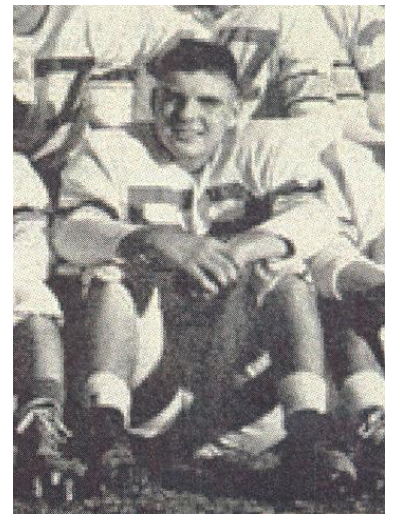


77th historical “tidbit.”
Dr. John S. Dahlem

HISTORY OF THE CALIFORNIA
INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION
SOUTHERN SECTION
(CIF-SS)


THOMAS E. BYRNES
Commissioner

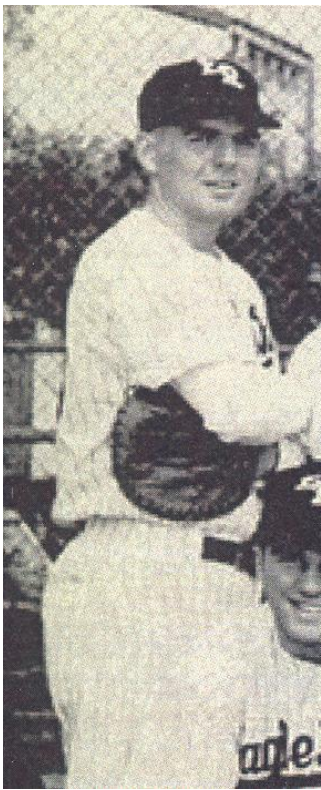


Eagle Rock H.S.

