

Ex-USC Kicker Sam Tsagalakis, Whose Late Field Goal Beat Stanford In 1953, Dies

Jan. 6, 2021

**--FORMER USC KICKER SAM TSAGALAKIS, WHOSE LATE FIELD GOAL BEAT STANFORD IN 1953, DIES**

**LOS ANGELES**—Former USC placekicker Sam Tsagalakis, whose last-minute game-winning field goal beat Stanford in 1953, died on Saturday (Jan. 2) in Pasadena, Calif., of lymphoma. He was 88.

He hit a 38-yard field goal with 14 seconds to play to give No. 17 USC a 23-20 victory over No. 11 Stanford in 1953. It was only the second time in Trojan history that a kicker made a field goal in the final minute to win a game, following Johnny Baker's famous field goal that beat Notre Dame in 1931.

Tsagalakis, who stood just 5-7 and weighed 165 pounds during his USC playing days, was nicknamed "The Toe." He lettered 3 years (1952-53-54) at USC after prepping at nearby Manual Arts High. The 1952 and 1954 Trojans played in the Rose Bowl, where Tsagalakis kicked a PAT in each game (a 7-0 win over Wisconsin and then a 20-7 loss to Ohio State). The 1952 squad finished 10-1 and was ranked fifth in the nation.

After USC, he became a salesman, first in the construction industry and then in the coffee business.

Tsagalakis was predeceased by his wife, Joanie, a former longtime employee in the USC Athletic Department. He is survived by sons Michael (partner Donna) and Mark (wife Cindy and daughter Audrey).

A private family service will be held at a later date.

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