



HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION
(CIFSS)

75th historical "tidbit."
Dr. John S. Dahlem


William W. Russell



CIF-SS COMMISSIONERS

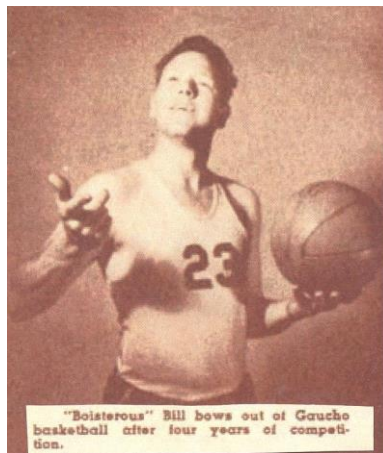
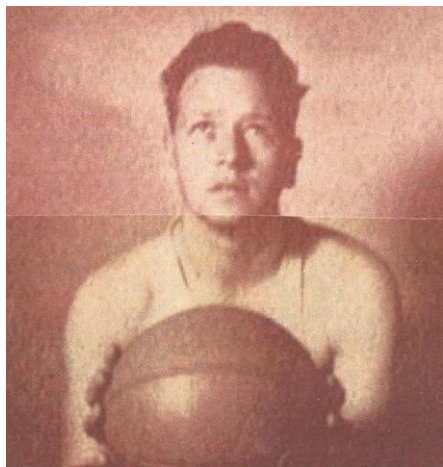
WILLIAM WILSON "Bill" RUSSELL

William Wilson Russell was born in St. Louis in 1915. When the stock market crashed in 1929 his family moved to Santa Barbara where he attended Santa Barbara High School graduating in 1932 at the age of 16. He attended Santa Barbara State College (which later became the University of California at Santa Barbara) but had to drop out to help his family through difficult financial times. He continued his education in 1938 and graduated with honors in 1940. During his career in college he was an outstanding athlete lettering in baseball his sophomore year and three years in basketball. He was the captain of the basketball team and they won the State Basketball Conference Championship for the first time (Bill was later inducted into the UCSB Hall of Fame). In 1940 he wanted to attend Boalt Hall Law School at Berkeley, but the war broke out. He became the Graduate Manager of Athletics and Student Activities at UCSB. He served three year of war service in Alaska working with military stations installed to protect America from Japanese invasion. He returned after the war to his previous position at UCSB and was the Ticket Sales Manager and Supervisor of Park Personnel for the Santa Barbara Dodgers baseball team.

William Russell

Baseball (1938), Basketball (1938-40)

Captained the 1940 UCSB basketball team...Named All-CCAA in 1940...In 1938, led the Gauchos in hitting, home runs, and RBI.



The quest for a new CIF-SS Commissioner:

C. I. F., SOUTHERN SECTION
MONTHLY BULLETIN

Vol. 13

OCTOBER, 1949

No. 2

OFFICE PERSONNEL

Mr. Van Patten has urged the Executive Committee to complete plans for turning the C. I. F., Southern Section office over to new hands in a year or so. Little progress has been made so far. Two candidates were interviewed by the Executive Committee. No commitments were made and no recommendations to the Council have been prepared.

Anyone interested in the position should address a letter to Mr. Van Patten who will notify candidates how to proceed.

When the committee adjourned they agreed to meet again at 1:00 P. M. Tuesday, September 27, 1949. Mr. Van Patten was directed to call the meeting.

●

From the "Monthly Bulletin" dated October, 1949:

CANDIDATES FOR C. I. F., SO. SECTION
COMMISSIONER OF ATHLETICS

The meeting of the Executive Committee was called mainly to interview candidates for the position of Commissioner of Athletics for the C. I. F., So. Section for next year.

A number of candidates were present and were each interviewed at length.

The Executive Committee spent about three hours on the question of a man for the C. I. F. Office for next year. They agreed unanimously to recommend to our Council Mr. William W. Russell, Graduate Manager at the University of California at Santa Barbara, for the position. The Executive Committee will recommend to the Council that Mr. Russell work with Mr. Van Patten in the office from February to June 1950 and take over the office July 1, 1950.

