



z* Obituaries

Paul Richard Muniz, 63

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BERKELEY, Calif. — Paul Richard Muniz, an advocate for abused and neglected children, a cyclist, social activist and devoted father of five, died of gastric cancer on July 27, his 15th wedding anniversary. He was 63.

Muniz was the son of Richard Muniz of Brewster and the late Alice Jane (Satterlee) Muniz. He was the brother of Elenitz Muniz (Judy Fenner), also of Brewster. Though a longtime resident of Berkeley, Calif., Muniz had ties to Cape Cod that date back to the 1950s when his family began summering in Dennisport. His parents moved to South Dennis in 1983 and he was a regular visitor to their home.

Muniz retired last month after a 27 year career as a Deputy County Counsel in Contra Costa County, Calif., where he represented Children and Family Services in cases of child abuse and child neglect. He was recently honored with a statewide award for his work and was revered throughout California for training attorneys, judges and social workers on the latest developments in juvenile dependency law.

Muniz was born in Utica, New York, and raised in Norwalk, Conn. After working summers for the New Haven Railroad and graduating from Williams College in 1968, Muniz served three years in the Army, including one year as a transportation clerk at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, during the Vietnam War.

Muniz obtained an MBA from the University of Oregon, intending to go into the railroad business. When he became disenchanted with the industry, he instead joined a migrant farming crew, harvesting potatoes for two seasons in Chemung County, New York.

He moved to California in 1976 to organize support for the United Farm Workers, then settled in San Francisco, where he obtained a law degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law. He was hired by the Contra Costa County counsel in 1984, and came to specialize in juvenile dependency law.

“It was work that really mattered to him; he wanted to make sure that children were safe and well cared for,” his wife Tyche Hendricks said. “Some of his most satisfying moments were seeing foster children adopted into loving homes.”

He was a person of great compassion, kindness and integrity,” she said. “I feel pretty lucky: He died on our 15th wedding anniversary, but we were together for 21 years.”

Muniz was a board member on the Institute for Central American Studies, which supports grassroots health and development projects in Nicaragua, and a strong supporter of community-sponsored radio. He built trails on public land in the San Francisco Bay Area through the Muir Heritage Land Trust. And he loved to ride his bicycle through the hills there.

Many people spoke of his highly organized mind, deep commitment to social justice and playful sense of humor.

“He had this wry wit, a great ability to summarize, and again, a mastery of the law,” said Contra Costa County Superior Court Judge Clare Maier. “What I found touching about him was his love for his family and children. He just glowed when he spoke of them.”

In addition to his wife, father and sister, Muniz is survived by his brother, David Muniz (Honne Heller), of San Francisco; his adult sons, Jonathan Schatz (Laura Heyenga), Jonah Muniz, Tobias Bilovsky and Ian Jones-Muniz; his 11 year old daughter Amelia Muniz and his 11 month old grandson, Lucas Schatz Heyenga. Services in Berkeley are

planned for late August.

Memorial donations in his memory may be made to WOMR-FM, 494 Commercial St., Provincetown, MA 02657.