



10932 PINE ST.
LOS ALAMITOS, CA 90720
(562)493-9500

WWW.CIFSS.ORG

THOM SIMMONS
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
THOMS@CIFSS.ORG

TAYLOR MARTINEZ
COMMUNICATIONS
COORDINATOR
TAYLORM@CIFSS.ORG

PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION - SOUTHERN SECTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PLUTKO, FORMER CIF-SS COMMISSIONER, PASSES

LOS ALAMITOS – It is with profound sorrow and deepest regret that the CIF Southern Section announces the passing of former Commissioner of Athletics, Ray Plutko, he was 85 years old.

“I was extremely saddened to hear Ray's passing,” stated CIF Southern Section Commissioner of Athletics Mike West. “I have had the privilege of sharing two different positions with Ray during my career, one being the Commissioner of Athletics at the CIF Southern Section and the other as Principal at Martin Luther King High School in Riverside,” added West. “He was known as a strong leader with a tremendous work ethic who was also loved and respected by those with whom he worked. He had a tremendous impact on both the Southern Section and Education Based Athletics as a whole and will truly be missed.”

Ray Plutko was born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania which is 20 miles outside of Pittsburgh. He attended McKeesport High School and was a member of their 1955 Basketball 4A Championship team. He also ran track in high school. His lifelong dream was to teach and coach. He joined the Navy in 1956 and was stationed in San Diego. He played basketball in the Navy and made the All-Navy team when he played his games at Terminal Island near Long Beach. Former CIF-SS Commissioner Ken Fagans officiating those Naval games.

He attended Mt. San Antonio College playing basketball and was the Student Body President in 1962. He continued his education at Upland College (Azusa Pacific University) and later received his master's from Cal Poly Pomona. He worked at several newspapers and taught at Marian Catholic High School in San Diego.

In 1970, he moved to Notre Dame High School in Riverside as a teacher and coach. His basketball record was 102 wins and 71 losses for a 71% winning average. He was also the Athletic Director and Assistant Principal at Notre Dame.



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In 1975, at the age of 35 years old, he became an Administrative Assistant with the CIF-SS. He was responsible for football, basketball, baseball and reorganized the football playoffs into a regional format. He was professionally active with California Athletic Directors Association, Southern California Basketball Association, Inland County Athletic Directors Association, and the National Historical Society.

On July 1, 1980, he became the fifth Commissioner of the CIF-SS.

Plutko stated his biggest accomplishments as the Commissioner were the development of the sponsorships, promotions and marketing along with fighting to keep the Southern Section intact. A self-admitted workaholic, Pluko averaged only four vacation days a year and worked 15-hour days.

In 1986 he left the CIF-SS to become the Commissioner of the Colorado High School Activities Association.

In 1991, he returned to California and completed an internship at Glendora High School to obtain his administrative credential through Azusa Pacific. He was an Assistant Principal at Charter Oak High School and became the principal in 1992. He then became Principal at Temple City High School in 1993.

Plutko opened Martin Luther King High School as a Principal in 1998. In 2004 he returned to Temple City High School as principal. Although he retired in 2007, he continued his involvement in working with the CIF-SS until 2020. He worked on helping put together basketball pairings brackets and served as CIF-SS Basketball Championships Tournament Director for more than 30 years.

Plutko was always interested in being a leader and mentor, but more than anything he wanted to make a difference. When he left Colorado to return to Southern California he was quoted as saying, ““I never look at myself as a man of power,” he said. “I always look at myself as someone with influence who can help others make decisions about changes and what’s best. Whether I’m a commissioner or an assistant principal doesn’t matter to me as long as I can help make a difference. Only the job description changes for me.”

Plutko is survived by wife Sharon and five children Greg, Gary, Dana, Kari and Kevin. Ray is preceded in death by son Scott, who passed two years ago this month. The Plutko’s also lost a son, Darryl, in 1967.

Information on services are pending.

END OF PRESS RELEASE



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