Mr. Laurensen and the Executive Committee agreed to call a special meeting of the Council on Tuesday, October 18 to pass upon the recommendation. The exact hour and place of the meeting will be announced later by letter to the Council. Early action on the recommendation is necessary, that Mr. Russell may fulfill his obligations to the University of California at Santa Barbara.

●

From the "Monthly Bulletin" dated January, 1950:

Mr. William W. Russell. Mr. William W. Russell who will be in the C. I. F. Office starting February 1, 1950 was introduced to the meeting. He expressed his pleasure at being associated with the C. I. F., So. Section. He assured those present that he would be all for the C. I. F. when he comes to the office.

William W. Russell became the second CIF-SS Commissioner on February 1, 1950. He was considered to be the strongest candidate with a “tremendous capacity for work, an engaging personality, a keen sense of humor, and practical experience with the problems of officiating along with all phases of competitive athletics.” He was initially called the “Commissioner-Elect!”

THE BILL RUSSELL YEARS



William W. Russell

1950 -
1954

William W. Russell was appointed as the second CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics upon the retirement of Seth Van Patten in 1950. An unusual scenario of events led to his appointment. Russell, a native of Santa Barbara, had returned to Santa Barbara State College (later to become UC Santa Barbara) to assume his position of manager of student affairs and athletics after service in World War II. In the spring of 1950, he was summoned to the office of Santa Barbara High School Principal Harvey Holt, a member of the CIF-SS Executive Committee, which at the time was in search of a replacement for Commissioner Van Patten. Holt had been made aware of Russell as a candidate for the commissionership by then Santa Barbara High football coach and athletic director Clarence Schutte. He informed Russell of the impending vacancy at the CIF Southern Section, and out of the meeting Russell filed an application.

“It is my understanding that the CIF-SS had approximately 40 to 50 applicants for the position,” noted Russell. “Most of the applicants were either coaches or athletic directors, who had been around for a long time. The committee couldn’t settle on anyone, so I was offered an opportunity to interview for the position. In the interview, Mr. Kinter Hamilton, who was chairman of the Executive Committee, asked me what I knew about the CIF and my reply was ‘not much’. All I knew was what I had gathered from Mr. Holt and a few things I picked up in glancing at the Blue Book. He explained to me that a big part of the job was being able to say no to people who would want an exception to the rules. He asked me point-blank

if I could say no to principals and superintendents on any issue, and my response was something like ‘I wouldn’t hesitate to say no to you’. About six months after I was appointed Commissioner, Mr. Hamilton told me my flippant answer to that particular question insured him I would be secure in the position.”

“It was a lucky break for me,” added Russell. “I know that I would never have done anything in my life as an occupation that I would have enjoyed more than working at the Southern Section and State CIF Offices.”

In his first year, there were three people Commissioner Russell would call on if he had a question or wasn’t absolutely certain about a ruling of some type. They were Harry J. Moore, who was the State CIF President and principal of Long Beach Wilson High School, former Commissioner Van Patten, and L.A. City Commissioner Bill Lopez. Russell felt that by consulting other experts in the field, he would be better equipped to develop consistency in his decisions and confidence in the public’s view of the organization.

Of course, Russell received a great deal of assistance from former Commissioner Van Patten.

“He brought the organization into the world and pulled it together from a loose-knit association. He centralized the CIF Southern Section for all sports. He was just a person who you couldn’t help but admire and get to like for his manner and ability. His accomplishments were tremendous. I had the opportunity to work under him for six months. He left good records and worked diligently to make the transition smooth.”

When Russell took the reigns of the CIF Southern Section in 1950, the office was located at the Helms Hall Athletic Foundation building, located at 8760 Venice Blvd. in West Los Angeles. The membership stood at approximately 160 schools. The playoffs in each sport were paired six-to-eight months prior to their opening by the Executive Committee, which would assign the champion of one league to meet the champion of another in the first round. In those days, only league champions gained entry.

