

Radio man who aired Miners' historic '66 season dies at 71

By Laura Smitherman

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Jud Milton Klundt, a veteran radio broadcaster who was the play-by-play announcer for UTEP's 1966 national champion basketball team, died Monday of complications from emphysema. He was 71.

Klundt, who was known as Jud Milton on the air, did the local broadcast of the Miners' national championship victory over Kentucky in 1966.

"Not many people remember that most fans listened to that game on the radio, and that it was my dad," said George Klundt, Milton's son. "Thousands of people greeted the plane on its return from that game — one of El Paso's biggest claims to fame.

"I always joked that when my father was on the radio, at least I could turn him off. But it was really neat to hear him as a kid, as I'm sure it was for everyone," he said.

Off the air, Milton was nicknamed "El Flaco" be-

cause of his thin stature. But on the air, his contemporaries said he had the voice of a giant, very deep and riddled with dry wit.

Born in Bowbells, N.D., just south of the Canadian border, Milton attended Jamestown College in North Dakota for a degree in psychology and journalism. He met his wife, Carol, in college.

He then served in the Army Air Corps as a radio operator for troop carriers stationed in Europe. He got his first experience behind a station microphone while working for the Armed Services Radio in Germany.

In 1952 he moved to El Paso and worked as a civilian radio information specialist for Beaumont Army Hospital. He then began announcing part-time at JROD radio and eventually also worked for KTSM and KHEY radio.

El Paso talk-show host Paul Strelzin said he started



Milton

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his on-air career “spotting” for Milton at high-school football games in El Paso. He would stand behind Milton and point out who was carrying the ball or who made the tackle.

“I loved that man. He gave me my first job in radio and taught me everything I know,” Strelzin said. “He was a wonderful man who loved sports.”

Milton is survived by three children, Gordon of El Paso; David of Denton, Texas, and Judith Gorzeman of Berino, N.M.; as well as 12 grandchildren and one great-grandchild.

The funeral will be at 1:30 p.m. Friday in Harding-Orr and McDaniel Montana Avenue. Burial will be in Fort Bliss National Cemetery.