reply to #343989) Subject: Re: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | |
| <p> Posted 11/7/2008 1:19 PM (#344209 - in reply to #343989) Subject: Re: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | | | |
| <p>Posts: 116</p> <p>★</p> | <p>He took me under his wing in 1986 when I started writing. I owe it all to the start I got from Tony. One of the original "Creature men". Great guy!</p> | | |
| <p>Muskydr</p> | <table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="532 1654 1123 1871"> <p> Posted 11/7/2008 3:20 PM (#344232 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1123 1654 1253 1871"></td> </tr> </table> | <p> Posted 11/7/2008 3:20 PM (#344232 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | |
| <p> Posted 11/7/2008 3:20 PM (#344232 - in reply to #343989) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> | | | |

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|--|---|
| <p>Posts: 638</p> <p>★</p> <p>★</p> <p>Location: Tomahawk, Wisconsin</p> | <p>Sorry to hear this Steve, heavy influences on the fishing of the Jonesi Clan, one of the pioneers,condolences to the family</p> <p>Dave Jonesi</p> |
| <p>Don Pfeiffer</p> | <div data-bbox="537 642 1255 856" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Posted 11/9/2008 3:21 PM (#344482 - in reply to #343989)</p> <p>Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> </div> |
| | <p>Met Tony way back when. Had chance to fish with him and a great time. A very good fellow indeed and he will be missed. My sympathy goes out to his family.</p> <p>Pfeiff</p> |
| <p>Justin Gaiche</p> | <div data-bbox="537 1167 1255 1381" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Posted 11/10/2008 5:33 PM (#344672 - in reply to #344482)</p> <p>Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away</p> </div> |
| | <p>I had only met Tony a few times at the Milwaukee Show when asked to speak. What Steve pre-mentioned about him before I met him was certainly true. This man was a very respectable gentleman who was exceedingly kind and had the ability to speak about fishing the way that grips all youth to get wrapped up in the sport. My thought and prayers to his family.</p> |
| <p>Clark A</p> | <div data-bbox="537 1734 1255 1864" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p> Posted 11/10/2008 9:46 PM (#344714 - in reply to #343989)</p> </div> |

Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away

Posts: 254



Location: Bloomington, MN

Mr. Portincaso was one of my first true heroes in the world of fishing. I first met Tony at a sport show at the Arlington Park race track in the mid-70's. I even got his autograph along with Mr. Petros's. I "think" he stated that my friend and I were the first to ever ask for his autograph. I grew up devouring Fishing Facts magazine, and obtained every issue (Fishing News 1968? which was in a newspaper format to the magazine format of Fishing Facts) they put out until the late 80's. I did have my Dad drive me and a friend up to Yorkville High School (northwestern suburb of Chicago) on a Saturday during a winter month to attend one of Tony and Spence's structure fishing classes. I probably took more notes during that day than I did during all of my college years, which in hindsight explains alot! Tony became a regular writer for the Fishing Facts magazine in early to mid-70's. I believe due to his classic photos of him and his entourage holding Wisconsin trophies was a big influence on Tuffy Boat sales during that period. The Tuffy logo was always represented, which I'm sure inspired many midwest anglers to purchase dark baby blue or bone colored tri-hulls. He was one of the first to introduce readers to the world of "Creature" fishing for muskies. In the late 70's Pelican (Thanks to Mr. Worrall) was the Mecca of that technique. Yes Bone and Deer, is where the fine tuning came into play for the toothy critters, but Pelican is where it shined. There were many anglers, especially from the Rockford, IL area, that constantly produced more and bigger fish than the traditional muskie fisherman which they were outnumbered by. **Mr. Portincaso's** articles and classes had much to do with those people's results. I still have at least 20 lbs. of Mar-Lyn Reaper tails and Fliptail Lizards, and at least 3 lbs of 3/8 oz. Crawford/Northwoods stand up Pow-R-Head jigs due to his influence. Tony started sporting a neatly trimmed beard in the late 70's, and Spence along with about half the Midwestern Fishing Facts/In-Fisherman readers weren't long to follow. To the best of my knowledge **Mr. Portincaso's** P.B. was caught on a Harasser w/ red twisters from Pipestone while fishing with Mr. Dan Sura (sorry for no pic., I only collected the "early" days). Tony was a frequent guest on Chicago's WGN radio's Saturday morning Outdoors program. He was the most laid back/non-arrogant professional fisherman to hit their air-waves. He treated every caller with utter respect and kindness. He was a true Pioneer of the sport I truly adore. My condolences go out to his family and friends for their sudden loss.

