COMMITMENT

Longtime Cabrillo coach dies

Ted Bockman remembered for molding youth

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SANTA CRUZ » Ted Bockman, a Cabrillo College
aquatics coach and instructor for 40 years, died
June 10 from cancer. He was 85.

Bockman not only coached college swimming
and water polo, but also founded the Cabrillo Threshers, a swim club,
in 1963. He coached the club for 12 years before passing
the program to Greg Hening, a Cabrillo athlete he
coached.

“He was like the father of aquatics in the county
from my era, in the 1960s and 70s,” said Hening,
who said Bockman was a lifelong coach.

“You didn’t call him ‘Mr. Bockman.’ You didn’t call
him ‘Ted.’ You’d call him ‘coach,’” Henning said.

Born and raised in Evanston, Illinois, Bock-
man served in the Army for two years after receiv-
ing a University of Illinois
master’s degree in physi-
cal education. A first lieuti-
ent tank commander,
he was stationed in Ko-
rea in 1952, then began
his coaching career in
1953 at a community
college in Lancaster. Bock-
man joined Cabrillo Col-
lege in 1961, and served
until 2001.

Aptos resident Paul Bai-
ley was part of Bockman’s
Cabrillo water polo and
swim teams in the 1970s,
before developing an im-
mune disorder that at-
tacked his spine, tempo-
rarily paralyzing him.

While recovering, Bailey
said Bockman kept him on
the swim team and entered
him in meets, to help speed
his healing.

“He entered me in the
three hardest races he
could and told me, ‘It’s just
a workout, Paul, you’ve got
to,’” Bailey said. “I couldn’t
even dive off the blocks. I
couldn’t jump. I’d just fall
into the pool.”

Bailey said swimming
put him back together, and
if it weren’t for that expe-
rience, he wouldn’t be as
healthy and active today.

“(For Bockman), it wasn’t
always purely about win-
ning,” he said. “It was about
how to mold young people.”

After retiring in 2001,
Bockman volunteered as a
water polo coach with So-
quell High, attending every
practice for more than a
decade.

Daniel Schwartz, former
Soquel High and now UC
San Diego goalie, said he
worked with Bockman for
countless hours and cred-
its his success to Bockman.
He said he’s saved coaching
advice in voice mails and
newspaper clippings Bock-
man left him. Through de-
liberate exercises, Bock-
man taught him not only how
to be a goalie but foremost,
an athlete, he said.

“You have to approach it
like an art form,” Schwartz
said. “It’s not a workout.
It’s not just conditioning.

TED BOCKMAN

Who: Founder of Cabrillo Threshers swim club and former Cabrillo College swimming and water polo coach

Born: Feb. 14, 1929

Died: June 10, 2014

Residence: Santa Cruz

Family: Wife Carol Bock-
man, children Chip Bock-
man, Peter Bockman, Kim-
berly Cox and Kerry Agarpo,
nine grandchildren

You’re practicing the art of
being an athlete.”

Bockman’s son, Chip
Bockman, said after his
father retired, he went to
Kauai every winter and vol-
unteered for a high school
swim team. Chip Bock-
man, a lifeguard supervi-
sor for California State
Parks, said he learned from
his father, how to be
involved.

“I think the importance of
family, education and
sports all rubbed off on
me,” said Chip Bockman.

“And being there for your
kids. He was always there
for us.”

Ted Bockman’s wife,
Carol Bockman, said they
would have been married
for 64 years on Friday.

She said her husband
worked seven days a week,
but family came first. He
often brought their four
children camping, she said.

“He was an excellent fa-
ther and grandfather and
uncle,” Carol Bockman
said.