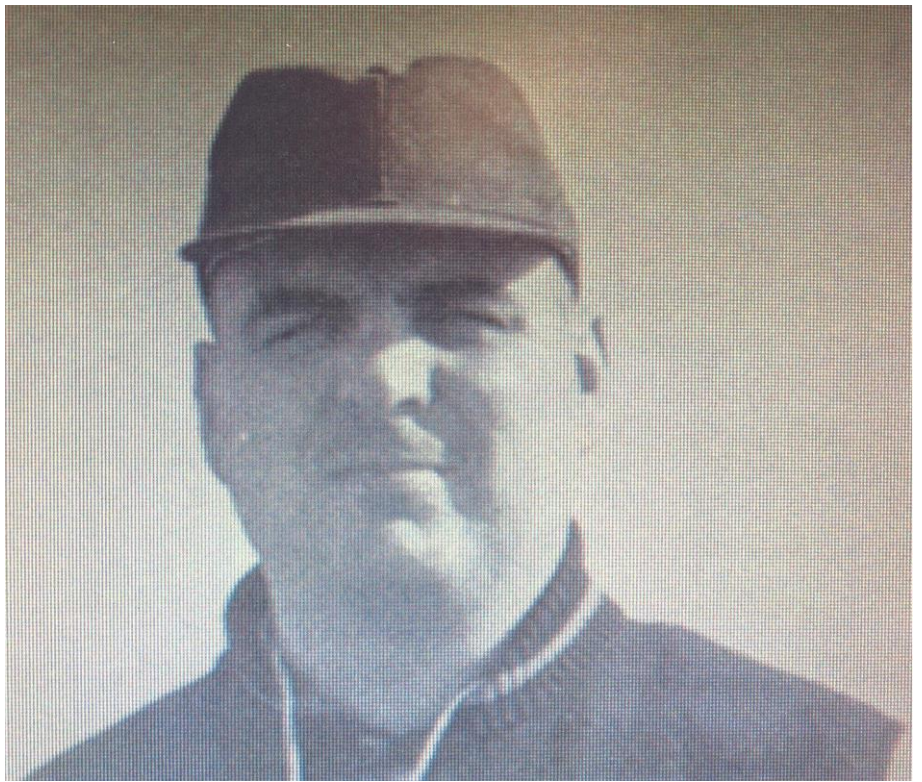
CIF-SS COMMISSIONERS

THOMAS E. BYRNES

Thomas E. Byrnes was born in Nebraska (1938) and moved to California when he was 10 years old. He attended Eagle Rock High School where he was a four year star football and baseball player who was All-League and All-City. Tom was named the outstanding senior athlete at Eagle Rock. He graduated in 1955 and attended Occidental College where he again starred in football and baseball. He graduated in 1959 with a BA in Physical Education. Byrnes later received his Master's in Education from Chapman College. He was hired as a teacher, coach and director of Athletics at Moorpark High School (225 students). He was the youngest athletic director at the age of 22 in the state of California. After one year at Moorpark he was called into the Air Force National Guard during the Berlin crisis. In 1960 he moved to Orange County and taught/coached at Valencia High School in Placentia. When El Dorado High School opened (1965) he moved there as the Athletic Director and continued to coach football and was the head baseball coach. He also coached swimming and said he was worst swimming coach, but they won because he had great swimmers. During his time in Orange County he served as Vice President, President and then State President of the California Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER). He was also the President of the Orange County Athletic Directors Association. He was instrumental in the creation of the CIF-SS “Know Your Blue Book Day” and had a close association with Commissioner Fagans. At the age of 35 years old he became an Administrative Assistant for the CIF-SS. He replaced Tom Morgan who left his position for the Southern California Golf Association. He was the youngest Administrator of the CIF-SS and two years later became the youngest Commissioner at 37 years of age when Ken Fagans retired in 1975. In 1980, Byrnes became the State CIF Commissioner of Athletics. Byrnes retired in 1995.



Baseball star at Eagle Rock



Athletic Director Coach at El Dorado H.S.

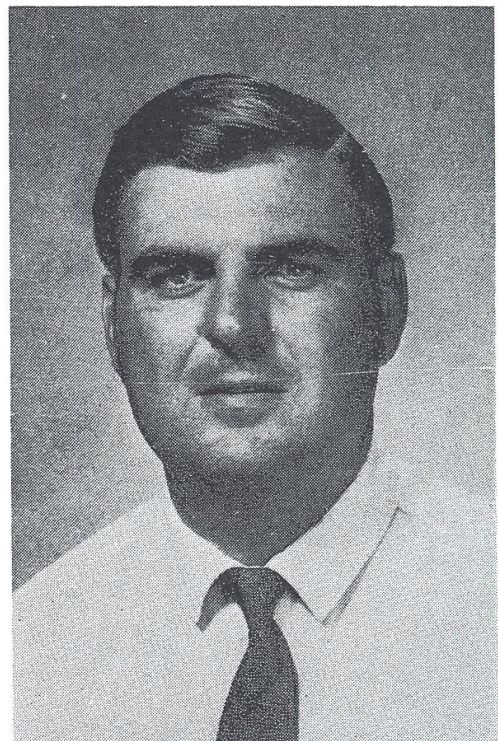
TOM BYRNES TO JOIN CIF, SS STAFF

TOM BYRNES TO JOIN CIF, SS, STAFF

Thomas E. Byrnes, 35-year-old athletic director at El Dorado High School in Placentia, has been named Administrative Assistant to CIF, SS, Commissioner J. Kenneth Fagans.

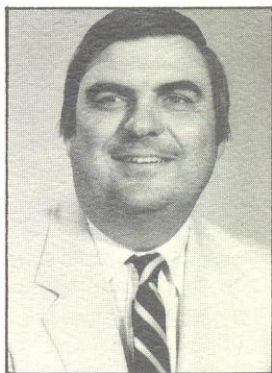
Byrnes, who has been athletic director at El Dorado since 1965 and has coached the varsity baseball and swimming teams there, will assume his duties Tuesday, Jan. 2, at the office in Artesia. He replaces Thomas A. Morgan, who leaves the CIF, SS, after two years for a position as Executive Secretary with the Southern California Golf Association, located in North Hollywood.

Byrnes was a four-year football and baseball player at Eagle Rock High School, being named outstanding senior athlete at that school in 1955. He made all-league and All-City football teams.



THOMAS E. BYRNES

THE TOM BYRNES YEARS



1975 -
1980

Tom Byrnes

In 1973, Commissioner Fagans was in need of an administrative assistant to replace Tom Morgan, who left the CIF Southern Section for a position with the Southern California Golf Association. When he began to assemble possible candidates for the job, he recalled a young athletic director from El Dorado High in Placentia, who a year earlier had aroused his interest by initiating a rules clinic for the administrators of member schools. That young A.D. was Tom Byrnes.