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| | Edited by Clark A 11/10/2008 10:11 PM | |
| sworrall |  Posted 11/10/2008 10:11 PM (#344722 - in reply to #344714) Subject: RE: Fishing Educator Tony Portincaso Passes away | |
|  <p>★</p> <p>★ Location: Rhinelander, Wisconsin</p> | <p>Clark,</p> <p>Tony's fish was caught at a Tuffy trip with the Top Ten dealers out of Art Lotto's camp on Loonhaunt, a short portage from Pipestone, if I recall correctly. We kept some of the rigs on Pipestone and brought a couple in to Loonhaunt. Dan was working with Tuffy at the time, and I'd bet Zach has a copy of the picture in his archives. I'll ask him to look when he gets a chance.</p> | |
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Daily Herald
Wednesday, May 13, 2009
8:38 AM

Daily Herald **Outdoors fans mourn Portincaso.(Sports)**

Article from:
Daily Herald (Arlington Heights,IL)
Article date:
[October 30, 2008](#)
Author:
[Jackson, By Mike](#)

Byline: Mike Jackson Daily Herald Outdoors Writer

Long time outdoorsman, fishing educator, teacher and writer **Tony Portincaso** passed away this week.

The retired 67-year-old happy-go-lucky well known outdoors fixture apparently suffered a fatal heart attack while walking near his home in Oregon, Ill. Service will be in Huntley on Saturday. Tony authored many columns, frequently appearing in the In-Fisherman.

Jigging Fall Muskies

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

8:44 AM

Up Down and Sideways

Two Takes on Jigging Fall Muskies

By Rob Kimm and Pete Maina

From The Next Bite – ESX Angler Magazine 2006 Fall Issue

Rob Kimm:

Anglers in general, and muskie anglers in particular, have an utterly unreasonable view of angling techniques. We see lures and the techniques used to present them as essentially progressive, a perpetual press of improvement over what was done before and how, and with what, to the point where if you aren't careful, you can catch yourself looking back at the past wondering how they managed to catch a thing.



This belief in continual progress is, I suppose, an unspoken argument for the absurdities one sees from time to time: spinnerbait skirts made from space age carpet fibers, bucktails the size of wombats, super magnum plugs that weigh in at a pound and change, wiggly rubbertailed gee-gaws beyond number. It may even explain the khaki-clad sport I ran into on the water a few weeks back who asked if I might have a black Magic Marker in the boat so he could dull the finish on his blades just a bit. Shiny blades, apparently, are last year's news.

Admitting this irrational view on lures is a roundabout means of apology for writing about something as mundane as jigs and jigging, when this inevitable innovation leaves so many other topics unexplored. The reality, though, is this: the fundamental building blocks of presentation haven't changed, and wont. Speed, depth, color, and size, attraction, and triggering ability are

still at the core of even the most innovative lures or methods of presenting them. The belief in progression is simply an example of endless variations on fairly basic themes, with varying degrees of success or failure. It's a reason to slink through the tackle shops like grave robbers each spring, looking for the next new thing.

But jigging gets scant attention from the vast majority of muskie anglers. Perhaps it's that assumption of progress that gets in the way. Because jigging is certainly nothing new when it comes to muskies.

Truth be told, jigging could rightly be called one of the first modern muskie techniques, tracing its roots back to the dawn of modern angling, when anglers like **Tony Portincaso**, a pair of young, energetic Chicago area anglers named Al and Ron Lindner, and a handful of others began fishing early version of today's soft plastics on Deer, Bone, and a handful of other Polk County, Wisconsin lakes.

"Tony and a few other guys from the Rockford, Illinois area started using [5-inch Reaper](#) for largemouth bass on those Polk County lakes," says legendary angler and Lindner's Angling Edge host Al Lindner. "Lo and behold, they started catching lots of muskies. That is truly where it began. At first they thought it was just a fall thing when the weeds were thin, but the system developed over time. We got bit off, so we added leaders, then graduated to bigger baits—the [8-inch Reapers](#), fished on spinning gear with monofilament and fairly short wire leaders." As the system evolved, jigs were not only lures but interpretive tools, used to probe weedlines and discover points, inside turns and rock piles that had previously been invisible. In experienced hands, a jig was—and is—as precise and informative about what lies beneath the water's surface as the most sophisticated modern graph.

