

# SC actor dies from leukemia

Bio-P

5-14-14

Peers remember Ralph Peduto's long and varied career

By Kara Guzman

kguzman@santacruzsentinel.com  
@karambutan on Twitter

**CAPITOLA »** Local actor, teacher and playwright Ralph Peduto, best known for his roles in "Mrs. Doubtfire," "The Rock" and "Patch Adams," died Monday from leukemia. He was 72.

Peduto died 12 days after being diagnosed, according to his wife Laura Peduto's Facebook post

Tuesday.

"My dear husband and dearest friend physically left our planet yesterday, but will never leave our hearts," wrote Laura Peduto, who added that the details of a memorial service will be announced soon.

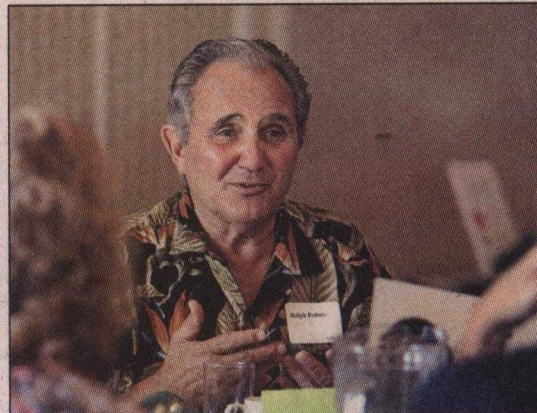
The Capitola resident's resume of movies, TV shows and commercials includes roles in "Cheers" and "Hill Street Blues." Some may remember Ralph Peduto as the

Midas man, who urged people to depend on him.

Santa Cruz writer Geoffrey Dunn said many people don't realize how extensive and successful Peduto's film, theater and writing career was. A 2000 Gail Rich award winner, Peduto was a great creative force who took risks on a daily basis, in a difficult industry, for decades, Dunn said.

"He kept doing that not only as

**PEDUTO » PAGE 3**



Local actor Ralph Peduto died Monday. He was diagnosed just 12 days before his death, according to his wife, Laura Peduto.

COURTESY PHOTO

## Peduto

FROM PAGE 1

an actor but also as a writer, two very different mediums," said Dunn. "I just thought he was really brilliant in both."

Born in a New Jersey working-class Italian family, Peduto moved to the Monterey Bay Area in 1973 for a broadcasting job at Carmel's KRML. He kicked off his acting career at Cabrillo College and later wrote plays produced there.

Steve Capasso, Santa Cruz actor, was a UC Santa Cruz student when he auditioned for his first play — "Root Rock," Peduto's 1979 autobiographical musical, performed at Cabrillo.

"I don't sing or dance but he convinced me to do it — that's Ralph," Capasso said. "He has this idea, he wants to go with it and he gets you to do it. He believed in me more than I believed in myself."

In the 1980s when Peduto began his Hollywood career, Capasso said he would carry a beeper for his agent to call when auditions arose in Los Angeles.

"He lived in Santa Cruz and he'd get an audition call and he'd race down there," said Capasso. "He loved being in the movies but he loved being in Santa Cruz more, I think."

Peduto also founded Acting On Camera, a Santa Cruz school for adults and youth.



DAN COYRO — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

Ralph Peduto was photographed working in a local sound studio for a Sentinel story in February 1981.

Santa Cruz resident Regina Henderson said both she and her daughter took acting classes with Peduto around 20 years ago. Henderson said Peduto was an engaging, giving and amazing teacher, and she'd often run into him at downtown cafes.

"He was like the mayor. People came by to talk to him," Henderson said. "He had a really sweet, like, Joe Pesci voice. He'd say hi and he'd remember your kid's name."

Santa Cruz musician Peter Cor said he helped Peduto produce five songs, including one named "Butt Naked in Tinseltown," a cautionary tale about the life of a Hollywood actor.

Cor said he started working with Peduto on a stand-up comedy show three months ago, and also recently began attending meditation sessions with Peduto each Monday at Soquel's Land of Medicine

**Born:** March 9, 1942

**Died:** May 12, 2014

**Who:** Capitola resident best known for his acting roles in "Mrs. Doubtfire," "The Rock" and "Patch Adams"

**Family:** Wife Laura Peduto, a son, daughter and several grandchildren

Buddha.

The Buddhist teachers dedicated Monday's meditation session to Peduto, the day he died, said Cor.

"He's left a big void on so many levels," Cor said, adding, "but that just shows the kind of guy he was."

Capasso said Peduto was happy making it as far as he did, because of his family.

"I think he always wanted more, a break to get a bigger role, to open more doors. I think we all want that," said Capasso. "But I think at the end of the day, he had his family and that meant more to him than anything else."