"When I was the athletic director at El Dorado, I became involved with CAPHER, the California Coaches Association and the Cal A.D.'s Association." recalled Byrnes. "We had some problems interpreting some of the Southern Section rules, so I called Kenny Fagans and asked if it might not be a good idea to put on a rules seminar for the school administrators. Kenny said "That's a great idea Tom, How do you propose to organize it? I said I'd put it together, and we proceeded with a "Know Your Blue Book Day."

Byrnes had always been a rising star. When he graduated from Occidental College in 1960, he was immediately hired as a teacher, coach and director of athletics at Moorpark High School. At the age of 22, he was the youngest coach and A.D. in the state. At Moorpark he coached every sport, lined the fields, drove the bus, washed the uniforms and taught seven classes. With his first paycheck, he went out and bought weights to start a conditioning programs for his athletes. When the Berlin crises hit the following year, he was called to active duty with the National Guard, and upon his dis-

RED LETTER DATES (Continued from page 7)

- NOV. 1965 The new CIF Southern Section Office in Cerritos is open for business.
- JUNE 1970 The first-ever CIF-SS sponsored event for girls, a swim relays meet, was conducted at Beverly Hills High School.
- MAY 1971 Athletic teams of CIF-SS member schools are reclassified by grade level, replacing three-point exponent system.
- MAY 1971 On the mandate of overwhelming results from a survey of member schools, the CIF Southern Section Council passes an initiative to form a Girls Interscholastic Athletic Board (GIAB). The board's purpose will be to study specific management guidelines for the advent of girls athletics as an addition to the CIF-SS program.
- NOV. 1971 The CIF Southern Section holds its first-ever official championship event for girls, the individual finals in tennis. Dana Lee of Redlands wins the singles title, while Lilly Valdes and Holly Blare of Corona del Mar team to capture the doubles championship.
- JAN. 1975 Kenny Fagans retires after 21 years as CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics.
- FEB. 1975 Tom Byrnes is appointed as the fourth CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics.
- NOV. 1975 The CIF-SS Executive Committee adds new representation in the form of a Girls' Athletic Directors' Representative. Barbara Wilson of Beverly Hills High School becomes the first-ever woman appointed to the CIF-SS Executive Committee.
- SEPT. 1977 Commissioner Byrnes puts into effect a new playoff grouping for the sport of football, known as the "Conference system". The new playoff setup is based on the geographical location of the leagues in addition to enrollment and strength of program. The popular innovation allows more CIF-SS member schools than ever before to participate in the greatest drawing of all high school spectator sports.
- JAN. 1980 Administrative Assistant Ray J. Plutko is elevated to the position of Commissioner of Athletics when Commissioner Byrnes accepts an appointment as CIF State Commissioner, replacing the retiring Bill Russell.

see RED LETTER DATES page 21

EVOLUTION OF THE CIF-SS LOGO



The original CIF Southern Section Logo (left), which depicts the California Bear and a track and field athlete, was first used on office stationary in the mid 1930's. A bronzed medallion of the original logo still appears on all CIF-SS awards. Development of the modern version (center) was underwritten by Mr. Bruce Hopping of the Kalos Kagathos Foundation in 1970. The logo was registered with the Federal Trade Commission in October, 1987. The 75-Year Anniversary version

BYRNES

(Continued from page 19)

charge, landed a teaching and football coaching job at Valencia High — once again as the youngest coach in Orange County. When the Placentia Unified School District opened El Dorado High in the mid 60's, he became its first Director of Athletics. He was the youngest Administrator the CIF-SS had ever had, and went on to become its youngest Commissioner at the age of 37 in 1975.

"When Kenny retired, there were some outstanding applicants for the job," Byrnes recalls, "Everything just sort of fell into place for me. The finalists included Dick Cordano of Arcadia High and Bob Packer of Costa Mesa. Either would have made a great commissioner."

Byrnes was well prepared for his new assignment after working two years under Fagans. In those years, the commissioner and one administrator comprised the CIF-SS staff. Byrnes immediately assumed duties involving all facets of the operation. And he learned from the master.

"Kenny Fagans had about the finest mind of any athletic administrator I have ever been connected with, and I state that categorically. If he had a weakness, it was that he was so talented he could do everything. That meant that anyone who succeeded him would have a big problem carrying on the operation of the organization."