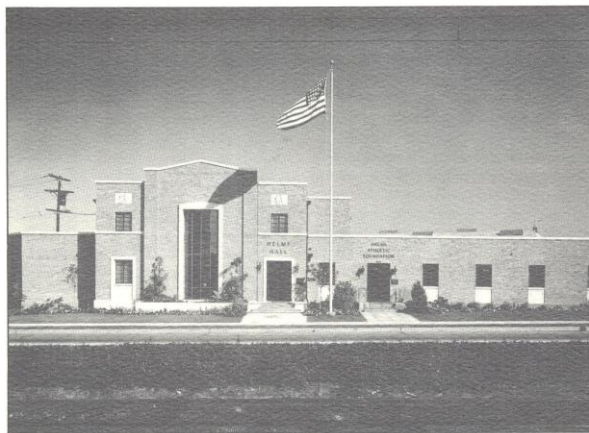
RUSSELL

(Continued from page 6)

Early on, Russell saw that officiating for the various sports had serious problems in the outlying areas. In metropolitan Los Angeles and the larger cities such as Long Beach, Pasadena, Santa Ana and San Diego, the officials had good numbers and well organized associations. These associations provided instructional programs, in which the officials attended weekly meetings and were required to pass qualification examinations. But in outlying areas such as Needles, Barstow, Paso Robles and Lancaster, there were only a few officials to go around and no associations. All too often, home town officials worked the local games, which invited controversy. So Russell formed instructional programs for football and basketball to travel to the vast boundaries of the section and provide clinics. The experts he sought to conduct these clinics were Norman Duncan of UCLA, who was an official in the NFL, and Ken Fagans of Compton High School, who was an outstanding basketball coach and official.

"Neither Norm or Kenny was paid a nickel to make those trips," said Russell. "They volunteered because they had a genuine concern for the welfare of high school athletics in Southern California. We would leave together on Friday afternoon and conduct clinics on Friday night, Saturday afternoon and Saturday night. As a result, we ended up with a better organization. We also assisted the officials in getting some mileage pay and were finally able to ask officials to travel for assignments in the outlying areas."

Another problem that arose during Commissioner Russell's tenure dealt with assigning home and away teams for playoff games. When he first became Commissioner, Russell continued the old procedure of flipping a coin, but most of the time, competing schools could not be in attendance. The only person other than himself who actually saw the flip was his secretary, and many times the coaches or administrators calling for results were hard to convince. So Russell devised what he termed "the telephone-book routine", where he would ask one school for an odd or even number in reference to the last number on a specific page of the Los



THE HELMS ATHLETIC FOUNDATION Building, located at 8760 Venice Blvd. in West Los Angeles, served as home for the CIF Southern Section from November of 1949 through March of 1959

RED LETTER DATES (Continued from page 5)

FEB. 1952	As a non-profit school organization, the CIF is ruled to have tax-exempt status on admission receipts from playoff games by the Internal Revenue Service.
MAY 1954	Commissioner Russell is elected to the position of Assistant Executive Secretary of the State CIF and Protection Fund. The position is eventually entitled State CIF Commissioner of Athletics.
JULY 1954	J. Kenneth Fagans is appointed as the third CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics.
DEC. 1956	In a landmark CIF-SS event, Anaheim and Downey High Schools play to a 13-13 tie to share the major-division football championship. The crowd of 41,383 at the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum endures today as the largest in CIF-SS history. The Mickey Flynn-led Colonists were coached by the legendary Clare Van Hoorebeke, while Downey and quarterback Randy Meadows were directed by Dick Hill, who went on to become the first CIF-SS coach to win grid championships at three different schools, including Santa Ana Valley in 1974 and Santa Ana in 1985.
DEC. 1958	Commissioner Fagan signs the CIF-SS "Articles of Incorporation," insuring the organization will forever maintain status as a non-profit organization unto itself.
APR. 1959	CIF Southern Section Office moves to 5443 W. Washington Blvd. in Los Angeles.
JUNE 1960	Member schools of San Diego County split off to form the CIF San Diego Section.
MAY 1965	Ground is broken for a permanent CIF Southern Section Office on the campus of Richard Gahr High School in Cerritos. Land for the new structure is donated by the Artesia-Bloomfield-Carmenita School District. Dr. Murrell Miller, Superintendent.

see RED LETTER DATES page 19

Angeles directory. That way the competing schools could look it up if they wanted to confirm it.

