

## **2006 Wayne Oyafuso**

**History, Life and Remembrance of Wayne Oyafuso by Walter Imahara, Feb 1, 2006.**

**Wayne's sister in Hawaii, Terry Oyafuso, sent me an e mail and found a quote by author unknown which she believes this to be him - "I want to be thoroughly used up when I leave this earth; for the harder I work, the more I live and I want to make it burn, passing it unto future generations." Is this the Wayne we knew, I think so?**

**Wayne was introduced to weight training when he was 14 years old. After a short period of training, Wayne knew that the sport of weightlifting was for him. Wayne's dream came to a halt in 1941, with the bombing of Pearl Harbor in Hawaii. As a loyal American, Wayne volunteered for military service, trained in Hattiesburg, MS, a member of the fame 442<sup>nd</sup>, and saw a lot of action in Europe. During combat in World War 11 he injured his left shoulder, which caused him to have a handicapped lifting career. On one occasion at a World Master in Vienna, AUT. Wayne and I journeyed to the area in France where he saw a lot of action. He was very pleased to see the improved conditions after 50 years.**

**I first met Wayne in Detroit, Michigan in 1962 at the Sr. Nationals. I came in from Germany in my officer's uniform and Wayne asked me a question and I said "Yes Sir" to him, recalled Wayne. We both started in the Masters program at the on start, Wayne in 1979. Wayne was 56 years old at that time and has competed regularly for 26 years. Wayne has medals in all the 20 World Masters Championships. Internationally he has attended five Olympic Games and five World Championships. Wayne has been IWF Category 1 and 11 referee since 1982 and has been selected for two weightlifting Hall of Fames. Today, I heard from Pedro Serrano, Chairman of the Pan American Masters Hall of Fame, and Wayne will be inducted in the Pan American Masters Hall of Fames as he was scheduled to receive it in July 2, 2006, Montreal, Canada.**

**Wayne has been my personal secretary of the World Masters since 1988. He has been my travel companion on numerous trips throughout the US and the World. I will give Wayne the deserved credit as the person responsible for accumulating all the data on 1377 master's weightlifters who have participated in the World Master since 1985. Thus the results were the creation of the IWF Masters Hall of Fame in 1993. Wayne started with a card system and recently purchased a computer to update the survey.**

**"Many men begin the journey well, and some travel well but few finish well. He fought a good fight, finished the race and kept the faith. Men of his caliber are few and far between and there are precious few examples of lives after which we can pattern our own. You have a great legacy." Author Rolf McColister**

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**The number of mail from all over the World in remembrance of Wayne tells how we all felt about Wayne. Wayne was a very special friend of mine and I will miss him dearly. Aloha, Wayne.**

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**As the numbers of emails that I have received on Wayne, he has touched so many lives. Quotes from emails.**

**He was a quiet genuine person and once you met him you could not help liking him.**

**He is always there, always working 110% for our organization and every single person involved. Such an unobtrusive man, such a champion on the platform among all the champions of our Masters movement – he was an outstanding lifter and an outstanding person. AUS**

**I treasure my friendship with Wayne Oyafuso, a special friend never to be replaced.**

**He always put the needs and best interest of the lifter above politics. Olympic Weightlifting was Wayne Oyafuso's life and he served the sport well. Weightlifting in Hawaii has lost a good friend and a special person.**

**I was very upset to hear of the sad news that Wayne had passed away. He will be missed by all. UK**

**Walter, you lost a great friend in the person of Wayne Oyafuso. Anything that I can say has been said. Weightlifting lost one of the greats and the Masters won't be the same anymore.**

**I know how much you and Wayne meant to one another and I am sending my heart to you during this time. Such a kind unselfish gentleman Wayne was. My heart is saddened.**

**Walter, we will all miss Wayne and especially you. You and Wayne have been good friends and traveling companions for a long time. Life is here for only a little while.**

**That is so sad; he was a true gentleman who loved our sport of weightlifting.**

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**Wayne was there.**

**USA National Masters, American Masters, Pan American Masters, IWF –Masters, World Masters Games and many other competitions. Wayne was there. He was there to help. He was there to work. Until recent years he was there to lift. He never complained. He was a giver, not a taker. He was a friend. He will be sorely missed.**

**Wayne was a GOOD MAN.**

**The first time I meet Wayne was in 1991 and the friendship continued as a master lifter and referee. I found out if he likes you, you will receive a box of Hawaiian candy. I will never forget on my visit to Hawaii in 1998, Wayne showed me his island. He even showed me his final burial place for serviceman. His work as “Statistic” for the IWF World Masters Hall of Fame was outstanding. He was a real great sports friend. “Person’s stepping in our lives and escorts us a little while. Some of them stay forever then he leaves their foot prints in our heart. Kurt Rosenburger, GER.**