So Byrnes' major task upon becoming commissioner was to draw on the great resource of the school membership in seeking out talented people who could assist in the staging of CIF-SS events. A year prior to his retirement, Commissioner Fagans had bolstered the office staff by bringing in Margaret Davis and Kendall Webb as administrative assistants. Just prior to his departure, he replaced Webb, who had accepted the position of San Diego Section Commissioner, with Ray Plutko.

"When I became the commissioner, girls athletics were just coming into the picture and we were expanding the playoff system in all sports to include more schools than ever before," said Byrnes. "One of the first things I did was to expand the role of certain individuals within the section to be managers of the various activities. I started by saying, 'alright, who puts on the best track invitational in our section, who puts on the best wrestling

tournament and who puts on the best swim meets? Those people are going to be the managers of our championship events.' When I first came into the office, Kenny and I would work for hours on end on a Sunday seeding our track or swimming championships. We'd just do it. When those sports expanded to include three or four divisions, along with adding the girls, it simply became impossible. So we had to decentralize by getting more people involved."

One of the major concerns during Byrnes' era was the relegating process. Under his direction, the modern 10-point relegating procedure was developed. Until his term, relegating was handled by committee, but it had gotten to a point where it was becoming an extremely difficult task. The committee was asked to assert its will over the member schools in the section — and most notable over groups of schools in specific geographic regions. Byrnes' procedure began at the grass-roots level, involving all of the schools in a specific area.

"With the section expanding, we had to relegate every year. In relegating, you always had five percent of the schools unhappy. It always was and always will be unavoidable. The process breaks down when there are a few schools that everybody leaves in a given league year after year. If they're a perennial doormat, they begin to feel like the odd man out and picked on. That's when you have real problems. The process we developed started with the member schools of each area, because those schools were best suited to determine what was best for themselves."

The second area of major change during the Byrnes' years were the playoff groupings, which underwent drastic alterations in nearly every sport. The most notable new concept allowed each of the CIF-SS leagues to enter three schools in the post-season tournaments rather than just a champion. And when Byrnes installed a totally new 10-division "conference" set-up for the football playoffs in 1977, it was considered the most radical playoff format revision in the history of the organization.

"First of all, we didn't develop the playoff system, that was done long before I became commissioner. Byrnes pointed out, "But we refined it in a number of areas. It started with the idea of taking three teams in every sport and doing away with the at-large

concept. When I started, we would have a 32-team bracket, which would allow for some co-champions and some league runners-up. But which schools and which leagues would get the extra spots? How would you determine that in an objective manner? It always led to arguments. So I got the bright idea that we should always take the top three in each league, and let the leagues determine who those schools would be. The big dispute was never where the school was placed in the playoffs, but if they got in. I think the new system solved a lot of problems, but it also added more administrative duties to the process."

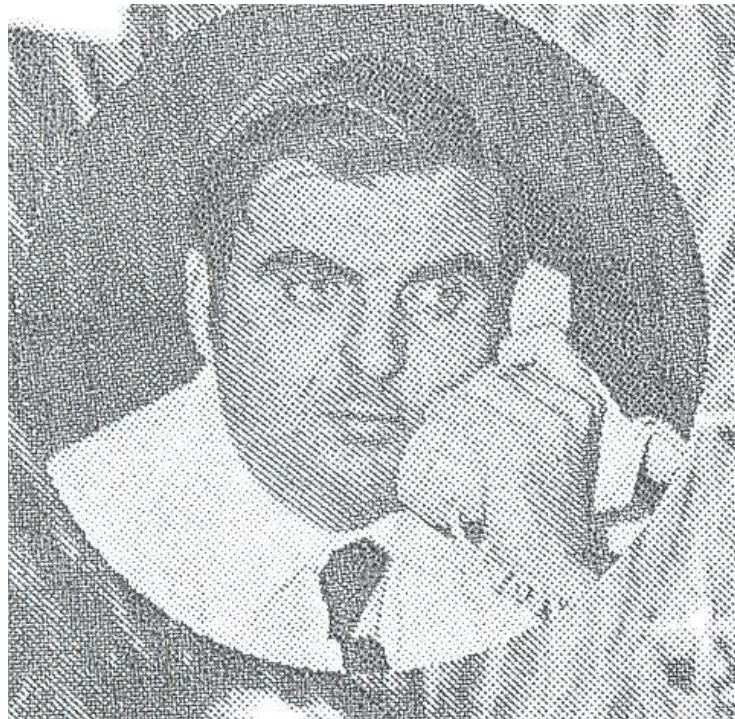
"The most revolutionary scheme I ever came up with and perhaps initiated the most scrutiny we ever came under was the conference system for football. We really had to sell that concept. Until we made the change, we had four 11-man divisions, so going to nine helped us tremendously in terms of geography and travel. However, the main rationale for the change was the fact we had 480 schools, and if you have just four champions, the average school could look forward being a CIF champion every 110 years or so. By going to 10 divisions, it averages out to 40 or 50 years, which we determined would maintain the integrity of the playoffs. Another item we discovered in our research was the fact that only 23 percent of the member schools had ever reached the football finals. One of our key selling points was the basis that it wasn't a realistic goal for kids to strive for a championship if you couldn't provide them with a reasonable chance."

