

# DAVID RICHARD BEAVER (DAVE)

## BIOGRAPHY

By

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Dave Beaver was born in San Francisco, California, on July 31, 1913, the second of three children born to Manley and Mary Ann May Beaver. His parents moved the family to Felton, California, (in the Santa Cruz Mountains) in the early 1920's, where they owned and operated a resort, Felton Grove. Dave grew up fishing in the San Lorenzo River and caddying at the local golf course, two sports he practiced all his life. He attended the local elementary and junior high schools but had to commute to Santa Cruz to attend Santa Cruz High School. He lettered in basketball and football. After graduation he chose to go to Fresno State where he again lettered in football and was a member of Sigma Chi, working at whatever jobs he could find to finance his education. He always said that the summer he bailed hay was the hardest job he ever had.

Dave graduated from Fresno State with a B.A. in Physical Education in 1937, and with the country still in the Depression he always said how lucky he was to find a teaching job. He was immediately hired to teach and coach at Caruthers High School in the Central Valley.

While at Fresno State he met his future wife, Margaret Boyer, at a dance for new students, which he crashed. And that was the beginning of a beautiful, loving relationship. In 1938 he and Margaret were married. They had four children: Dick, Peggy, Nancy and Ken. Dave and Margaret were married for 61 years until his death in 1999 at the age of 86.

Dave enlisted in the U.S. Navy in 1942 and in World War II served his country stateside until 1946. During those years he was assigned to duty at Corpus Christi, Texas, and Pensacola, Florida, Navy Air Training Bases as a Navy Survival Training Officer (Lieutenant J.g.). During that time he helped write the U.S. Naval Swim Guide and directed their Survival Training Programs, working with all Sea Survival Training and Air Sea Rescue. Dave later said "he was appalled at the great number of young men in the Navy who could not swim".<sup>1</sup>

After the war, Dave was hired as a teacher and coach at Richmond High School (Richmond, California). He coached at Richmond from 1946 to 1949 (basketball and track) when he was hired by the San Leandro Unified School District (SLUSD) as Supervisor of Physical Education, a position he held from 1949 to 1967. In this position, Dave organized and oversaw physical education activities for 14 schools. "Planning with architects and engineers he was responsible for building three gymnasiums, two pools,

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<sup>1</sup> Article by Lonnie Wilson in "The Daily Review"

all field facilities for football, track, basketball, volleyball and other pertinent physical education facilities".<sup>2</sup>

He implemented a training program for elementary school teachers so they understood the importance of using physical activities as complementary to academics and so they understood, for example, the teaching of eye/hand coordination activities. Concurrently he enrolled in graduate courses at Stanford University, completing an MA in 1953. Dave was a member of the California Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER) from 1937 to 1989. He received their Award of Merit for his work in California Physical Education and Athletics.

Because of his Navy experience, when he was hired by SLUSD, Dave was<sup>3</sup> determined that every child in the city would have an opportunity to learn the essentials of swimming. He teamed with Frank DeMello, long time pool manager at Farrelly Pool, to expand the existing Swim-to-Live program. Dave organized and coached a swim club with a cooperative group of parents and youngsters and from that group a teaching staff for the Swim-to-Live program was soon available. He worked with the American Red Cross to certify Water Safety Instructors through the Swim-to-Live program. He trained and hired his life guards and locker room staff locally providing them with work ethic and standards which have served them well in life.

For the Swim to Live program Dave established a method of teaching swimming he called "Water Maneuverability" whereby children graduated through sections of the pool, starting in the "Baby Pool" and graduating to the deeper pool. Children learned 18 basic swimming survival skills, along with all swimming strokes. His method was adopted by the American Red Cross in the East Bay and San Francisco. He gave clinics and demonstrations throughout California on "How to Teach Swimming by the Sectional Method". The program was very successful. As one graduate of the program from the 1950's recently emailed "without Dave Beaver I would never have learned to swim".

In addition, with the cooperation of his colleagues, principals, teachers and administrators, Dave designed and implemented an innovative program that brought<sup>4</sup> all fourth, fifth and sixth graders to Farrelly Pool for swim lessons each spring. As a result, virtually every student in the district learned how to swim and developed water safety skills. The creation of the swim club, named "the San Leandro Beavers", as well as the district sponsored swim classes, brought a steady stream of proficient, competitive, and nationally ranked swimmers to the San Leandro High School swim team, which almost routinely won league championships. Many of the swimmers were recognized as high school All-Americans, and many more went on to earn swimming scholarships at universities throughout the U.S.

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<sup>2</sup> Article by Lou Mozzini, V.I.G.O.R., A publication for Health & Physical Education Instructors in Alameda County Schools. June 1967

<sup>3</sup> Article by Lonnie Wilson in "The Daily Review"

<sup>4</sup> Article by Lonnie Wilson in "The Daily Review"

The success of the swimming programs in the early 1950's and the positive impact they had on children and parents <sup>5</sup> made the city so swim-conscious that two new pools were voted on by the taxpayers. Dave oversaw the designs for the pools at San Leandro and Pacific High Schools and implemented the Swim-to-Live program at Pacific High School.

Dave's influence reached far beyond San Leandro Unified School District. Dave was one of the founders of the American Swim Coaches Association and served on various committees over his 31 year membership. He served on the Board of Directors for 7 years; was Secretary-Treasurer for 2 years and National Age Group Chairman for 7 years. He served on the Board of the Pacific Association for Age Group Swimming and chaired the Junior Olympic Committee for 8 years. He served on a State of California Committee that proposed revisions to the State's manual on Pool Health and Safety. He promoted swimming state-wide as a sport and health providing activity. He managed teams that represented the United States in international swim events, accompanying the swimmers to Hungary, Romania, Iran and Iraq, Japan and Canada.

Dave was an outstanding innovator and organizer, and a man truly ahead of his time, both in his job as Physical Education Supervisor and as a coach. He designed and had made the first PACE clock in the area. He initiated weight and circuit training for his swimmers back in the 1950's. He, partnering with George Haines coach of Santa Clara Swim Club and 6 times Olympic Coach, introduced the use of background statistical information that was the basis of U.S. Swimming establishing qualifying times, when those were introduced in the late 1950's.

While in San Leandro Dave served on the Oakland-Bay Area American Red Cross Board of Directors for 8 years and the San Leandro Metro Chamber of Commerce for 8 years. He was active in his sons' Cub and Boy Scout troops and supported his children in all of their extracurricular activities. He was a mentor to many of the swimmers on the Beavers, a number of whom became teachers because of his encouragement.

In 1967 Dave retired from SLUSD. He and Margaret moved to Santa Cruz, where they built, owned and operated a Swim and Tennis Club from 1967 to 1978. The Club, which they sold in 1978, is operational to date. In Santa Cruz, Dave was active in the Metro Chamber of Commerce and Santa Cruz Rotary Club.

In 1978 they moved to Cameron Park, California, where he continued to play golf and he and Margaret enjoyed their grandchildren, making sure they all learned how to swim. He joined Caldwell Banker – More & Mathews - in 1987 as a Realtor.

In 1987 Dave was elected to the American Swim Coaches Association Hall of Fame in acknowledgement of his many contributions to swimming.

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<sup>5</sup> Article by Lonnie Wilson in "The Daily Review"