



Joseph Rantz

March 31, 1914 - September 10, 2007

Redmond, Washington

Joseph Rantz, the University of Washington oarsman who stroked toward gold with the 1936 U.S. eight at Hitler's Berlin Olympics, died in Redmond, Washington, on September 10, 2007. He was ninety-three.

Born in Spokane on March 31, 1914, and raised through a hard Depression boyhood that included stretches of fending for himself, he earned a seat in coach Al Ulbrickson's varsity boat by endurance more than polish. The crew that beat Italy and Germany on the Gr?nau course did so as underdogs in a spectacle designed for another country's mythology. Rantz came home, took an engineering degree, and spent decades at Boeing - a quiet professional life that never required the Olympic story to open doors.

Decades later Daniel James Brown's *The Boys in the Boat* returned him, reluctantly, to public view. He had kept medals and memories without turning them into a second career. Neighbors in the Seattle area knew a precise, private man more readily than a symbol of American grit.

He died in Redmond on September 10, 2007. The boat's story is now national folklore; Rantz's own preference was always the work that came after the finish line.

Services

Died in Redmond, Washington, on September 10, 2007. Olympic gold medalist, rowing eight, Berlin 1936; longtime Boeing engineer.

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