

NOT FOR CIRCULATION

Award-winning sports editor

Peel Bldg. Bk.

Community remembers Frank Baliva

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By IAN HUTCHINSON
Staff Writer

There's a secluded room downstairs at Dixie Arena Gardens, hidden away from the noise of the nearby dressing rooms where guys go to talk hockey and exchange good-natured barbs. It is one of the many places where Frank Baliva showed what he was all about.

The 32-year-old sports editor of *The Mississauga News* drowned last week in a boating accident on Stony Lake, near Peterborough. Another Mississaugan, Gary Robb, 33, died while their friend, Kirk Moxam, was rescued.

An avid fisherman, Baliva is remembered as a dedicated family man and community worker with a great sense of humor and a keen sense of competition.

"He always had time for a few laughs and some humor," says former Dixie Beehive coach Norm Dowdall, quite often the target of Baliva's kidding.

Adds Beehive owner Howard Pallett: "We kidded him, of course, about being in Streetsville more than he was in Dixie."

"All I know is that when Mike Toth was sports editor and Dave O'Brien and Frank Baliva were sports writers, it was love at first sight," says former Streetsville Derby coach Tom Barrett, now with the Kitchener Rangers.

Barrett adds that Baliva's personality was such that he would anger you one minute with something he'd said or done and have you laughing the next minute.

While the dressing rooms and offices were places to show his sense of humor, Baliva's keen sense of competition was obvious on softball diamonds and touch football fields where he competed for *Mississauga News* teams.

Mississauga Recreation and Parks Commissioner Ian Scott remembers a Mississauga Sportsmen's Softball League (MSSL) game earlier this year in which his team, The Blitz, and The News were tied 1-1 in the top of the seventh inning.

"I was catching and Frank stepped up to the plate. I said, 'Don't do anything silly now, Frank,' and he hit a home run over the fence," says Scott.

"He called me Sparky," says MSSL president Rick Parkhurst. "I think it had something to do with Sparky Anderson. He was a fierce competitor. He liked to win and he was a pretty good little ball player."

Parkhurst adds the MSSL will award a trophy each year in the memory of Baliva, who also competed with The News in the Mississauga Touch Football League.

"He played baseball for me as a young lad," recalls Port Credit Arena manager Archie Chase. "Frankie was such a competitor and I like that."

The Mississauga News' offices were another place where Baliva showed his spirit and sense of humor. In addition to his support of Mississauga athletics, Baliva was also respected for his work

with *The Mississauga News*' Christmas Bureau Fund, which aids needy families during the Yuletide, and the annual Mississauga proceeds to various charities.

"He was dedicated to his work and offered his assistance to community projects *The Mississauga News* was involved in," says Heidi Weinhofer, co-ordinator of the Christmas Bureau Fund.

"He was a driving force behind the dinner committee," says Jerry Love of the Recreation and Parks Department and a member of the celebrity dinner committee.

"He was so supportive of Port Credit and athletics in general in Mississauga," adds Peter Martin who taught Baliva at Port Credit Secondary School.

As a writer and editor, Baliva had a lot to do with *The News* winning several awards for best sports pages. With Baliva working as sports editor, *The News* was judged best overall paper in North America by the Suburban Newspapers Association (SNA) in 1981.

He won the Ontario Lacrosse Association media recognition award in 1977 after receiving the Mississauga Firefighters photography award a year earlier.

In addition to newspaper work, he hosted the *Sports Mississauga* show on Cable 10 in the early '70s and worked as a color commentator of junior B hockey games on CHWO Radio.

"As an employee, Frank was a dedicated, hardworking 10-year man," says Ron Lenyk, publisher of *The Mississauga News*. "He represented the heart of *The Mississauga News*. He was a vital part of it."

"As a person, he was a committed father and a loving husband. His family was very important to him."

Baliva is survived by his wife Charlene, daughter Tara, 6, and son Derek, 1. Funeral services were held Monday.

Education fund to aid children

A fund for Tara, 6, and Derek, 1, the children of Sports Editor Frank Baliva has been set up by *The Mississauga News* for their education.

Donations can be made payable to *The Mississauga News* and can be dropped off or mailed to our offices at 3145 Wolfedale Rd., Mississauga, Ont. L5C 3A9.

More information can be obtained by calling Heidi Weinhofer at 273-8124.



The last farewell. Pallbearers, including *Mississauga News* publisher Ron Lenyk, carry Frank Baliva's coffin during Monday's funeral service for the late *News* sports editor.