**WE LOSS A GREAT FRIEND.**

**A sad day for the weightlifting family.**

**Wayne was a gentle, kind person that always took the time to make myself and my medical team feel welcome at every event. He always seemed to have a smile on his face and quickness in his step. Despite a long standing shoulder injury, Wayne continued to preserve and to lift competitively until 2003. He will be sorely missed. Mark Lavalley, M.D.**

**Words cannot express my sadness and grief on hearing the news on Wayne’s passing. I considered him a devoted friend and remember with great fondness many conversations we had. We laughed a lot together. He encouraged me so much when I first started lifting and coached me a few times. I am sending you sympathy and tears because I know how close you and Wayne were. You were the very best of friends. You did so much for him. I hope my words have given you some comfort. Wish I were with you so I could give you a big hug. With much love, sympathy and many, many tears. Barb Conley, Vice Chairperson, IWF Masters**

**Wayne helped us at every competition. You never had to ask him to help. He just showed up and went to work wherever he was needed. He was there early and stayed late. I never heard him complain. His outlook on life was exemplary. Wayne was a quiet giant. Mahalo Wayne.**

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**I appreciated Wayne's interest in me as a lifter. He encouraged me so much when I first started lifting. I also appreciated his sense of humor. We had many, many good conversations. I will miss him greatly.**

**Wayne was always a person willing to help other lifters whether they were his competitors or not. He would often go around and encourage others during the competition. He would do all this without making a big production about it. He was always assisting with the officiating and helping behind the scenes to keep the meets running smoothly. He will be missed by all.**

**Wayne was a great Masters lifter, great official and more important Wayne was a great human being.**

**Thanks for the sad update. I have known Wayne since the early 70's. He was a good friend of the late Gordon Andrews. Weightlifting has lost a good man.**

**RIP Wayne, I know you are lived in peace and brought it to all around you. A real gentleman if ever there was one.**

**A gentle man who always had a smile and a nod hello. One of the good ones.**

**I had known Wayne since 1992. I met him for the first time at the Pan -Am Masters in Regina, Saskatchewan. Like all you, I had grown accustomed to seeing Wayne at all the major meets. We all have seen Wayne working hard for the US Masters, Pan-Am and World Masters but he also donated his talents to the Senior Worlds in 2003. While sad occasions do occur they do serve to gently remind us that we can never take our own health or our friend's presence in our lives for granted. We are also reminded that time marches on even for the good ones among us and that the best we can do in this world is to serve our fellows as best we can while we are here. I count myself lucky to have known Wayne for as many years as I did. CAN.**

**Mr. Oyafuso was a gentleman in every sense of the word and quite a valuable asset to the game. It was great getting to know him through the Masters program as he was in Savannah frequently over the past five years. I'll always value our talks and the advice he gave me and I thank Bill Deni for introducing me to him when I was 17. I'm sure I can speak for the rest of my team when I say we will miss his smile. His character and his dedication to us all in the weightlifting community will be missed.**

**To Family Oyafuso. Please accept my heartfelt sympathy for this passing away. Wayne was a real sports-friend all time. Austria**

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**I knew Wayne before 1997, in fact about 1989 but not too well. It was after I became IWF Masters Secretary that I got to know each other and became friends. Then again, I imagine everyone who got into conversation with Wayne became his friend and he was friendly. He was good, he was kind, he was gentle and he was a gentleman. He loved weightlifting and everyone in weightlifting loved him. In 2005, he had heart surgery and was recovering. At Christmas we exchanged cares and I asked about his health and received a positive reply. I fully expected to see him at the World Masters in France in 2006. Maybe he will be because many of us will be having conversations and talking about him and that's good because he won't be forgotten. Bill Barton, UK.**

**It was 10 years before when for the first time I meet you and Wayne in Poland, since then I always will have a same picture of our FRIEND, a noble kind man of the masters, he will travel with the best of our memories. GRE.**

**Wayne, you have always been among my very best friends. I'll miss your sincere smile and your honest and gracious greeting, where ever we meet in our travels. Sincerely, I will miss you. Chuck Meole**

**On behalf of the Irish Amateur Weightlifting Association, I would appreciate it, if you would convey our heart felt sympathy to Wayne's family. He was a dear friend to us and we greatly miss him. With deepest sympathy, Billy.**

**I received the sad news about Wayne passing to better life. He, indeed, was a fine gentleman, a great lifter, sharp referee and best friend of many of us. I have good memories for him. May The Lord keep him in His Mansions. Best regards, Jose, DOM.**

#### **A Remembrance of Wayne Oyafuso**

**I was shocked and deeply saddened to learn that Wayne Oyafuso had died. Masters Weightlifting has lost one of its most devoted and hardworking supporters and I have lost a good friend. For the past 13 years I have traveled around the world to attend international weightlifting competitions, never missing a single Pan American or World Masters Championship during that time. Wherever and whenever these events took place, I knew I could always count on meeting Wayne there, talking with him, sharing meals with him, working with him to help the competitions run smoothly. There has never been a more reliable and faithful worker in the sport of Masters weightlifting.**