From Deer and Bone, Portincaso, the Lindners, and others, began to expand jigging into new territories. "It worked everywhere we tried it," says Lindner. "There were guys on Pymatuning catching muskies on jigs like crazy; it worked in Minnesota too." Publication of the technique in Fishing Facts magazine was a landmark in modern muskie fishing. "It really was a major breakthrough," said Lindner. "This was still the 'fish of 10,000 casts,' and we were catching 3 to 5 a day. Guys wouldn't believe it when we told them how many fish we were catching.

"Still, despite its long history, not to mention its effectiveness, jigging for muskies has seldom sustained more than isolated regional popularity. Though it has enjoyed a resurgence of late, due in large part to an excellent series of articles on the subject by In-Fisherman Editor-in-Chief Doug Stange, jigging is still overlooked by most muskie anglers. At best, it's a cold front technique, and at worst it's ignored altogether. "As far as a presentation system," says Lindner, "it's still under-utilized."

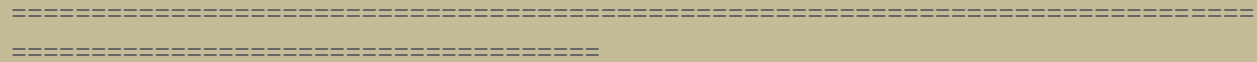
Vertical jigging gets even less attention. Once again, outside isolated pockets scattered across the muskie's range, vertical jigging for muskies is next to unheard of.



It's a shame, really.

Jigging, you see, is—or can be—more than just a different presentation choice. Jigging can be a system for approaching angling situations where each aspect of presentation, each block, differs from more standard muskie tactics. There are few angling situations, especially in the cold water period of fall, to which jigging techniques can't be applied effectively. There are some situations where nothing's more efficient and effective.

What follows are two looks at jigging up fall muskies...



Of Jigs and Muskies

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

8:46 AM

Perspectives of the Creature Man

Of Jigs and Muskies

Published November 11, 2005

By Steve Worrall

Soft Plastics are gaining new popularity as many innovations and new styles have entered the market over the last few years. The story behind the FIRST soft plastic revolution that took place in the 1960's when there were no jigs or soft plastics designed for Muskies is pretty much a compilation of who's who of the top angler names from the 60's, 70's and 80's created from a brain trust in the Chicago suburbs to Rockford area in Illinois.

The muskie soft plastic revolution came from my father's kitchen table in the late 50's and early 60's. Jim Cairnes, a family friend and one of the best sticks I have had the pleasure to meet, and my Dad fished together for bass a lot, and used the only soft plastic/jig combination available at the time, a Squirm'n Jig. It was pretty rough by today's standards, sporting a soft hooked bullet jig and a really rough copy of a nightcrawler, but MAN it caught bass and muskies. Another family friend, **Tony Portincaso**, was involved in helping make the plaster of Paris molds for the jigs in the kitchen; I still remember what the smells and sounds were as that work was

underway; to an impressionable fish crazy kid, this was pretty cool stuff. One could get as many as 50 jigs out of a mold if it was prepared properly.

My Dad took a ball jig and filed the bottom flat, then filed the sides into a nearly triangular design with a wider bottom than top, changing the balance and the hook position in an attempt to create a jig more fishable in the weeds and one that hooked-up better. The first stand up jig was born, appropriately called a 'diamond head'. That design has many copies and improvements on the market since, but the first stand up swimmer heads and diamond heads were made by Jim, Tony, and my Dad. A gentleman named Paul Repka eventually made a series of production molds and supplied us with beautifully crafted and painted jigs for many years.

Larry Latino, another top stick from that era and **Tony Portincaso** eventually took that idea to Mar Lynn Tackle, and between Larry and Tony, the Pow'r Head stand up jig hit the market. Jim Cairnes' and my Father's original swimmer head is still the best 1 to 1.5 ounce swimmer out there. Herbie did a good job designing the Cobra, and Jack's Jigs had several good ones.

In the early 1960's my father took a bass fishing trip to Arkansas where my grandparents lived at the time, meeting Harold Ensley there. Harold had just done very well in a bass tournament with his new lure, a soft plastic leech like 5" tail now known as the Reaper. They were one color, brown. The plastisol was bubbly and hard, and the mold pretty rough, but the lure combined with my Dad's standup jigs and Jim's swimmers was destined to make Muskie History.

