



## Les Francis Leslie Fenderson

March 22, 1938 - December 14, 2024

Les (Francis Leslie) Fenderson passed away peacefully with the love of his life, his wife Shirley, by his side on December 14th, 2024. Les was born on March 22nd, 1938, in Bisbee, Arizona. He attended Bisbee High School, where he met Shirley (Baumkirchner). It was love at first sight! They were married for over 64 years. He attended the University of Arizona, where he played baseball and played in the College World Series. They later moved to NAU, where he received his teaching degree and later his Masters. He is survived by his wife Shirley, daughter Kim Zillweger (Chuck), son Fred Fenderson (Laura), and grandchildren Micheal (Jessica) & Sarah Zillweger, Garrett & Ellie Fenderson.

His passion in life was his wife, children, grandchildren, students, and players. He held great pride in his 64 year marriage and his children/ grandchildren. He was a devoted man of faith. He loved deeply and was incredibly supportive. He attended every sporting event, extracurricular activity, music, dance, football, baseball, volleyball, tennis, soccer, softball, swimming, wrestling, and basketball game/event possible. He loved the outdoors and going hunting. He took great pride in his own personal forest, his yard, spending hours attending to all the plants and grass. He was constantly “coaching” his kids and grandchildren in whatever endeavor they were into at the time, searching Google and learning how to teach growth and improvement.

He was the revered teacher of Anatomy & Physiology, and Biology at PHS for decades. He was the head coach of varsity baseball for 20+ years and assistant football coach for many years. To his players and students, he was a mentor, a teacher and coach, a father figure, a friend, and, at times, a dictator (his way or the highway). He has been called an “icon in the community.” He was respected by all who knew him. He earned that respect and reputation over the many decades of teaching and coaching. Most often, he had a quiet and stoic demeanor but could command the moment instantly. He “impacted” and had a tremendous positive “influence” on decades of students and players. He was both feared and respected. The fear of high expectations later gave way to achievement and success.

His teaching style and high expectations were integral to fostering a successful collegiate education for many and a new way of learning, thinking and problem solving for others.

His method was not wrought memorization or indoctrination but rather how to think critically, take in the information, evaluate, question, deduce and if necessary, extrapolate the most likely answer to the unknown problem. He taught confidence in self. His students left believing they could solve any problem. They learned how to study.

He was an inspiration. He taught how to take on hard challenges and deal with winning and losing. He is often described as “my favorite teacher/ coach” while at PHS. He had a great sense of humor, often humming the “death march” while passing out a pop quiz in class. He set high expectations for his students, as every time they walked into the classroom, they had to pass under the “through this door, walks the crème of the crop” sign hanging overhead. If you were caught goofing off, you would often get a “bop” on the back of the head, yet you knew he loved you and simply expected more out of you. He would never take credit for the success of the countless physicians,

dentists, veterinarians, physical therapists, nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, contractors, CPA's, lawyers, etc., who took his Anatomy & Physiology class or played for him, but he would have a quiet smile of pride knowing he helped spur their confidence to achieve their dreams.

He will be deeply missed but never forgotten. Les lived a great & meaningful life, filled with love of his family, friends, students and players.

Services will be held January 24 at 11:00 AM at Sacred Heart Church, 150 Fleury Street, with a reception to follow at the Hassayampa Inn, Marina room, 122 East Gurley.

# Previous Events

## Memorial Service

JAN 24. 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM (MT)

Sacred Heart Catholic Church  
150 Fleury St  
Prescott, AZ 86301-2702  
(928) 445-3141

## Reception

JAN 24. 12:00 PM - 2:00 PM (MT)

Hassayampa Inn, Marina Room  
122 E Gurley  
Prescott, AZ 86301