The era of lawsuits, litigation and the need for a CIF-SS general council also raised its ugly head during Byrnes' tenure. Under his direction, the section office became more sophisticated in handling these situations. One of the positive results was that it provided a need to clarify appeals procedures for the member schools, which led to an increase in participation for governing the section.

"In the old days, decisions were made on a unilateral basis," noted Byrnes. "I want to qualify this statement by noting that there always had been participation, but because of the complexity and the multiplication, we had to increase it."

As for the standards of athletic competition in the Byrnes years, the level of excellence continued to rise. Greater

see BYRNES page 21



(Continued from page 20)

numbers of athletes than ever before were afforded an opportunity to display their talents with the expansion to divisions in individual sports such as track and field, swimming and wrestling.

"I remember one year we had three kids at our swimming championships — Shirley Babashoff, Brian Goodell and Tim Shaw — who already had won Olympic medals when they competed in the Southern Section finals. That was incredible when you think about it. I also recall when a state swimming champion from Iowa transferred to one of our schools and couldn't meet the qualifying standards for the prelims. That was a good example of our competitive level. Baseball, basketball, football, volleyball, water polo, tennis, track and golf. We had 'em all. However, we must remember the CIF is an educational program. Our emphasis should be to produce doctors, lawyers and engineers, not Olympic championships and professional athletes. Certainly, our schools have produced many fine athletes who have achieved national acclaim, and we're very proud of it. But athletics are only a portion of the educational system, and in our philosophy, we do not want the tail wagging the dog."

With the retirement of Bill Russell in 1980, Byrnes was called upon to inherit the position of State Commissioner of Athletics. And right off the bat, he was thrust into a struggle with nothing less than the very existence of the CIF at stake. Under State Superintendent of Schools Wilson Riles, the State Dept. of Education decided it wanted to take over the interscholastic athletic program and do away with the CIF. But the organization was able to fight off the attempt and establish itself as the official governing body of high school athletics state-wide. A piece of legislation known as Senate Bill 19 was eventually passed, giving the CIF a right to exist on a five-year renewal policy. The entire first year of Byrnes' state commissionership was devoted to preserving the integrity of the CIF, and in his opinion, the Southern Section was instrumental in the effort to convince the state legislature the justice of the cause.

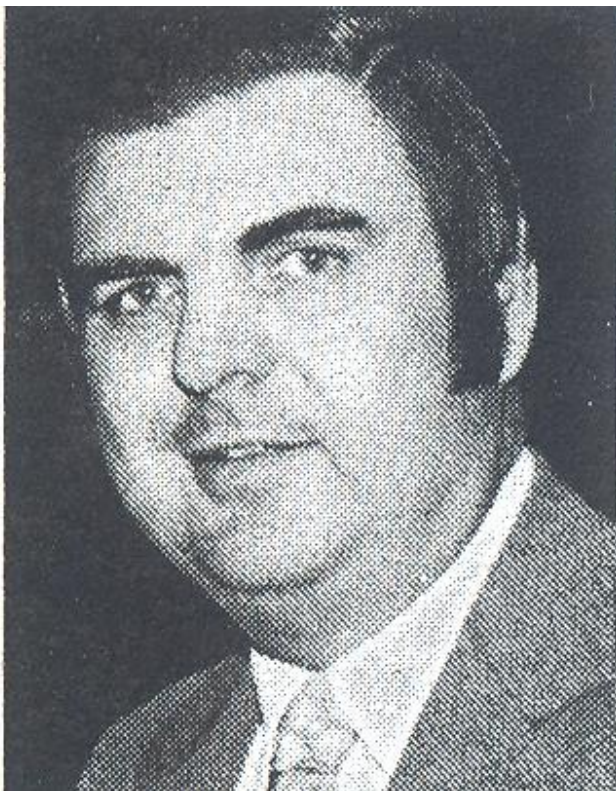


RED LETTER DATES (Continued from page 19)