My father brought a huge bag of those Reapers back to Illinois and distributed them amongst the group he fished with, including a bass fisherman named Buel Coley. They caught fish, and A LOT of them. Equipment of the day was a 7' fiberglass medium heavy rod and a Mitchell or Abu spinning reel spooled with 10# line for bass, and for the historic muskie trips to the Bone Lake area by 'the crew' soon to include folks like Al and Ron Lindner, **Tony Portincaso**, Frank Rondone, **Jim Cairnes**, Spence Petros, Larry Latino, Don and Steve Worrall, Betty Worrall, Shelly Cairnes, the McBride brothers, and many other crazy muskie fishermen, the weapon of choice was the same rig spooled with 17# line and armed with a 60# seven strand leader.

I caught my first muskie, a big girl, on a jig my Dad made and a plastic worm on Bone Lake. The crew had already created quite a reputation for themselves as Muskie and Bass anglers, and most of those fish were caught tossing a jig.

As years passed and innovations by Jim and Paul Repka continued to refine the jig designs, bass anglers were demanding better soft plastics. Mar Lyn ended up marketing the Reaper. I had found a company in Texas selling a large lizard called Stembriage Products, and over a couple years talked Mary Stembriage into doing some mold work for us. We used a weird paddle tail called a Ding A Ling on the Lizard bodies as well. I really liked that lure, but it never went into production. My second largest Muskie from Pelican Lake, just shy of 53", came on that combo.

As we fished Muskies with the Reaper, the hook shaft area of the soft plastic would get torn up to the point where the Reaper was useless. Using the Stenbridge Products Lizard (Fliptail brand) the tail which was like a sectioned worm tail, would get nipped off, rendering that lure body useless as well. One hot early 1970's afternoon on Enterprise Lake in Langlade County, Wisconsin, Shelly Carines had a few of those ruined tails sitting on Jim's back deck. She looked them over, and said aloud, "I wonder if this stuff melts?" She took her butane lighter out of her pocket, trimmed a Reaper and a Lizard by cutting the ruined head off the Reaper and the tail off the Lizard, and melted the plastic of both while Jim held them, welding them together. It WORKED!! We now had a larger lure, and were able to use our old junk tails to create whatever style tail we could.

Not too long after, I was fishing the Embarrass River for smallmouth out of my Tuffy 154 with Steve Quandt, owner of Glasway, Tuffy Boat's parent company. I pulled out a couple of my creations and handed them to him. He looked at those ugly tails and asked, "What kind of creature are these?" That did it; from that time forward the lures were known as 'creatures'. I was known by many during the 70's and 80's as 'The Creature Man'. **Jim Cairnes** and I followed with several production creatures, which I marketed through a tackle company long sold to Dick Moore.

Creatures on the Weeds

The original Diamond Head jigs were designed to be 1/4 ounce with a 3/0 hook, 1/3 ounce with a 4/0 hook, or 5/8 ounce with a 5/0 hook. All were designed for use in the weeds. The Diamond Head shape works fine on the rocks too, but has more of a propensity to get hung in the rocks than the swimmer heads. I designed a 1/8 ounce model for the Fliptail Baby Creature, which was primarily a walleye and bass lure.

The ounce jig matched up exactly with the reaper, an excellent weed line tail. Most of the crew attached the reaper on the jig with a sideways profile, trying to get as much contrast as possible from the side and back. The 1/3-ounce jig was the standard for the Fliptail creature or the Lizard/reaper homemade combo, and the 5/8-ounce for the Super Creature or large shad and twister bodies. The plastic is adhered to the jig with a drop of superglue, which holds the lure together through multiple fish and keeps it from getting destroyed by the hook shank. All of the above rigs were designed to fall at a drop rate of about 1' per second, and that by serious design. More on that in a bit.

The best all around outfit for Creature fishing is an IM6 or 8 graphite spinning rod with high quality guides, medium heavy to heavy action with a fast taper and fast tip for popping the jig through the weeds. The reel needs to be large spooled, and balance with the rod exactly for comfort when 'popping' the weeds and setting the hook. The big spool allows for the line to be picked up very fast with minimum turns of the reel handle, important when using the lures as they were intended to be used. Casting tackle works, but is VERY hard on the wrist and arms when popping weeds, something I sometimes do all day. Speed and comfort are why my creature rods are spinning outfits.

The line needs to be monofilament. I know some folks recommend superlines, but there is a problem using the superlines with a real 'creature only' setup. Superlines allow for absolutely no stretch, so when a muskie hits that jig the line is immediately tight, and it's very hard to get a snap hookset because there is zero slack. I also find myself setting the hook way too soon with the superlines, missing most of the hits from muskies, pike, and especially walleyes. I like 17# mono, but 14# will do for some folks. If you are just slow rolling the jig, Superlines will work well, but I still prefer the forgiving properties of Mono. My first half dozen muskies over 50" came on mono, so I don't believe one actually needs the superline hook set to put the steel to a fish using a properly designed jig head.