In 1951, Russell was instrumental in forming the first-ever CIF golf competition. With the assistance of Executive Committee member Oliver Corbin, he headed off a proposal of some member leagues to discontinue the football playoffs. He was involved with the CIF Southern Section's decision to adopt the National Federation Football Rules in April of 1950, which eventually led to state-wide adoption of National Federation Rules in all sports. In 1952, Russell saw to it that the CIF-SS obtained non-profit status, and thus would not be taxed on playoff admission receipts.

When the State Executive Director of the California Interscholastic Federation Protection Fund, Arthur Bingham retired in 1955, Bill Russell was appointed State Commissioner. He inherited the dual function of administering the state insurance program, in addition to overseeing the function of the State CIF. Under his direction the CIF Protection Fund became the largest school non-profit benefit and relief association in the United States. While State Commissioner, Russell served as Chairman of the National Federation Track and Field Rules Committee, where under his leadership, the first ever combined rule book for both boys and girls competition was established. He was also instrumental in ushering in the highly successful state-wide interscholastic athletic program for girls in the early 1970's. In 1980, Russell retired from a 30-year career as one of the most influential and progressive leaders in the development of California's interscholastic athletic program. "The CIF is a great organization," added Russell. "It has good purpose and has built an outstanding reputation over its long history. It gives me great pride to say that I was part of that history."



Interesting factoids on Russell's tenure:

- He had two secretaries and himself in the office.
- When he had questions of what to do in his first year he would call Harry J. Moore, Principal at Wilson High School.
- Bill said that Seth Van Patten was very helpful and left good records.
- He had real problems in assigning officials in small towns like Needles or Barstow where the only officials were "hometown officials."
- Russell did all the assigning of officials.
- He had a league called the Tri-State League" with teams from California, Nevada and Arizona.
- There were problems with feelings towards private schools by the public schools....he would go out and discuss those feelings with the Catholic Athletic League and they were receptive because they didn't want to be ousted from the organization.
- In the early 1950's there was a movement to discontinue the football playoffs because they lasted into December.
- The local newspapers always supported him and the CIF-SS.
- They ran a State Track Meet at Stanford Stadium, but they only had 8 lanes so they had to put three runners in a lane...they did not stagger them and Russell ran down from the stands, stopped the race before the starter shot the gun off, and set the runners in the proper place.
- Russell let the women decide in the member schools what they wanted to do with girls sports. A women's committee drew up rules for girls similar to the boys. Many schools did not want to abide by those rules. CIF-SS was playing by two rules. When Title IX came out Russell asked the Office of Civil Rights to put in writing what they wanted the CIF-SS to do. That quieted the schools down and the Civil Right office went after those schools not abiding by the Title IX rules

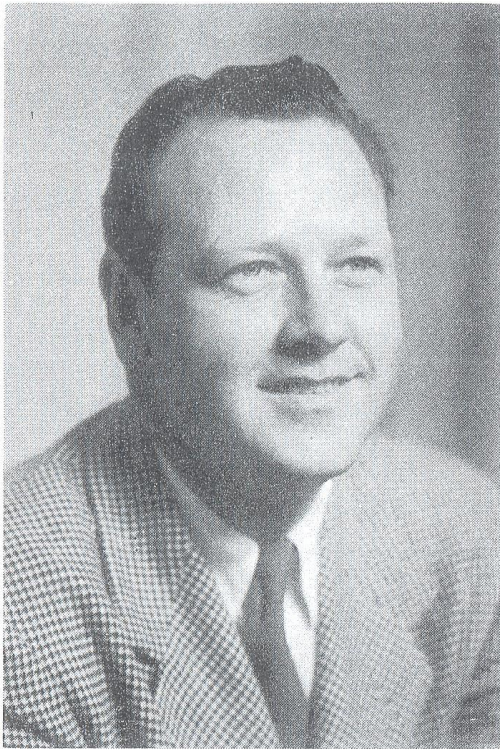


C. I. F., SOUTHERN SECTION MONTHLY BULLETIN

Vol. 18

DECEMBER, 1954

No. 3



WILLIAM RUSSELL

RUSSELL LEAVES SOUTHERN SECTION

After nearly five years of loyal service to the C.I.F., Southern Section, Wm. W. Russell, Commissioner of Athletics, is leaving to accept a position as Assistant Executive Secretary of the State C.I.F. Mr. Russell assumed his new duties in the State Office at Berkeley on November 1, 1954.

