

Walters, who founded soccer club, dies at 72

Bob Walters, founder of the Bellevue Soccer Club, died Sunday at the age of 72.

Walters, a retired chief master sergeant in the U.S. Air Force, moved to Bellevue in 1968 after retiring from the Air Force in 1965 with a 100 percent medical disability due to a lung disorder.

In 1972 he founded the Bellevue Soccer Club, and in 1973 the fledgling club signed up 60 children who paid \$10 each. In 1984 the club purchased a 23.5-acre site at 42nd Street and Nebraska Highway 370 for \$52,000, invested another \$40,000 in improvements, and paid the loan off in 1988.

Through the years Walter was increasingly in failing health until in the final few years he needed aid from breathing apparatus. Friends said that Walters never allowed his health problems to stand in his way.

Ed Babbitt, a Bellevue city councilman and another early member of the Bellevue Soccer Club, said Walters set

the standard when it came to effort and dedication.

"Sometimes, we would look at everything we were doing for the club and we'd think, 'Hey, this is taking up a lot of my time,'" Babbitt said. "But then we'd look at all that Bob was doing and our efforts would look like a grain of sand."

Walters was named the Bellevue Leader Man of the Year for 1990 in recognition of his work building the Bellevue Soccer Club from a fledgling organization to one of the state's premier youth soccer programs.

He also was honored with the City of Bellevue's Jewel of Bellevue award, was named Kiwanian of the Year in 1979, and held an Air Force Commendation Medal.

He is survived by wife, Susan; daughter, Elaina Cook; sister, Elsie Sewald of Orland, Calif.

Services will be held Thursday at 2 p.m. at Bellevue Memorial Chapel. Visitation will be held today, Wednesday, from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m. Burial will be at Bellevue Cemetery.

Memorials are suggested for the Bellevue Soccer Club.

Bellevue Memorial Funeral Chapel was in charge of arrangements.



Walters