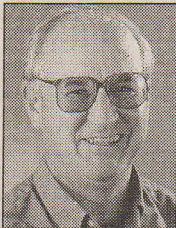


Emig carried passion for sports

Someone once told me that I may feel for a person, but I never can know how someone feels.



Art
Voellinger

Sports Views

I thought of such recently upon learning of the March 6 death of Bob Emig, 51, of Collinsville.

You see, I often felt sorry for Bob Emig, who had entered the fraternity of journalism as a sportswriter after graduating from SIU-Edwardsville in 1971 only to lose

that position when the East St. Louis Journal/Metro East Journal closed in 1979.

Emig had been a part of a sportswriting team at the Journal that championed high school athletics under sports editor Arnold Irish. The writers spawned from that Missouri Avenue location included the likes of Rudy Martzke, currently the sports television-radio critic of USA Today; Gary Mueller, who became a nationally recognized hockey writer for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch and Mike Robinson, who moved to Nebraska and became a newspaper publisher.

Bob though did not catch on with any of the St. Louis Area daily newspapers, and while he

spent several years as a freelance reporter of sports for KMOX radio and a writer and/or columnist for everything from the Redbird Review to the Journal Publications of Southwestern Illinois, I always felt he would have liked to return to the business of a daily newspaper.

I retained those feelings last fall when Bob and I last spoke at length. It was after an Althoff soccer victory, and I avoided newspapering in deference to Emig's passion for sports.

The site was the West End Tavern in Millstadt where owner Bob Alberter, like Emig, an Althoff alumnus, listened with me as Bob recalled the facts, figures, nicknames and games of outstanding Southwestern Illinois athletes.

"He was excellent with numbers," Althoff football Coach Glenn Schott said of Emig, who served as an assistant Crusaders boys soccer coach in recent years until resigning in 1999. Among his contributions was researching and producing the school's first soccer record book and also keeping stats for Althoff football.

"He was a tireless worker," said former Althoff soccer Coach Dave Stosberg, who echoed the sentiment of Mrs. Maureen Moore, director of the Prairie State Games for which Emig was the director of competition since 1993.

"He had been a volunteer and then a regional director," Moore said of Emig, whose relationship with the games was as strong as

his efforts as a youth sports coach and athletic at Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic School in Collinsville from 1993-98.

Also responsible for starting the annual Tournament of Champions youth soccer tournament from 1987-2000, Emig took pride in being able to boost area athletes. Meanwhile, he kept things in perspective when it came to recognizing two of his sons, Aaron and Adam Emig, who had set records as soccer players and football place kickers at Althoff.

In researching columns Emig had written for the Collinsville Herald, I found Bob's work absent of an overuse of the pronoun "I" but flowing with quotes from those he interviewed. His opinions were limited and to the point while he used quotes to develop insight.

A member of the Illinois High School Basketball Association's Hall of Fame for media contributions, Bob Emig touched many lives.

From when he became interested in writing as a high school correspondent, he showed a genuine concern for others while using sports as a way to reach out.

My sympathy to his wife Camille (nee Odolich), sons Aaron, Adam and Matthew, his mother Kathleen Emig, brothers Ken (Nancy) Emig and Jim (Jane) Emig and sister Sandra (Tom) Schreier of Belleville and family.