- JUNE 1980** The CIF-SS Corporate Sponsorship Program is formally established with the hiring of Larry Zucker to a full-time position as Director of Sports Marketing and Advertising.
- OCT. 1980** Under the direction of Commissioner Plutko, the CIF-SS stages its first-ever Athletic Directors' Symposium, entitled "Athletics in the New Decade".
- MAR. 1983** The CIF-SS draws its largest crowd ever for a single day of championship basketball competition, with a grand total of 17,378 at the Long Beach Arena. The evening session features a showdown between Mater Dei and Long Beach Poly, attended by a capacity crowd of 12,506.
- JAN. 1984** CIF-SS Hall of Fame Recognition Awards founded. The new program gives the CIF-SS an alternative to the Gold Life Pass — which for obvious reasons must be limited — for showing its appreciation to outstanding contributors of the organization.
- AUG. 1984** Former CIF Southern Section athletes collect a total of 44 medals at the XXIIIrd Olympic Games held in Los Angeles. Had the CIF-SS entered the Olympics as a nation, it would have placed third in the final medal count.
- MAR. 1986** Commissioner Plutko announces he will step down to accept a position with the Colorado State High School Activities Association.
- JULY 1986** Stan Thomas, an administrator with the Tustin Unified School District, is appointed as the sixth CIF-SS Commissioner of Athletics.
- MAY 1987** The CIF-SS Office staff undergoes a reorganization, which entitles Dean Crowley as the first-ever Associate Commissioner of Athletics.
- OCT. 1987** Remodeling and expansion of the CIF-SS Office in Cerritos is completed by the A.J. Padelford and Son Company, whose generous donation provides four new offices and a new conference room for the organization.
- MAY 1988** The CIF Southern Section celebrates its 75th Anniversary with a special invitation luncheon at the Sequoia Athletic Club of Buena Park.



COACH DICK BRUICH of Fontana celebrates the Steelers' 1988 Big-Five title-game win over Fountain Valley.



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- When Tom was at Moorpark High School he was the A.D., P.E. Department Chairperson, football coach, baseball coach, assistant basketball coach, drove the bus, washed the uniforms, taught seven classes, had no extra service pay. With his monthly check of \$425 he bought weights for the school so they could have a weight training program. He said he was, “the luckiest guy in the whole world.”
- When he was in the National Guard he stated, “I defended Van Nuys Blvd., very well and the Russians never did attack...I did a pretty good job.”
- He was very surprised that he was named the CIF-SS Commissioner as there were several very good candidates.
- Byrnes said that Ken Fagans, “had the finest mind of any athletic administrator that he had ever been connected with.”
- Byrnes felt that because Fagans was so talented that he needed to increase the staff and expand, especially in girls’ sports.
- He called El Dorado High School the “farm club” for CIF-SS when CIF-SS hired Bill Clark as an administrator.
- The football championship in his first year at Coliseum was so foggy you could not see the players from the sidelines.
- Dr. Pepper was our first corporate sponsor at \$35,000 a year.
- Wilson was the second sponsor for their tennis balls.
- At the State Level he had to keep CIF a separate entity and not under the control of the State Department of Education. His big supporter was Bill Campbell, Senate Minority Leader, who helped keep CIF separate and had children attending Los Altos High School...Tom of course sent him a CIF courtesy card.
- Tim Byrnes, Tom’s son, is a very successful head football coach at Fullerton Community College.
- Tom’s wife Joyce was a highly regarded school counselor in the Anaheim Union High School District.



C. I. F., SOUTHERN SECTION
MONTHLY BULLETIN

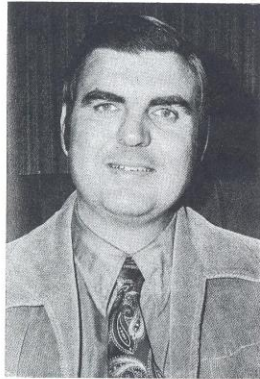
VOLUME 38

FEBRUARY, 1975

No. 6

THOMAS E. BYRNES ASSUMES COMMISSIONER POST

FOURTH IN CIF-SS HISTORY



THOMAS E. BYRNES

Thomas E. Byrnes, formerly Administrative Assistant to J. Kenneth Fagans, has acceded to the post of Commissioner of Athletics for the CIF-Southern Section as of February 1, 1975. Recommended by the CIF-SS Executive Committee and confirmed by the Council, Byrnes becomes only the fourth Commissioner in the 61-year history of the Southern Section.

