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# PRESS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION SOUTHERN SECTION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRESS RELEASE: #15**

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## **Dr. John S. Dahlem, Beloved CIF-SS Historian, Passes**



LOS ALAMITOS, CA – It is with great sadness the CIF Southern Section office shares the passing of long-time historian and former council president, Dr. John S. Dahlem. Dr. Dahlem was 81 years old.

Dr. John Dahlem had been involved with high school sports since the 1960's and part of the CIF Southern Section since the 1980's. He was president of the organization from 2004-2006. Following his tenure, he became the CIF-SS voluntary historian and devoted thousands of hours to preserving the rich history of this organization and the athletes and leaders who have been a part of it. He was also part of the CIF State hearing panel.

Dahlem grew up in Santa Monica, California, and went to Santa Monica High School. He was a proud Class of 1961 Samohi graduate. He attended the University of Oregon for a Bachelor's degree in History, completed a Master's degree in Latin American History at UCLA and received his Doctorates in Human Behavior and Leadership through United States International University. Dr. Dahlem is a decorated U.S. Army veteran who served as a first lieutenant and commander in Vietnam. He received a U.S. Armed Service Bronze Star for Meritorious Unit Commendation and the Vietnam Service Medal. Upon returning from military service, he became a teacher, wrestling coach and later a principal at Kennedy, Loara and Western High Schools in the Anaheim Union High School District. He was a very beloved teacher, coach and administrator for close to 40 years. He retired in 2006.

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Dr. Dahlem is well-known and admired in the wrestling community for his years of commitment to the sport. He served on the CIF-SS wrestling committee for decades, helped organize all events, including the Masters meet, and advocated and pushed for girls' wrestling to become a sanctioned CIF-SS sport. Dr. Dahlem started and finished his coaching career at Loara High School from 1969 to 1984. During his coaching years, his team won 233 matches, while losing only 36. His teams won 10 league championships and had a league record of 53-1, including four undefeated seasons. He was awarded the [Lifetime Service to Wrestling award by the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2000](#) and was inducted into the [California Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2007](#). He was also the first coach inducted into the Orange County Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Dr. Dahlem was a family man. His wife, Sioux, his sons, Shawn and Ryan, and his grandchildren were the world to him. One of his favorite things to do was travel the world with his wife. He was also an avid mountain climber who became the oldest American to complete the Explorer's Grand Slam, climbing the Seven Summits and pulling a sled to the north and south poles. [He tackled Mount Everest with his son, Ryan](#), which made them the oldest Father-Son combination to ever do so. Dahlem also ran the Los Angeles Marathon five times, the Long Beach Marathon three times and participated in several 5k's with Sioux.

The CIF Southern Section office staff greatly admired Dr. Dahlem not only for his contributions to the organization and its history, but because of the care and love he gave to us all as individuals. The CIF Southern Section would not be what it is today without him.

"There simply wouldn't be any history archives if it wasn't for him," said CIF-SS Assistant Commissioner, Thom Simmons. "He's everything. He's part of the family."

"He is one of the most special people I have ever met," said CIF-SS Chief Financial Officer, Mitch Carty. "I'm so incredibly honored and grateful to know him and have him as a friend."

"He is a tremendous human being, and the world is in a much better place, and we certainly are, and I know I am, because of him." said Assistant Commissioner, Rich Shearer.

He will be recognized with the CIF Southern Section for years to come with the historical archive being renamed as the, "[Dr. John S. Dahlem Digital Library](#)," after him earlier this year.

Dr. Dahlem passed away peacefully at home, Friday, November 8th, with his family by his side, after battling a long illness. His family asks that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the [Dr. John S. Dahlem Digital Collection – Memorial Fund](#)

Details on a celebration of life are still to come but expected to take place December 2024.

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