

Obituary

NICHOLAS J. GALLO

July 12, 1950 – October 11, 2007

Nick Gallo had the right stuff—not only for being the kind of writer you wanted to read, but also the kind of human being you wanted to be with. He put together keen intelligence with passion, and balanced things out with compassion and impeccable ethics. Then, too, he was funny as hell.



Nick died suddenly on assignment in Greece October 11. Cause of his demise remains obscure. He fell ill on the flight, was taken to an Athens hospital, seemed, for five days, to be improving. And then he was gone. Suspects include a cardiac infection, pneumonia, perhaps an embolism. We'll know eventually.

Gallo's writing was impressive. He'd won a mountain of awards, including the Pluma de Plata (twice, for Best Travel Article on Mexico), presented personally by former Mexico President Vicente Fox, and the Darrell Bob Houston Literary Prize (from the Weekly for Best Article of the Year, a piece about his love of betting on the horses).

Nick also wrote several books, and some of his writings have been anthologized. Though primarily a freelance magazine journalist, he was first a poet, and so his journalism had depths of meaning and a polish uncommon in that genre. He once began an article about a trip to Mexico: "Like a jaguar on the prowl, the morning sun creeps out from a thicket of clouds, and stretches itself across the sky. I hardly care, huddling in the sand under two blankets, shivering with headache, fever and chills. First day on vacation, and I've brought a respiratory virus from home."

He knew how to keep readers wanting more.

Nick could tell you, with a mix of forethought and savvy, why the Seattle Mariners front office had bungled its latest trade, and then, if you weren't in utter agreement, back it up with a trenchant quote from Pablo Neruda, the glorious Chilean poet. He certainly knew the president was a hamburger, tried relentlessly to laugh away his anger and sadness with the state of our world, and, almost as important, he was born to play shortstop.

Nick had a cannon of an arm and for maybe 20 years was the spiritual heart of a rag-tag softball team called The Rocket. He played in a local pick-up basketball league for middle-aged guys who wanted to moderate their testosterone, and coached Little League baseball, partly because he was still a kid himself, and partly because Nick figured if he took the job it would prevent one more screaming failed-jock militarist from psychologically scarring young boys and girls. He could never understand those coaches who thought it helpful, or permissible, to yell at nine-year-olds. (Umpires, of course, a different story.)

Nick is survived by his wife, Laurie Brown, his two sons, Alex Gallo-Brown, 22, a writer and student at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Noah Gallo-Brown, 17, a student at Garfield High in Seattle; two brothers, Alex Gallo, of Eugene, Ore., and Matt Gallo, of Newport, Ore; two sisters, Lory Gallo, of Brooklyn, and Mandy Krantz, of Des Moines, Iowa; and his mother, Rose Gallo, also of Des Moines.

Services will be held at 4 p.m. Oct. 27 at The Chapel of St. Ignatius at Seattle University, 901 12th Ave.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests donations to the Nick Gallo Memorial Fund, 6312 23rd Avenue N.E., Seattle, WA 98115. Or to the Richie Sexson Fund for Failed Clean-Up Hitters, c/o Safeco Field.

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