Arriving in Southern California from Nebraska at the age of ten, Tom Byrnes continued his schooling at Eagle Rock High School in Los Angeles and at Occidental College where he received his B.A. in Physical Education in 1959. As an athlete, he distinguished himself in both football and baseball at the secondary and collegiate levels.

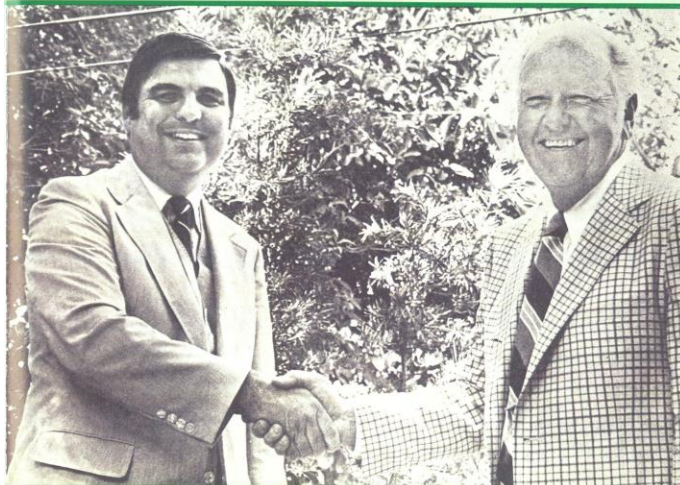
A high school teacher for 15 years in physical education, history, geography, and physiology, Byrnes also has been a successful coach at the interscholastic level in football, baseball, and swimming at Moorpark, Valencia, and El Dorado High Schools. His most recent administrative experience prior to two years at the CIF-SS Office was as Athletic Director and Physical Education Department Chairman at El Dorado High School in Placentia. Sandwiched in, also, were six years of service in the Air National Guard.

Thomas Byrnes has been quite active in professional organizations, having been President of the Orange County Chapter of the California Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation and a State Vice-President of the same organization. He was also President and a prime mover in the formation of the Orange County Athletic Directors Association. In addition, he has been a member of the California Athletic Directors Association. Other affiliations include the California Coaches Association, Southern California Football Coaches Association, California Activity Directors Association, and Phi Epsilon Kappa. Service club associations have been the Y.M.C.A., International Lions Club, and the National Jr. Chamber of Commerce.

