JIM SCHMITZ’S WEIGHTLIFTING LEGACY

The man who set the gold medal standard in coaching weightlifters
There are a few remarkable coaches who have set themselves apart from others, inspiring their athletes to achieve what many thought impossible.

What’s more, they have achieved their success with class and integrity, accepting their obligations as leaders and role models by refusing to compromise their core values. Basketball guru Phil Jackson is such a coach, as is baseball legend Yogi Berra. These men will forever be remembered in the sports record books as “The Best.”

In Olympic-style weightlifting, one coach who deserves to stand proudly beside these other great men is Jim Schmitz.

Schmitz has earned his reputation as one of the most accomplished Olympic weightlifting coaches in the United States. He has trained 11 Olympians, and his team won the national championships seven times.

He was selected as the United States Weightlifting Team Coach for the 1980 and 1988 Olympic Games, and served as the president of the United States Weightlifting Federation. He is also an accomplished coach of women lifters, having trained three who competed in the world championships.

Gator class of ‘68, Jim Schmitz was a defensive lineman and team MVP.
IN MEMORIUM, JIM SOCHOR:
Feb. 11, 1938 — Nov. 24, 2015
From an article in the Davis Enterprise published on December 6, 2015

With his loving family at his side, Jim died of complications from Multiple Myeloma on Nov. 24, 2015.

Jim was born on Feb. 11, 1938 in Oklahoma. His parents moved him and his older brother John to San Francisco in 1941 and Jim grew up with the streets, parks and beaches of San Francisco as his playground.

He was the first four-letter athlete at Washington High School and is a member of its Athletic Hall of Fame. He attended San Francisco State University, where he met his future wife Donna, and lettered in three sports and later was inducted into their Athletic Hall of Fame.

His senior year he was selected as the Northern California Intercollegiate Back of the Year and nationally as a Little All American Quarterback. He was drafted by the San Diego Chargers, but decided instead to pursue a masters degree at San Francisco State and coach with his coach and mentor Joe Verducci.

Jim earned a Doctorate in Education from the University of Utah. In 1970, he became head football coach at UC Davis, establishing an incredible record. Over the next nineteen seasons the Aggies won eighteen consecutive conference championships and Jim was selected as Conference Coach of the Year sixteen times. In 1999 he was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame.

He was a gentle man who possessed great dignity, humility and wisdom. His determination to live as long as possible was an inspiration to all that knew what he was experiencing. He did not let his illness define him. As in his athletic endeavors, he was a great competitor and bravely fought cancer for seven years.

We are all blessed that he played such an important role in our lives.

October 5
GRIDIRON CLUB DINNER
$75 per person

It has been five years since we unveiled the statue of Vic & Joe that graces Nasser Plaza outside the gymnasium. It’s time we got the Old Gators together again! Join old friends and teammates for a fun and informative evening on Wednesday, October 5, at Bertolucci’s in South San Francisco. 5PM start time. Come and trade stories with old Gators, and mangia on a special Italian dinner.

Featured speaker is Gator great and NFL coach, Gil Haskell, talking about his SF State days, and filling us in on life in the NFL. Space is limited, so book early.

Look for your email invitation, or contact Don McPhail at dmacinfo@comcast.net for information.
MANUEL PERRY: A Humble & Determined Leader!

At three in the afternoon you can find Dr. Manuel Perry (Gator class of 1960) at a middle school tutoring students in science homework and talking to them about the importance of doing their best in whatever they undertake. Manuel comes by his willingness to help young people from his parents who always stressed the importance of education and the importance of doing one's best.

Dr. P, as the students call him, has been working with students after school for the last six years. He developed the READY Program working with his local Rotary club, of which he has been a member for over a decade. He looked at all of the talent sitting in his Rotary Club and came up with the idea of the READY Program.

READY: Rotarians Educating And Directing Youth, meets his desire to "stop talking and get involved" to solve the problems of low achievement in low income schools. The growth in performance of students in their abilities to improve academically and socially is well worth his and other Rotarians' efforts to help. 'Lets Get Them READY' is his new mantra.

Manuel has worked as a science teacher in the Peace Corps, a scientist at NASA, the U.S. Army Ames Research Lab., and the U.C. Lawrence Livermore Research Lab before retiring.

JOE GARRITY: Tenderloin top cop reluctantly accepts promotion

It is the end of an era in the Tenderloin, as popular, much-respected police Capt. Joe Garrity will leave Tenderloin Station to become a commander. “I didn’t ask for it, believe me,” Garrity said. “It’s kind of like moving away to college. You don’t want to give up your room.”

No one has ever questioned Garrity’s energy, enthusiasm or commitment. In all he served in one of the city’s toughest neighborhoods for 27 years: 14 years as a patrolman, eight as a sergeant, two as a lieutenant, and three as captain.

Along the way he’s managed a remarkable balancing act, earning the respect of both the local business owners and the neighborhood advocates. There was no secret to how he did it; he was out on the street every day.

Garrity is an imposing presence. At 6 feet 3 inches, 250 pounds, he still has the look of the linebacker who got a tryout.
with the Dallas Cowboys after playing football at San Francisco State in the early '80s.

"John Joseph Garrity is the greatest beat cop I have ever seen in my life," says his former partner Roger Battaglia. "If there was a hall of fame for beat cops, he'd be in it. He knew absolutely everybody in the neighborhood. They all used to call him 'Big Red,' and there was more than a measure of respect there."

[Editor's Note: Joe Garrity has also been one of the most active and enthusiastic supporters of this newly energized GridIron Club, the Vic & Joe statue, and anything to do with Gator football.]

From an article by Don McPhail for the Gator GridIron Update on July 20, 2016.

DR. ALLEN ABRAHAM: Renaissance Man in the Body of a Wrestling Coach

As his friends all know, Coach Abe is a very deceptive guy. He looks and acts like quite a gentle man, which he is most of the time. It's those "other times" he fools you.

I've been fortunate to get to know Allen all these years after he was one of my football coaches. We go to Stanford games together, and he's always thoughtful and good-natured, until game-time. Then he becomes the intense guy who scouted Gator opponents for Vic Rowen. Serious. Intense. Focused on formations and down-and-distance.

And in casual conversation, he likes to pretend he's just a simple jock. But he has a PhD from Columbia and his Masters from SF State. As he tells it, "All because Vic Rowen called me into his office and laid down the rules, to make me study and go to class."

Allen is also a very nice guy, yet at SF State he played sports that seem violent to many people, earning Little All America honors in football, and national ranking as a wrestler. He played for both Joe Verducci and Vic Rowen.

After graduation he became a nationally respected wrestling coach at SFSU and earned Coach of the Year honors five times. He was a professor of Kinesiology, and retired as Associate Dean and Chair of the Department in 2008, remaining as Emeritus.

These days, Allen has discovered luxury cruise ships, and he loves to rebuild classic automobiles, sort of a hot-rodder at heart.

He was a driving force behind the creation of the Vic & Joe statue; and for our renewed GridIron Club, because he knows how much his football friendships still mean.

He looks and acts like a gentle guy, but you don't want to challenge him to wrestle!

Gator GridIron Club Update is edited by old Gator Don McPhail.

After you read these stories, let us know where you are and what you have done since SF State days.

Email to dmacinfo@comcast.net

GATOR GRIDIRON CLUB