It was in February, 1950, that Bill Russell was selected from a large field of candidates to succeed the beloved Seth Van Patten, as the second Commissioner of the C.I.F. Coming to the Southland from Santa Barbara College, where he served nine years as Graduate Manager, Russell brought to his new position a tremendous capacity for work, an engaging personality, a keen sense of humor, and practical experience with the problems of officiating, and all phases of competitive athletics.

The outstanding athletic program now in operation in the Southern Section of the C.I.F. attests to the fact that the Executive Committee and Council made a wise choice when Bill Russell was appointed to succeed Mr. Van Patten.

During his tenure in office, Mr. Russell, with the aid of the Council, instituted the following improvements in the C.I.F., SOUTHERN SECTION, Athletic program:

- I. Improved officiating—
 - a. Through the adoption of the IBM selection system for appointing officials.
 - b. Assisted in developing a uniform instructional program by affiliation of outlying groups with the Southern California Officials Associations.
 - c. Conducted clinics in outlying areas.
- II. Accounting and budgeting system—
 - a. Instituted a system of accounting which permitted an accurate day to day picture of income and expenditures.
 - b. Instituted a budget system for expenditures.
- III. Playoffs—
 - a. Developed separate playoffs for small and large schools in football, basketball, and baseball.
 - b. Placed playoff games, as far as possible, in the communities involved.
 - c. Widened the scope of participation in the playoffs by including second place teams in basketball and football.
- IV. Golf—
 - a. Developed a free lance golf league.
 - b. This league permits the scheduling of triangular and dual competition, cutting down on transportation and time away from class.
- V. Eligibility questions—
 - a. The Executive Committee has placed more emphasis on the Commissioners Office handling eligibility cases so a more uniform interpretation could be obtained.
 - b. This has provided for quicker service to the schools on eligibility matters.
- VI. New schools joining the C.I.F., Southern Section—
 - a. During the past four years about 50 new schools have joined the C.I.F., Southern Section.
 - b. Better assimilation of these schools into the program has been provided.

It is with the well wishes of all persons connected with the C.I.F., Southern Section, that Mr. Russell leaves to undertake his new duties in the State C.I.F. Office.

Russell served on many state and national sports committees:

- National High School Track and Field Rules Committee 1953-79; Chairman 1957-79.
- NCAA Track and Field Rules Committee 1958-73.
- Advisory member – High School Football Rules Committee 1954-1980.
- Member Executive Committee for Southern California Committee for the Olympic Games, 10 years.
- Member Executive Committee of the U. S. Track and Field National Hall of Fame, 2 years.
- Member – Executive Committee – National Federation of State High school Athletic Associations – 1972-75.
- Member – Board of Directors – Southern California Tennis Association 1951-1980.
- Member – Tournament Committee and Rating Committee – Southern California Golf Association; member SCGA Board of Directors 1981-92.

