



Charles Leon Eller

December 17, 1936 - August 10, 2022

Charles “Leon” Eller

On August 10th, 2022, our hearts broke as we said goodbye to Charles “Leon” Eller after 85

remarkable years of life. He went home to be with his Lord and loved ones before him,

peacefully surrounded by the love of his family on earth.

Leon was born on December 17th, 1936 in Corning, CA to Monta Dorcas and John Chester

Eller. He was one of seven children. After brief stints living in Oklahoma and Gridley, CA, the

family moved back to Corning in 1951 where he attended Corning High School. While in high

school, Leon excelled in basketball and track and field, but most especially football where his

lifelong love for the sport took shape. Leon’s outstanding performance in football earned him a

spot in the State Shrine All Star Game where the best high school football players from Northern

California faced off against those from Southern California.

After high school, he attended college at Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT) where he played

football and set the record for most minutes played in a season, playing every

minute of every game on offense, defense, and special teams. As an athlete, Leon was known for his rare combination of strength and speed, along with his relentless desire to beat the competition.

On April 13th, 1958, Leon married the love of his life, Barbara Jo Spaletta. And while he had a deep passion for the game of football, it was no contest for the love that he held in every part of his being for Barbara, even turning down a tryout with the Oakland Raiders in order to settle down and start a family. When asked what accomplishment he is most proud of, Leon would always reply, "Convincing Barbara to marry me." In 1964, Leon and Barbara moved to Richfield where they raised their children, Jeff, Lisa, Curt, and Matt in a home full of faith, love, hard work, and laughter.

A true lover of athletics, Leon coached varsity football at Corning High School and was instrumental in founding the Corning Youth Football Program in 1963. He made a tremendous impact on the lives of numerous young men over his many years of coaching, using sports as a vehicle for teaching the values of hard work and discipline. If you have ever attended a sporting event in Corning, you were guaranteed to see Leon on the sideline or in the crowd rooting for the Cardinals, rain or shine, win or lose. Together, he and Barbara have almost certainly attended more Corning sporting events than anyone in history.

Leon was a passionate and devoted prune farmer, operating more than 60 prune harvests over the course of his life in addition to several pistachio harvests. Leon enjoyed tending to his family orchard and garden and was always generous with sharing the bounty of his harvests. Most days you could find him on his John Deere "Gator" riding around Richfield checking on his prunes, family, and friends.

Leon was a larger-than-life figure with a personality that touched the lives of countless individuals in the Corning and Richfield communities, and well beyond. Leon knew no stranger and had a distinct way of making everybody feel welcomed and valued. A devoted son, brother, husband, uncle, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, nobody was full of more pride for their family than Leon. He would seize any conversation as a grand opportunity to talk about the current activities of his children, grandchildren, relatives, and those who left an impression on him. He was a skilled storyteller with an incredibly sharp mind capable of recalling vivid details of times long ago, and his unique ability to add lib to every tale he told made sure it was

worth the currency of your time and attention. He never missed a meal, and if there was a buffet, you could count on him to be first in line and back for seconds.

Leon was an active member of the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church,

and from the day he married Barbara, he hardly missed a Sunday service. He and Barbara enjoyed attending community events every chance they had and were known as pillars of the community.

Together they enjoyed square dancing, listening to live music, attending (oftentimes hosting) family gatherings, and spending quality time with their many loved ones. Leon was a legend in every sense of the word and while history has taught us that heroes get remembered, legends never die. Leon lives on in our hearts and through the stories that he told all of us, and we will tell of him.

Leon is survived by his wife Barbara; children: Jeff Eller (Holly Eller), Lisa Nye (Rick Nye), Curt Eller (Lorrie Eller), and Matt Eller (Julie Eller); grandchildren: Alisha Savage (Jim Savage), Eric Nye (Lyndsey Nye), Shane Eller (Jenni Eller), Darren Nye (Karle Nye), Baillie Howard (Joey Howard), Cameron Nye, Emerie Carter (Tucker Carter), Audrey Eller, and Kaiden Eller; eleven great-grandchildren to date; and numerous extended family members.

A rosary for Leon will be held on Friday, August 19th at 7:00 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Corning, followed by a Mass in his honor on Saturday, August 20th at 10:00 a.m., then graveside service, and finally a celebration at the Biswell Ranch in Richfield (6200 Hall Road) at 1:00 p.m. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that you donate to the Corning High School Sports Association or the Immaculate Conception Church.