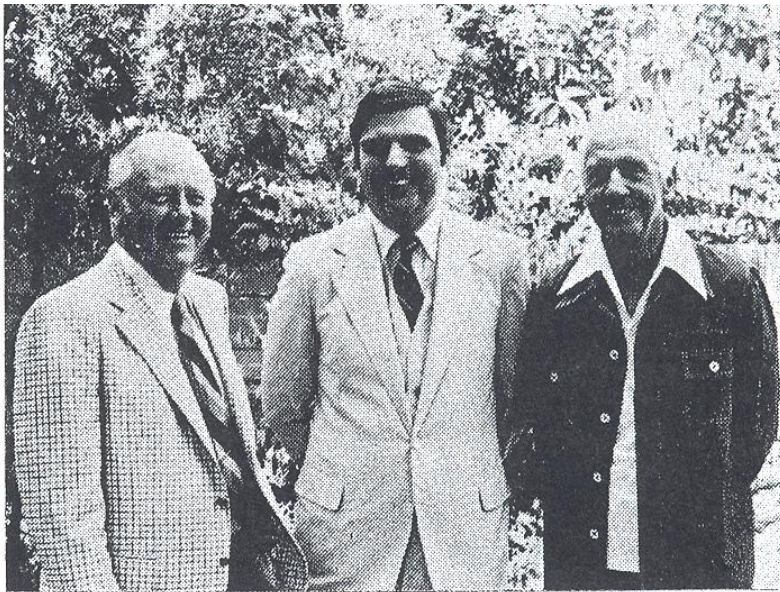
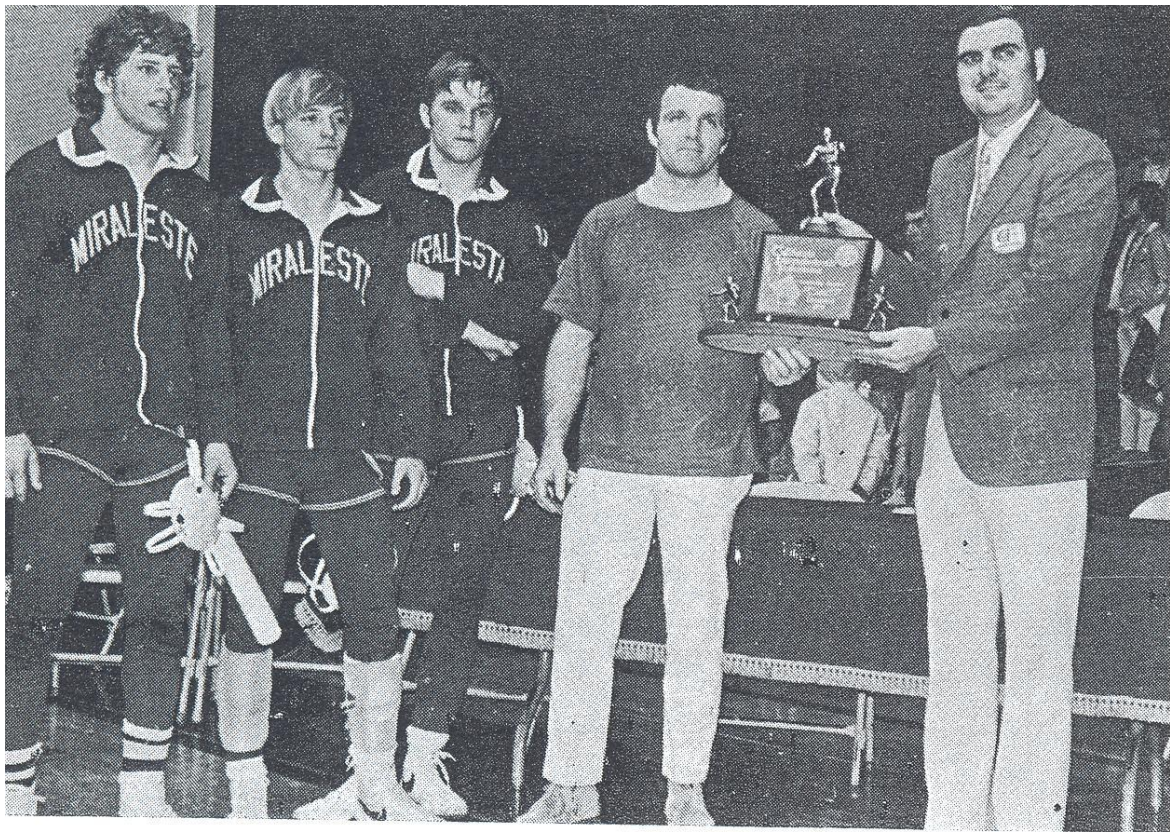
The new Commissioner is a resident of Fullerton where he and his wife Joyce live with their 9 year old daughter, Brenda, and their two sons, Tom 12 and Tim 8.

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 **MONTHLY BULLETIN** 
VOLUME 43 OCTOBER, 1979 No. 2



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



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



Commissioners Byrnes & Fagans



THOMAS E. BYRNES
1975-1980

Thomas E. Byrnes became the fourth Commissioner of the CIF Southern Section and served in that role from 1975 through 1980. At that time, he was selected as the California State CIF Commissioner, succeeding the retiring Bill Russell. During his tenure with the Southern Section, Commissioner Byrnes was instrumental in creating the highly successful conference football playoff format; stimulated the further growth of Girls' interscholastic athletics to its highest point in its brief history; increased the Office services to the member schools which became one of the most modeled throughout the United States, and saw the membership climb to 477 schools. Additionally, Commissioner Byrnes was recognized on the National level and served as a Keynote Speaker at the 1978 National Federation Meeting in Salt Lake City.



Russell

Plutko

Fagens

Thomas

Byrnes

COMMISSIONERS

Byrnes

Plutko

Wigod

Crowley

Staunton