I use a seven strand leader, usually about a foot long in 60# test, with a 100# swivel and a good snap. I have yet to have a failure with my leaders, and have been using that setup for over 30 years. Watch them for kinks and wear, and replace when the leader begins to look beat up. A solid wire leader will not allow the jig to sink properly in the weeds, and will cause you no end of grief trying to keep it clear in heavy cabbage.

The jig design is very important. In order to cut weeds the jig should not be rounded from the eye back, like many of the bass jigs adapted for Muskies. The weeds are pushed out by that jig design, and end up on the leader. That design also rolls upon contact with heavy weeds, which is why they usually come with a Mylar weed guard. The hook needs to be nearly vertical when the jig is at rest on the bottom, so when weeds do get wrapped on the hook shank a quick hookset will cut them away. The upright hook profile also provides for an excellent 'bite' in the fish's mouth corners. Two quick pops of the rod usually buries a 5/0 all the way through the corner of the mouth. To do a quick test to see if the hook is properly placed with the lead head, place the eye of the hook against your palm and the hook point against your palm at the same time. Try to pull the hook point across your palm; if it doesn't hook skin immediately, get rid of the jig and go get one that will.

The technique has been way over thought recently, trying to make a 'jump lure' be a crankbait, glider, and twitch bait all in one. The design of the jig and creature is opposed to those techniques; one might as well be throwing a crank bait if one is just cranking the jig in hopping it along with the rod. Cast the jig and creature out to the weedline, and count it down. Now you know why I like the jig to sink at 1 foot per second, I have excellent presentation control. Count it down to the bottom, point the rod directly at the jig, and turn the reel handle FAST two to three times, depending how high in the water column you wish the jig to climb. I like to hop the jig about 3 to 4' vertically, which requires about three full reel handle revolutions. Stop reeling, and watch the line, again counting the lure down. Watch the line until it suddenly 'bows' or goes slack, then simply repeat. Don't move the rod tip around, that just puts you out of a good hook set position. If you know the last two hops were 4 count, and you count to 2 and the line goes slack, either a fish has your creature, or you are in the weeds, either way, set the hook, and if it's a fish, the game is on. If it's a weed, you will clean off the jig and continue the retrieve. Most strikes from muskies are almost like an electric shock in the rod handle, sort of a

sharp 'click'. Bass just thump the thing, walleyes create a sudden 'light' feeling that is just as suddenly heavy, and Pike are totally unpredictable.

The count down feature of the presentation also REALLY puts you in touch with the structure. You will know from the drop time if you came upon an outside turn (longer drop time because it's getting deeper) or an inside turn (shorter drop time because it's getting shallower), allowing you to learn the water better than you ever imagined once you master the technique.

If you want to just crank soft plastic, you are not jigging or Creature fishing, you are cranking a soft plastic lure. That's what Bulldawgs and like designs are for. That style lure is a soft plastic bait, but that is where the similarity ends.

Creatures on the Stones

I love my Dads's swimmer jigs for this application. A 1 Ounce jig with a 5/0 hook and slightly larger creature is perfect. The fact the swimmer jig design glides more and sinks slower as a result will give you the desired approximate 1-foot per second drop rate. Any good quality swimmer jig will do the job, just make sure you aren't using one that really falls slowly, or you will be fishing too slowly and not covering the water as well as you could be. The swimmer jig hook almost parallels the flat surface of the jig, but will still pass the hook in the palm test. When the jig hits bottom the flatter profile of that design resists getting fouled up in the rocks, but you will occasionally get hung up. Point the rod at the rock you have managed to get behind, and slack line to sudden 'pop' set the hook, returning to immediate slack line. That many times will pop the jig free. If all else fails, take the boat to the backside of the obstruction and pull the jig free.

NEVER cast shallow to deep, those rocks lay that way down there and you will spend the entire time getting hung up. Parallel the edge to hitting it at about a 30-degree angle fanning the edge and break line out to whatever the break offers. Always cast with the wind, otherwise the boat movement will tighten up your line and make the entire process a lot harder to read.

If you wish to vertical jig buy a Fuzzy Duzzit or similar lure. Creatures and jigs do OK under that application, but not nearly as well as the lures designed for that purpose. Big lake trout jigs are made for that, and work really well, too.

