



Dragan "Don" Popovic

January 1, 1941 - September 29, 2025

Dragan "Don" Popovic passed away on Monday, September 29th in St. Louis, Missouri, at the age of 84.

Born January 1, 1941, in the small town of Berane, Montenegro, Dragan was the second of five children in his family. Early on, the young Dragan showed extraordinary talent in many sports before finding his greatest passion and talent for soccer. His professional journey began with his hometown club, Radnicki, and by age 17, he was recruited by top Yugoslavian teams, including Buducnost in Podgorica. As he rose through the ranks of the Yugoslavian national league, he earned the honor of playing for the celebrated Red Star Belgrade and later captained Hajduk Split. Dragan was known as much for his perseverance as his talent.

In 1967, Popovic's soccer career brought him to the United States to play in the National Professional Soccer League with the St. Louis Stars. He often shared that St. Louis was the most rewarding chapter of his career, as it was where he met the love of his life, Connie Michael, whom he married in 1971.

Following his playing days, Popovic established himself as a top-tier coach across North America, leading teams in Toronto, Rochester, New York, San Jose, Las Vegas, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis. Despite breathing fire on the sidelines, his players traded Dragan for "Don". Perhaps, the pinnacle of Don's

professional coaching career was guiding the New York Arrows to four consecutive MISL championships and earning MISL Coach of the Year honors for the 1980-81 season. In 1983, Don was named the North American Soccer League Coach of the Year while coaching the Golden Bay Earthquakes. Don and Connie eventually returned to her hometown of St. Louis where Don ended his professional coaching career with the St. Louis Storm and the folding of the MISL in 1992.

That same year, in 1992, alongside Lou Fusz, Jr., Don helped start the Lou Fusz Soccer Club, where he affectionately became known as “Pops” by his players. With Pops’ leadership, the club expanded to over 150 youth teams by his retirement. For almost three decades, Pops’ mentorship shaped thousands of St. Louis area youth, helping many secure collegiate scholarships and inspiring a generation of soccer players throughout the country.

In recognition of his profound impact, Don was inducted into the St. Louis Soccer Hall of Fame in 2004. His legacy is cherished throughout the St. Louis soccer community, where he is remembered as a dedicated husband, coach, mentor, and friend.

Don Popovic is survived by his beloved wife, Connie (née Michael). He is the cherished son of the late Mihailo and Milica Popovic, and was preceded in death by his sister Olga and brothers, Slobodan, Miketa, and Milan.

Services: Funeral from the SCHRADER Funeral Home and Crematory, 14960 Manchester Road at Holloway, Ballwin, Monday, October 6, 9:45 a.m. to St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church, 15642 Clayton Road, Ellisville for 10:00 a.m. Mass. Interment at Bellerive Gardens, Creve Coeur. In lieu of flowers, To honor his memory, the Popovic family requests that donations be made to St. Louis Children's Hospital. Visitation Sunday, October 5, from 2-7 p.m. Friends

may sign the family's on-line guestbook at Schrader.com.

Cemetery Details

Bellerive Gardens Cemetery

740 North Mason Road
St. Louis, MO 63141
(314) 434-3933
info@bellerivegardens.com
<https://bellerivegardens.com>

Previous Events

Visitation

OCT 5. 2:00 PM - 7:00 PM (CT)

Schrader Funeral Home
14960 Manchester Road
Ballwin, MO 63011

Funeral Mass

OCT 6. 10:00 AM (CT)

St. Clare of Assisi Catholic Church
15642 Clayton Road
Ellisville, MO 63011