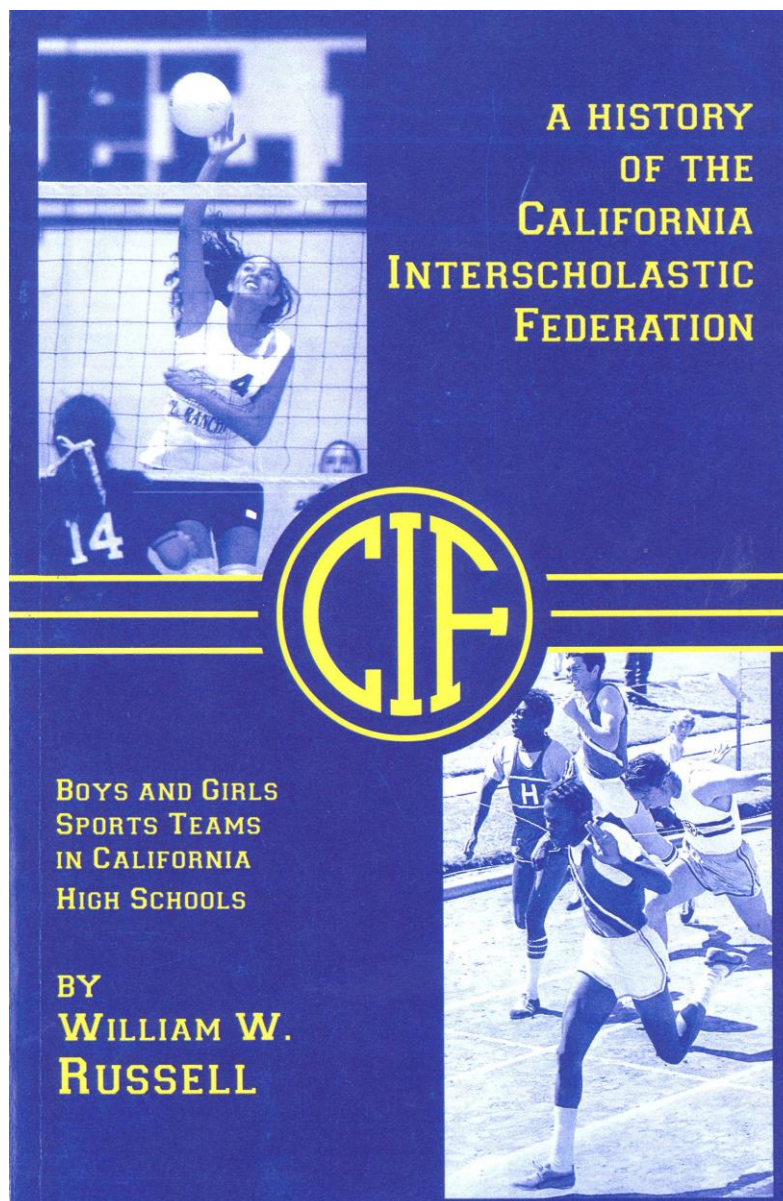
In 1981, Bill Russell was the recipient of the NFHS -National Federation of State High School Associations' highest honor. Granted to but one person each year "for outstanding services in the field of interscholastic activities at state and national levels," The Award of Merit was presented to Bill Russell in 1981 at the National Federation convention in Dearborn, Michigan.

In 1998, the UCSB Alumni Association honored Russell with their Distinguished Alumni Award for his far-reaching work in athletics, for service to UCSB, his city and his state.

Russell wrote his book, *A History of the California Interscholastic Federation: Boys and Girls Sports Teams in California High Schools*, covering the period from its inception 1914 to 2000.

He was a member of La Cumbre Golf and Country Club since 1968, serving on its Executive Board from 1975 - 78 and 1988 - 91 and chairing golf and handicap committees. During that time he shot his age twice – at 69 and again at 80. Russell played golf till age 91.

A member of the Men's Garden Club, Russell's garden bloomed radiant with orchids and azaleas, protea and varietal bulbs, exotic shrubs and succulents.



BILL RUSSELL RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

Former CIF Southern Section and State Commissioner of Athletics Bill Russell was honored at the annual California Coaches Association Coach of the Year Banquet as the 1989 recipient of the William S. Rockwell Memorial Distinguished Service Award.

Russell, who replaced CIF-SS "founding-father" Seth F. Van Patten as the section's second Commissioner in 1950, guided the organization through the 1953-54 school year before being named CIF State Commissioner of Athletics, a position he held until his retirement in 1980.

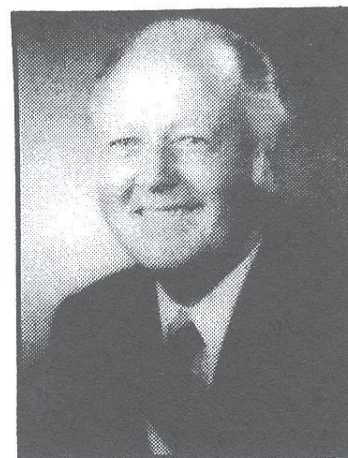
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In 1955, Russell became Executive Director of the California Interscholastic Federation Protection fund and inherited the dual function of adminis-

trating the state insurance program, in addition to overseeing the function of the State CIF. Under his direction, the CIF Protection Fund became the largest school non-profit benefit and relief association in the United States.