Don't over think the process or give it too little time; creature fishing is fast, action packed, and will catch almost any game fish you encounter. Practice your hookset, be sure you are fishing with the wind, and the lure and technique will force a level of boat control you never thought possible. Jig fishermen are traditionally the best boat control experts I fish with, and it's the technique that taught them how to make that boat dance.

By the way, really big muskies like jigs and creatures a lot. My largest and second largest Wisconsin fish both came on Creatures. Try the technique, you won't be disappointed, and that 'click' when a Muskie hits does get sorta addicting.

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Walleyes Unlimited

Wednesday, May 13, 2009

8:48 AM

Welcome to Walleyes Unlimited USA

One of the finest multi-species fishing clubs in the country . . .

Founded in 1969....

Inducted into the Fishing Hall of Fame 2007....

Walleyes Unlimited USA | P. O. Box 8817 | Waukegan, IL 60079 |

info@walleyesunlimitedusa.org



Founded in 1969, **Walleyes Unlimited USA** is now recognized as the top multi-species fishing club in the country. In May of 2007 Walleyes Unlimited USA was honored to be inducted into "*The Fresh Water Fishing Hall of Fame.*"

The majority of our members are residents of northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Our club attracts a wide variety of anglers and skill levels. By sharing information, Walleyes Unlimited members learn the latest techniques and methods for a variety of species.

Although our main interest is on walleyes, our membership includes some of the top local anglers for bass, northern pike, muskies, panfish and salmon. Whether you are a novice or hard core fanatic, our meetings and membership can increase your skill and knowledge for most freshwater fish.

Some of our members are outdoor writers for various publications and many of our members speak at fishing seminars in the area and tour the "Walleye Circuits." As a club member you'll enjoy these benefits and more! In the past years the club has

sponsored hundreds of speakers including:

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|-------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Sam Anderson | Mark Martin | Gary Roach |
| Greg Bohn | Tom Neustrom | Mark Romanack |
| Mark Brumbaugh | Mike Norris | Jim Saric |
| John Campbell | Kim Papineau | Doug Schreiber |
| Daryl Christensen | Gary Parsons | Tommy Skarlis |
| Dave Csanda | E. L. "Buck" Perry | Dan Sura |
| Gary Engberg | Tony Portincaso | Ted Takasaki |
| Mike Gofron | Bob Propst, Sr. | Mike Theyrl |
| Keith Kavajecz | Jason Przekurat | Babe Winkelman |
| Al & Ron Linder | Tony Puccio | |

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|-------------|--|
| Subject | Re: "Uncle" |
| From | DavidN8827@aol.com |
| To | podgy59@yahoo.com |
| Cc | lhofmann@cox.net |
| Sent | Wednesday, May 20, 2009 10:53 AM |
| Attachments | _AVG certification_.txt |

Russ:

Len sent me a copy of the tribute to Portincaso. He truly was an impressive guy that led an impressive life. I guess a lot of us have our favorite Port stories. Mine is not nearly as impressive as the tributes that I just read but it does show that even at a young age he was an impressive and determined guy. Even though he grew up in Franklin Park he did not go to Franklin Park Grade School. I think he went to Manheim because of a screwy dividing line (Addison Street) that had some Franklin Parkers attending other grade school. Anyway, I first met Tony in August of 1955. We were going out for freshman football and classes had not yet started. I am sure that you remember how the routine went. Every one was put in a line to get weighed and measured and then get their equipment. Tony and I just happened to be next to each other in the line. When we got to where we were to get our equipment we were both weighed and each of us weighed about 105 lbs and were about 5' 4" tall. They didn't have hip pads that were small enough for either of us and had to go retrieve some. Coach Bujan started laughing at

both of us and of course that created more laughter from the bigger guys that were also in line. Coach Bujan asked Tony and me if we were Assets or Liabilities. Eugene Bach was nearby and spoke up for us. He said very loudly that at least Tony and I had the guts to try. I doubt very much if Gene remembers this incident. Tony and I finally got our pads, etc. and started walking out to the field. I introduced myself to him and asked if he knew what Coach Bujan meant by "Asset or Liability". Tony didn't know and I didn't know.

I also asked Tony if he thought that maybe we were too small to play football. He said "no, we won't always be small". Tony and I didn't end up being close friends as in hanging out together etc. but whenever he walked by me in the hallways he would give me that twinkle that indicated he remembered our first day at East Leyden when we were two 13 year olds that weighed 105 lbs.

Dave

