TRICE

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award-winning Special Olympics coach and a hall of fame athlete, died of natural causes at his La Grande residence Wednesday.

"He was a great humanitarian and an amazing ambassador for this community," said Joe Brogdon, a retired La Grande High School educator and an assistant Eastern Oregon University track coach.

Lin Casciato, a retired La Grande High School teacher and softball coach who lived in Union County for four decades before recently moving to Portland, said Trice's passing creates a painful void.

"This just leaves a big hole in the community," Casciato said.

Trice was recognized many times for his work as a Special Olympics coach. In 2007 he was named an assistant coach for Team USA at the World Games in Shanghai, China. That same year he received a Governor's Gold Award from Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski for his work in Special Olympics. Four years later, Trice was selected as a Special Olympics coach for Team USA in Athens, Greece.

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"He was constantly working year-round (on Special Olympics), all of those sports, all of those seasons. I don't see how he did it," Casciato said.

Trice also worked closely with other youth programs in the community, stepping forward whenever youths needed help.

"He never said no to anybody," Casciato said. "He set a high standard. He was an amazing volunteer. The guy was just an amazing human being."

The La Grande High School Tiger Booster Hall of Fame inducted Trice in late 2019 for his Special Olympics work and his athletic accomplishments. Trice was a star running back for the La Grande High football team in the late 1960s and later made his mark at Western Oregon University, Monmouth. At Western, Trice graduated in 1974 as the school's all-time leader in all-purpose yardage.

BABIES

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of a lamb, of hands, or of Christ, words of comfort or a description of the child, including "Beautiful" or "Precious Baby."

"I love 'Safe in the arms of Jesus,'" one of the women said, reading the inscription on a grave from the early 2000s.

One has no name or date at all, reading only, "Until the new world sweet baby girl."

The woman who organized the display wishes to remain anonymous, stating she is "not looking for recognition. I just want to share anonymous love." Her hope is the act will touch mothers who also have experienced the pain of losing a child.

"May 11, 2003, was Mother's Day. I had given birth to a little baby boy named Noah. He lived for two hours and passed away in his dad's arms," she said. "It devastated us."

Her son, her second child, was born at Oregon Health and Science University, Portland, at 25 weeks gestation.

"I went into early labor," she said. "Because I had been leaking amniotic fluid, his lungs were struggling to develop. When he was born he just didn't live long."

Staff photo by Ronald Bond

Three La Grande women placed more than 600 decorative butterflies at the two children's portions of La Grande's Hillcrest Cemetery as a show of support for mothers who have lost a child.

Because of the baby's condition, the couple was faced with the gut-wrenching decision of whether to allow doctors to try to save their child or "let nature take its course," she said.

"That was one of the hardest decisions of my life," she said. "To make that choice to let go and let God take control of that situation was very hard."

When she woke up after the death of her son in a different wing of the hospital, she knew there would be great difficulty ahead.

"The first thing I saw was, I was looking out over this magnificent view of Portland with Mt. Hood in the background," she said. "I woke up terrified. I knew I had to go out into that world and leave that hospital. There are no words to describe the emptiness in my heart in that moment. Throughout the next several weeks, I had a lot of trouble coping."

But during that time, her mother shared a dream of her late husband telling her their grandson was with him. That gave her hope.

She recalled realizing, "I have this child I need to be there for," alluding to her firstborn child. "I've gotta pull it together and focus on what I do have."

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The pain she experienced still was crushing, though, even as two more children followed, and especially on Noah's birthday.

"Every year, Mother's Day, especially when it fell on May 11, has been super hard for me," she said. "I have three children besides Noah, and I tried to put on a happy face for them, but inside I wanted to cry all day."

But then she read that article.

"It was very inspirational," she said. "I wanted to carry through and inspire others through what inspired me."

She also said her faith has been instrumental in helping her continue on.

"I don't believe God is a punisher," she said. "I believe God is our strength. I didn't feel he is punishing me, but I feel he is my core foundation. That got my heart through it."

FACE

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in identifying someone.

"People recognize faces, and characteristics carry across families," Redgrave said.

Re-creating the face, however, took some creativity. Redgrave had no actual skull to work with, just the digital copies of the photos the Oregon State medical examiner took of the remains after hunters found them in August 1978 in a shallow grave on an embankment of Finley Creek. And these photos were not direct shots of a forward-facing skull.

"The angles were really horrible," he said. "Sometimes medical examiners will take horrible photos of remains."

He tapped into his arts background to draft lines of perspectives based on the images, he said, eventually leading to a three-dimensional rendering of the skull. He also credited biological anthropologist Amy Michael who teaches at the University of New Hampshire and works with Redgrave Research Forensic Services. She provides guidance on ethnicity and age of the faces he brings to life.

From there, he said, re-creating faces takes about four or five hours, and this case was no different. He said he is a night owl and started the project at 2:30 a.m. Saturday, May 3. Later that morning, he sent the team members the video he made showing the face, including the superimposition that shows how the skull fits inside the face. He said that lets him check the work to make sure skull and facial angles line up.

Jederberg said she was shocked, surprised and impressed with the work. But she did not immediately push the images to the public via the Facebook page for the case, Finley Creek Jane Doe — Elgin, OR. Instead, the team arranged a video conference Tuesday with Dr. Veronica "Nici" Vance, forensic anthropologist for the Oregon State Medical Examiner's Office.

MORE INFORMATION
You can find the Facebook page for the case here: https://www.facebook.com/finley-creekjanedoe/
And you can check out Anthony Redgrave's work at redgraveresearch.com.

Jederberg said that meeting proved invaluable. Vance entered Jane Doe's image into the state's database for missing people, Jederberg said, and Vance told the crew she would work on tracking down the cremains. After the medical examiner's office wrapped up its work on the case all those years ago, state police shipped the bones to a crematorium in Walla Walla, where the paper trail went cold for Jederberg.

Vance, however, carries the kind of clout that could open news doors leading to the recovery of the cremains and the distant possibility of extracting DNA.

"That's where we're standing right now," Jederberg said.

The group on Tuesday posted Redgrave's forensic art on the Facebook page. Jederberg said overnight the page received roughly a hundred new followers.

"We've got all kinds of people saying, 'Could it be this person?'" she said.

Followers said they are combing through images on public databases of missing people looking for possible matches to the image of a slender-faced woman with big eyes. Redgrave said this is one of the reasons he does what he does.

Even if people don't recognize the face of a stranger, he said, they care more about a stranger once they see their face.

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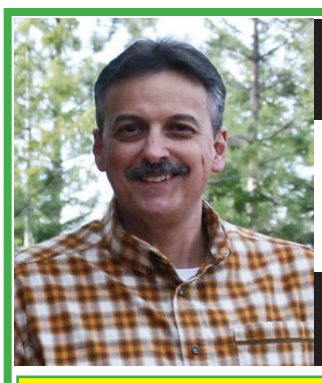

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~ Derick Reddington, Lieutenant LaGrande PD, Retired

"I am voting for Bill Miller for Union County Sheriff. After researching the four candidates, I believe Bill is the best choice for this important position. He has the breadth and depth in law enforcement experience we need. He has also received tremendous endorsements from those I respect and trust who have worked with him in multiple capacities over the years. Please join Ed and me in voting for Bill Miller."
~ Dixie Lund, EOU Retired

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