

REID BRAGA, 58, DEDICATED HOCKEY COACH AND PRANKSTER

Joshua Hudelson, Globe Correspondent

24 August 2002

The Boston Globe

Reid A. Braga of Attleboro, an oil company salesman and hockey coach, died of emphysema Wednesday at Northeast Specialty Hospital in Stoughton. He was 58.

For Mr. Braga, it was "family first, hockey second," said Mary, his wife of 36 years.

His love of the sport was so great that he braved the Blizzard of '78 to attend the Beanpot.

"We knew there was a storm, but he wasn't going to miss the Beanpot," said his son, Matthew of Attleboro.

After the game, Mr. Braga spent five days walking and hitchhiking home, riding part of the way on a Boston Globe truck, said his family, who didn't hear from him the entire time. "We didn't know if he was dead or alive," his son said.

Mr. Braga coached hockey at Bishop Feehan High School for 20 years, where he had a 159-68 record. He was head coach from 1986 to 2000. He received the Boston Globe Coach of the Year award in 1987, when he led Bishop Feehan to the state championship.

"He was a hard-nosed coach," said his son Jonathan of Fort Bragg, N.C. "He didn't want to hear any whining."

But more common was Mr. Braga's expression of concern for his players. "He showed them he cared about them as a person, not just on the ice. I think a lot of kids looked up to him as a second father figure," said Jonathan, who remembers his father calling parents and teachers to find out how his team was doing off the rink.

Born in Taunton, Mr. Braga grew up skating on the pond behind his house. He took up tennis at St. Francis College and continued to play into his later years.

In 2000, Mr. Braga retired from a 10-year career as a sales executive for Mutual Oil Co. in Brockton. Prior to that he had worked for Texaco for 24 years.

Mr. Braga also leaves a third son, Christopher R. of Annapolis, Md.; a brother, Thomas of Kennebunk, Maine; a sister, Lynn of North Kingstown, R.I.; and four grandchildren.

A funeral will be held Monday at 9:30 a.m. at the Sherman & Jackson Funeral Home in Mansfield. Burial will be in St. Mary's Cemetery in Mansfield.