Joseph Harold Navach

Died: November 13, 1994

Joe died at this home in Northridge, California, at the age of 55 on Sunday, November 13, 1994.

Raised in Barrington, Rhode Island, he graduated from nearby Moses Brown School in Providence, where he was on the yearbook and in dramatics. An athlete, he was a member of the football, track, and wrestling teams.

At Dartmouth he majored in history and was a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon fraternity. He wrestled his freshman year and was in the Newman Club all four years.

He attended McGill University on Montreal, where he earned both his M.D. and Master of Surgery degrees, did his internship at Kings County Hospital in New York, and completed his residency in orthopedic surgery at Rhode Island Hospital in Providence. His general medical skills were refined during a three-year practice of emergency medicine. Active duty as a military surgeon for three years was followed by private practice. He was board certified in the field and a fellow of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgery. He served on the staff of Valley Presbyterian Hospital in Van Nuys, California.

Little is known about Joe's personal life after Dartmouth, and only his address is listed in the 25th (1986) Reunion Yearbook.

However, a Google search produces some illuminating information about Joe and an achievement he is credited with. Call it a blend of some advanced acupuncture techniques, biophysics, and orthopedic medicine.

To advance what was considered Joe's path-breaking work, "The International Joseph H. Navach Project" was established at the Human Systems Laboratory — now called the Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health (LACH) — at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The project is under the guidance of John M. Ackerman, M.D., with participation and mentoring by Beverly Navach, M.D., Joe's wife. The Director of the laboratory is Gary Schwartz, Ph.D..

The mission statement for the Joseph Navach Project says that Joe "devoted his professional life helping people who were seriously compromised surgically as well as medically to return to reasonable functioning, utilizing traditional medical techniques and cutting-edge clinical biophysics." Joe was particularly interested in the use of something called the Vascular Autonomic Signal (VAS), a diagnostic acupuncture pulse technique discovered and developed in

the early 1950's at the medical school in Lyon, France, by neurologist, Paul Nogier.

Few physicians in the U.S. knew about the utility of this technique, says the mission statement, but Joe devoted the last 18 years of his life to understanding it, with the idea of using it to treat severely compromised orthopedic patients.

Whatever may be the latent promise offered by Joe's inquiries, and the project initiated in his name, the goal of improving the lives of patients, and his willingness to step outside conventional treatments, seems to have guided Joe's practice of orthopedic medicine.

It is not surprising, therefore, to see his named attached to an article in The Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (March 1996), published nearly two years after his death, that reports on the success of a new wheelchair cushion, using some of Joe's research, that alleviates the pressure on the bony prominences of chair-bound quadriplegic patients.

After Joe's death, the Governor of New Mexico in 1997 presented his widow, Beverly, with an award honoring Joe for the special wheelchair seat he had created.

Besides his wife, Joe left behind four children, Matthew, Karen, Christine, and Sharon.