As State Commissioner, Russell also served as chairman of the National Federation Track and Field Rules Committee, where under his leadership the first combined rule book for boys and girls competition was published. He was also instrumental in ushering in the highly successful state-wide program for girls athletics in the early 1970's.

Russell joins a group of 16 recipients of the prestigious award, which dates back to 1971. The list includes another former CIF-SS Commissioner of Athletics, Kenny Fagans, who was honored in 1987.



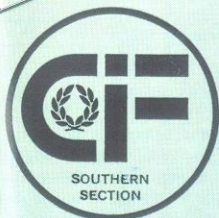
William Russell
30 Years with CIF

William W. "Bill" Russell, age 94, passed away on August 9, 2009. He is survived by his daughter and granddaughter, Diana and Thea Vondervoort.



WILLIAM W. "BILL" RUSSELL
(1950-1954)

WILLIAM W. "BILL" RUSSELL SERVED AS THE SECOND CIF-SOUTHERN SECTION COMMISSIONER FROM 1950 UNTIL DESIGNATED STATE CIF COMMISSIONER IN 1954. DURING HIS TERM AS CIF-SS COMMISSIONER, COMMITTEES WERE APPOINTED TO ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE CONDUCT OF CIF-SS CHAMPIONSHIP EVENTS. HE WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN FORMING THE FIRST LEAGUE FOR CIF-SS GOLF COMPETITION, AS WELL AS RESTRUCTURING THE SOUTHERN SECTION TRACK & FIELD COMPETITION. RUSSELL HAS SERVED AS THE CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION TRACK & FIELD RULES COMMITTEE SINCE 1956, AND UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP AS CHAIRMAN, THE COMMITTEE PUBLISHED THE FIRST COMBINED RULE BOOK FOR BOYS' AND GIRLS' TRACK COMPETITION. BILL RUSSELL, AS EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (BEGINNING IN 1955) OF THE CIF PROTECTION FUND WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ITS EVENTUAL DEVELOPMENT INTO THE LARGEST SCHOOL NON-PROFIT BENEFIT AND RELIEF ASSOCIATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

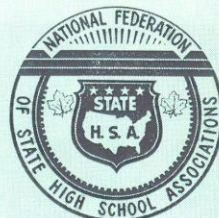


MONTHLY BULLETIN

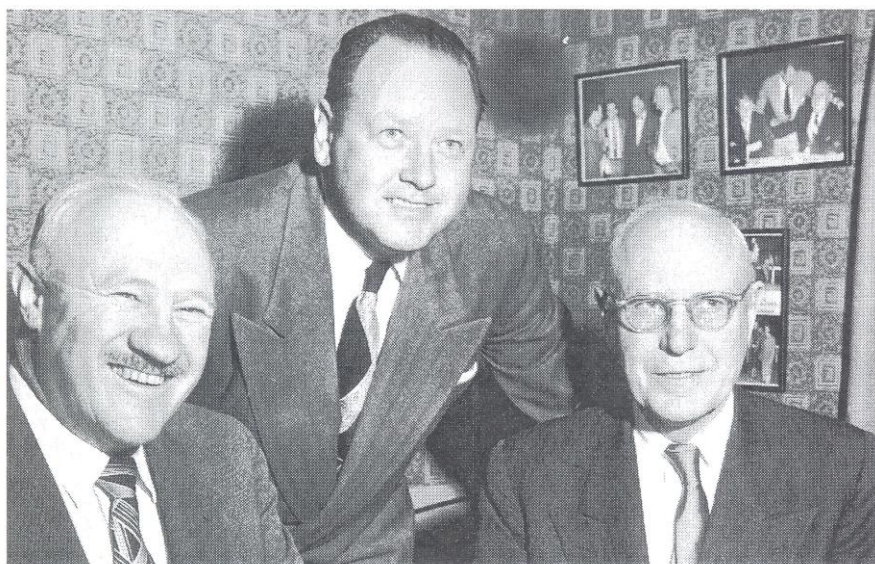
VOLUME 43

OCTOBER, 1979

No. 2



COMMISSIONER WILLIAM RUSSELL
CONGRATULATES THOMAS BYRNES,
NEXT CIF STATE COMMISSIONER
OF ATHLETICS



l to r: Willard B. Knowles, Bill Russell and A.B. Ingham, Executive Secretary, report on football rules changes in 1955.