Cemetery Details

Sunset Hill Cemetery

4470 Oren Avenue
Corning, CA 96201
(530) 824-2255

Previous Events

Visitation

AUG 19. 6:30 PM - 7:00 PM (PT)

Immaculate Conception Parish
814 Solano St
Corning, CA 96021

Rosary

AUG 19. 7:00 PM - 7:30 PM (PT)

Immaculate Conception Parish
814 Solano St
Corning, CA 96021

Funeral Service

AUG 20. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (PT)

Immaculate Conception Parish
814 Solano St
Corning, CA 96021

Graveside Service

AUG **20**. 11:15 AM - 11:45 AM (PT)

Sunset Hill Cemetery
4470 Oren Avenue
Corning, CA 96201
(530) 824-2255

Tribute Wall



“ *Peaceful Reflections Cross "Memories" was purchased for the family of Charles Leon Eller.*



August 20, 2022 at 12:26 PM



“ *Arrive in Style was purchased for the family of Charles Leon Eller.*



August 16, 2022 at 01:33 PM



“ *What a wonderful man, with a wonderful family that meant everything to him. Our family have so many fun, happy rewarding memories of him. A smile that just plain made your day. How happy his family that has gone on before him are right now. Our love to you all. Jerry & Joyce Lequia*

JOYCE LEQUIA - August 16, 2022 at 02:55 AM



What a truly wonderful man he was! Corning youth athletics was invaluable improved because of him. He was a great guy and the Jackson family will always remember him. Our hearts go out to the Eller family. Thoughts and prayers are with you. I know my dad is swapping stories with him in heaven.

Kelly Jacksob - August 18, 2022 at 08:03 PM

LT

“ Leon was a great neighbor and friend, always there when we needed a question or something done, as a widow when I became a farmer, if it was not for Leon & Curt, the orchard we still have would not be here. We thank him for ALL the harvesting he did for us through the years. Also all the gatherings we attended including us in everything. We will truly miss him and are so very very sad he is gone. I to will miss all his great stories that he shared. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family.

With Lot of Love

Brad & Loretta Taylor

Loretta Taylor - August 15, 2022 at 01:36 PM

MM

“ My condolences to the Eller family in the passing of Leon. Thru Carl, my brother-law, and Elaine, my sister, I've kept current with Leon's conditions. It's been about 10 years since seeing Leon and Barbara I believe the last time was in Las Vegas. I always knew Leon as a respectable, reserved man, hard working with a dry sense of humor. I've told many people about his views of migrant farm labor, that the migrant farm laborers are key to making USA agriculture work. He was as hard working as they. To the family, take time to grieve; it is a healthy process in the death of someone close. It accelerates the healing process. Bereavement is hard, The first years after the loss is hard, especially at holiday gatherings. Eventually, the sun sets on the loss, and the good memories will outweigh the weight of the grieving. Take care, I'll put the family on my prayer list. Mike Miloserdoff, Carl Eller's brother-in-law.



Michael Miloserdoff - August 15, 2022 at 10:40 AM

RW

“ You will be greatly missed Leon, we could always count on you to be at our daughters games, Spike enjoyed reminiscing about life, baseball and football. You always had a smile on your face and that twinkle in your eye. y guess is you'll be coaching God's football team. You will be missed by so many. I personally will miss that special twinkle in your eye everyone I ran into you. Rest in peace Leon.

Spike and Rosie Wilfong

Rosie Flores Wilfong - August 14, 2022 at 01:40 AM

NO

“ Condolences to the family. Thankful for Coach Leon & his dedication to Corning youth sports. Hope grieving is short & fond memories many.

Norman Oilar - August 13, 2022 at 02:22 PM

JT

“ Leon was my youth football coach. He grew up with my mom and uncles. Every time I saw him he was happy to see me and I him. He will be missed. My prayers go out to the family.

James E. Thompson - August 13, 2022 at 11:12 AM

JA

“ Whenever I came back to Corning for Homecoming, I used to see Leon Eller at the football game. He was a great guy and a giant for Corning High Sports. He will be missed. My condolences to his family and friends.

Jerry Askey - August 12, 2022 at 10:20 PM

HP

“ I remember when my family moved to Richfield in 1967. My Mom worked at the Chicken Shack in Red Bluff. She would always talk about those Eller boys (Leon and Paul) and how nice they were when they came in to eat. After growing up, Leon never failed to ask how our son, Kyle was doing when he would see me (it was a football thing). You will be missed Leon.Helen Pitkin

Helen Pitkin - August 12, 2022 at 09:05 PM