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Wayne always made the interests of our sport and his fellow athletes his number one priority. He never, for a moment, sought to serve solely his own interests or desires, nor did he ever engage in any form of self-promotion. He cared only about serving his sport and helping his friends. He was always prepared to serve as a referee, jury member, technical controller, or in any other role—especially at those times during the competitions when it seemed no one else was available. He was always willing to help with clerical duties and administrative tasks—all the little, unglamorous things that are so important to the smooth running of weightlifting competitions. Many times—so many times, I couldn't count them—Wayne was one of the first and also one of the last people at the competitions, helping to get things off to a good start and then helping to finish them off smoothly.

But it was not just in the little things that Wayne served his sport. One of the biggest and most important things of all—the IWF-Masters Hall of Fame—owes its existence to Wayne Oyafuso. He was the one who started the points system, and the one who did the enormous amount of work necessary to compile and maintain the competition records of the world's Masters Lifters. As we continue to honor our top Masters athletes when they enter the IWF-Hall of Fame, we should remember and honor Wayne Oyafuso for initiating this great institution of Masters weightlifting.

I know that others will be able to tell many stories about Wayne, to recount details of his life and service, of his early weightlifting career, and to tell of the many ways that Wayne helped people through the years. For so many years, Wayne faithfully assisted IWF-Masters Chairman Walter Imahara with innumerable administrative tasks and responsibilities that made the IWF-Masters a better organization, helping it to serve Masters Weightlifters throughout the world. Masters lifters everywhere will remember that they always saw Wayne present at every meeting and gathering, always ready to assist and serve. They will also remember that they saw Wayne continue to appear on the lifting platform, never ceasing to give his best efforts in competition despite great difficulties caused by long-term injuries. Wayne was justly proud of his determination to always, always, do his best in competition, no matter how difficult he found it to carry this through.

Beyond his service to Masters Weightlifters everywhere, Wayne was one of my best friends in the Masters weightlifting world. On a personal level, Wayne was as reliable a friend as he was a worker and official. Many times he helped me achieve better performances in competition, by pointing out technical flaws and making suggestions for improvements. Often he was the only one who spotted these problems and told me about them. Many of the photographs I have of my own lifting were taken by Wayne. He often used my own camera to surprise me with unexpected photos of my own lifts, sometimes when there was no one else besides me who was photographing the meet. I am very grateful to Wayne for this, especially since many of these photographs are the only records I have of some of my best

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lifting performances. I also benefited personally when Wayne carried out his official duties. Just last year in Edmonton at the World Masters Games, Wayne served as Technical Controller in the session in which I myself lifted, and he showed a firm hand in keeping the competition running smoothly and in good order.

And so many times I have been grateful to Wayne simply for being there, for being around, knowing you could count on him to help when help was needed and to join in discussions, meals, and social events. He was very intelligent and very knowledgeable, both about weightlifting and its history and about many other things. I always enjoyed talking with him and working with him. How much I will miss him, just as the whole Masters weightlifting community worldwide will miss him as well. David Meltzer, Seattle, Washington

Walter

I will keep you, Wayne, Wayne's family and all our weightlifting family in my prayers. Wayne was a just a wonderful human being. He was always there to help and encourage others. I think that it is encouragement that I will miss the most. I don't think I ever heard him say anything negative about anybody. He is and was exactly what all human beings are supposed to be. What a wonderful world we would have if all of us were just like him.

Pat

#### OSAGE SPIRIT SONG

Often in my travels I have come to the land of the spirits,  
As day approaches I travel and come to  
the land of the spirits.  
As the sun descends I travel and come to  
the land of the spirits.  
In my dreams I travel and come to the land of the spirits,  
Often in my travels I come to the land of the spirits,  
As a spirit I travel and come to the land of the spirits.

All have gone to the land of the spirits,  
Leaving a well-trodden path.  
Already along that path I am traveling,  
My grandfathers have gone to the land of the spirits,  
Upon their path I am traveling.  
All have gone to the land of the spirits,  
Upon their path I am traveling.

My footprints are even now upon the mystic path,  
The spirit path that lies before us.  
My footprints are even now upon the mystic path.

WAYNE, WE WILL MISS YOU

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**I knew Wayne as a man of few words. I have learned many things about Wayne. I learned about his heroic service in WWII. I learn about his illustrious career in Weightlifting. I learned about his world travels. I did not learn these things from Wayne. I learned them from his friends. Wayne always asked me about myself. He always asked about my family. He gave me words of encouragement and support. I am saddened by his passing and I will miss him. L. Lipinski**