KEEPS HERALD-EXPRESS CUP

Capt. Henry Roselli of the victorious Compton High grid squad takes The Herald-Express perpetual title trophy from C. I. F. Commissioner William W. Russell after his team beat Fullerton, 26-14.

1958 CALIFORNIA STATE TRACK MEET

COKE SPONSORSHIP

State Commissioner Bill Russell & CIFSS
Commissioner Ken Fagens



NEWLY APPOINTED COMMISSIONER Bill Russell (left) joins the outgoing Seth Van Patten at an athletic luncheon in the Helms Hall Building in 1950.



Picture taken at the CIF office in Santa Barbara in 1971.

l to r: Bill Russell, Commissioner-1955 to 1980; George Miskulin, President-1972 to 1974; Bryce Schurr, President-1966 to 1968; Edwin Hendrix, President-1969 to 1971; Delmar Marshall, Council Member-1945 to 1957, Assistant Commissioner-1958 to 1971; Robert E. Stewart, Administrative Assistant-1967 to 1980, Associate Commissioner-1981 to 1982; Fred Greenough, Superintendent of Schools-Santa Barbara County.



CIF-SS Commissioners

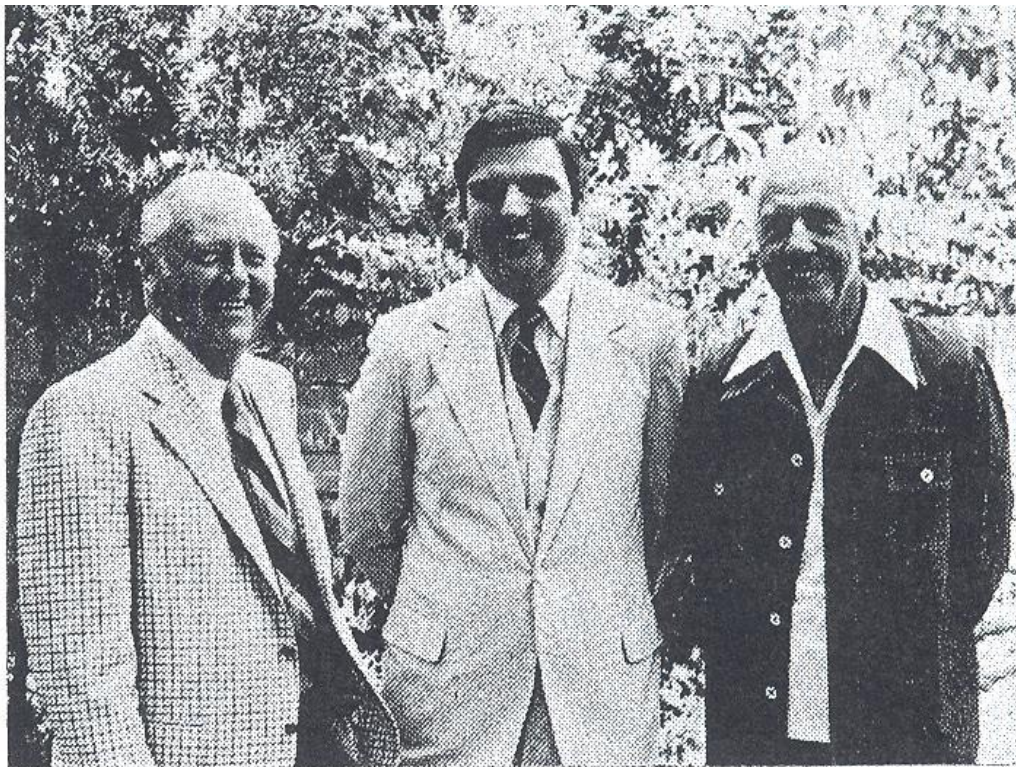
Russell

Plutko

Fagans

Thomas

Brynes



Three Southern Section Commissioners (left) William Russell 1950 to 1954, (middle) Thomas Brynes 1975-1979 and (right) Kenneth Fagans 1954 to 1975.

