

## **Frank Maestas**

Born: October 6, 1935, Las Vegas, New Mexico

Died: March 8, 2006, Albuquerque, NM

High School: West Las Vegas High School 1955

College: New Mexico Highlands University bachelor's degree in political science & journalism 1959

### **High School**

- First four sport letterman – Football, Basketball, Baseball & Track – in history of West Las Vegas High School. Attended Robertson High School as a sophomore and junior when West Las Vegas closed.
- Senior Class Salutatorian
- Only West Las Vegas High School student to receive college scholarship from New Mexico Highlands.

### **College**

- Frank became the first in his family to achieve a college degree, which has achieved fourteen graduate and postgraduate degrees since then.

### **Professional:**

Frank Maestas was a pioneer for Hispanics in journalism in general and sports journalism as he was one of the first Latino sports writers in the nation back in the 1960's. He was a sportswriter for the Albuquerque Journal for 28 years. Many of his feature articles brought tremendous pride and sense of accomplishment to numerous New Mexico families and communities.

Through hard work and dedication Frank became one of the most accomplished sportswriters of his day and was respected as a deadline writer. In his early days before computers, he had to dictate stories over the phone off the top of his head and always organized and covered the event without missing a beat. Maestas had a reputation for unsparing truth and was a stickler for accuracy, but also was approachable and sensitive to his sources.

Journal sportswriter, Phill Casaus adds: "During the 1983 Final Four national sportswriters saw firsthand what we all knew -- Frank was a pure sports journalist. He was absolutely one of the best game story writers in the country. By that I mean, when a deadline was fast approaching and you needed 12- or 14-inches ASAP on a game with every important fact about the game, Frank was the best. He could rattle off a story from his notes, over the phone, arranging it all in his head. It was cool to watch or, if you were in the Journal office, take dictation. I did that a few times with Lobo basketball. If you could not keep up with Frank, you would soon hear the familiar "Hey, we're a morning paper, Rookie. Let's go.""

Through hard work and dedication Frank became one of the most respected sportswriters to ever cover events in the State of New Mexico and was always proud to be a New Mexican. He managed to do all of this while befriending everyone he dealt with and built a legacy for being a creative, adventurous character that will always dwell in the folklore of sports in New Mexico.

- 1960 Worked for a year as a sportswriter for the Albuquerque Journal.
- 1961 Sports editor at the Santa Fe New Mexican.
- 1961-1962 History teacher at Pojoaque High School.
- 1962 Returned to work at Albuquerque Journal where he worked until 1990.
- Covered all sports in New Mexico including UNM Lobo football, baseball and basketball, and Albuquerque Dukes baseball. Albuquerque Dodgers, many Los Angeles Dodgers spring training camps covered some of the top boxing talent of the day, including Bob Foster, a young Johnny Tapia

- Known for his “Let’s Be Frank” opinion articles.
- Devoted most of his career to promoting New Mexico high school athletics. Frank built relationships with coaches and encouraged them to call in the scores after each game. Frank would then compile high school box scores from throughout the state for the morning’s paper. The first high school box scores, weekly statistics, and top-ten rankings (which are now common-place) were a result of Frank’s efforts.
- Hosted Annual WAC skywriters’ tour for decades.
- Official Host of national press for the 1983 NCAA Final Four sports journalists.
- Associated Press Top 20 voter for college football and basketball.
- Heisman Trophy & John Wooden Trophy voter annually during 28-year career.
- Maestas mentored journalists throughout his career. As the lead sportswriter for the state's largest newspaper for decades, much of the young talent that came through Albuquerque and elsewhere came under his tutelage. His influence is felt today through those who continue in the profession, He was a key component in the careers:
  - Longtime Associated Press sportswriter Pete Herrera,
  - Journal deputy sports editors Rick Wright and Ed Johnson
  - Santa Fe New Mexican editor Phill Casaus
  - Journal sportswriter James Yodice, who worked under Maestas and continues to cover high school sports.
  - Through some of the people he directly influenced, his "coaching tree" is seen in national figures in sports journalism, including Washington Post sportswriter Rick A. Maese and Iliana Limon, sports editor of the Orlando Sentinel.
  - Some of his other proteges have since left the industry, such as lawyer Marty Esquivel and education administrator Barbara Armijo, but think of Maestas as central to their development as professionals.

## Honors

- 1966, 1968, & 1970 New Mexico Sportswriter of the Year.
- 2006 Honored with NM Highlands Sports Hall of Fame “Special Remembrance” tribute.
- 2015 Honored with New Mexico Sports Hall of Fame “Award of Distinction” for his long-time contributions to New Mexico athletics.

## Family

- Married Emma Duran of Las Vegas in 1960 and had two sons.
  - Miguel Maestas, an educator who lives in Seattle.
  - Antonio “Moe” Maestas, State Representative/Senator from Albuquerque
- Later married Lydia Aragon of Tucumcari in 1985 who had five children:
  - Angela Speight
  - Roland Aragon
  - Ron Aragon
  - Sabina Vitelo
  - Lorenzo Aragon