

Forte, Basketball Great, Dies at 60

Chet Forte.

Chet Forte, possibly the finest basketball player in Columbia history, suffered a fatal heart attack on May 18 in San Diego. He was 60 years old.

Forte had hosted a sports talk show on radio station XTRA since May of 1991, a position which allowed him to return to the respected image he had earned as ABC sports director who helped to launch Monday Night Football.

One of the most celebrated men in sports media, Forte had worked 25 years at ABC, and directed the network coverage of two Olympic games.

Forte later overcame his battle with compulsive gambling, which, in September, 1990 had led him to plead guilty to mail and wire fraud and income tax charges, stemming from efforts to support his habit. The judge had sentenced him to five years probation.

At Columbia, Forte was a dominant scorer, although he was only 5'7". He still holds 12 records for the Lions, including season and career scoring, and his one-game scoring record of 45 points, set in 1957 against Penn, stood until Buck Jenkins scored 47 in 1991.

In 1956-57, his senior season, he scored 694 points in 24 games, a 28.9 average, and was voted college basketball's Player of the Year, beating out the great 7-footer, Wilt Chamberlain of Kansas. Forte was a consensus All-America, won the Haggerty Award as the top player in the New York Metropolitan area, and was All-Ivy and All-Metropolitan. He played in a national College All-Star Game and set a scoring record with 32 points.

Forte, a native of Hackensack, N.J., whose full name was Fulvio Chester Forte, is survived by his wife, Patricia, and daughter, Jacqueline.
