

## AQUATICS: COACHING LEGEND ERNIE POLTE PASSES

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Legendary Hornet Aquatics coach Ernie Polte passed last Thursday night at his home in San Clemente.

Ernie was 90 years old and had been fighting advanced stage of liver cancer for several months.

A FJC graduate, Polte coached and taught at Fullerton from 1962 to 1990 winning 12 conference titles, 6 SoCal titles, and 3 state championships. Ernie was one of the first of watermen to swim, play water polo, scuba dive, compete in life guard competitions, and open water swims right up to his 90th birthday.



Polte was inducted into the Fullerton College Athletic Hall of Fame in 2008.

He began his long affair at Fullerton College as a student-athlete playing on the Hornet water polo team in September of 1947, which was coached by another legend in Jimmy Smith. By February 1948, Ernie was the State and National record holder in the 100-yard, 200-yard breaststroke, and Medley Relay.

In 1949 Polte beat the national record holder Jon Stebbins at Stockton College. He then was accepted to Stanford University.

At Stanford, Polte was the swimming captain in 1951 and won the PAC 8 Championship in 1950-51. In June 1951, he graduated from Stanford.

In 1962, Fullerton College hired Polte as the Hornet aquatics coach. He was the third ever swim coach in the history of Fullerton College. In May of 1964, his FC swimmers broke every school record, and set new records in all but two events in the Eastern Conference.

In water polo, the Hornets won 12 conference championships, 6 Southern California titles, and 3 state championships in 1969, 1973, and 1974 (current water polo coach Rhett Price played on the 1974 team). Under Polte's guidance, the Hornets had 36 All-Americans and an overall record of 506-156. In swimming, Polte's teams won 9 conference titles, 6 Southern California titles, and 2 state championships (1970 and 1975).

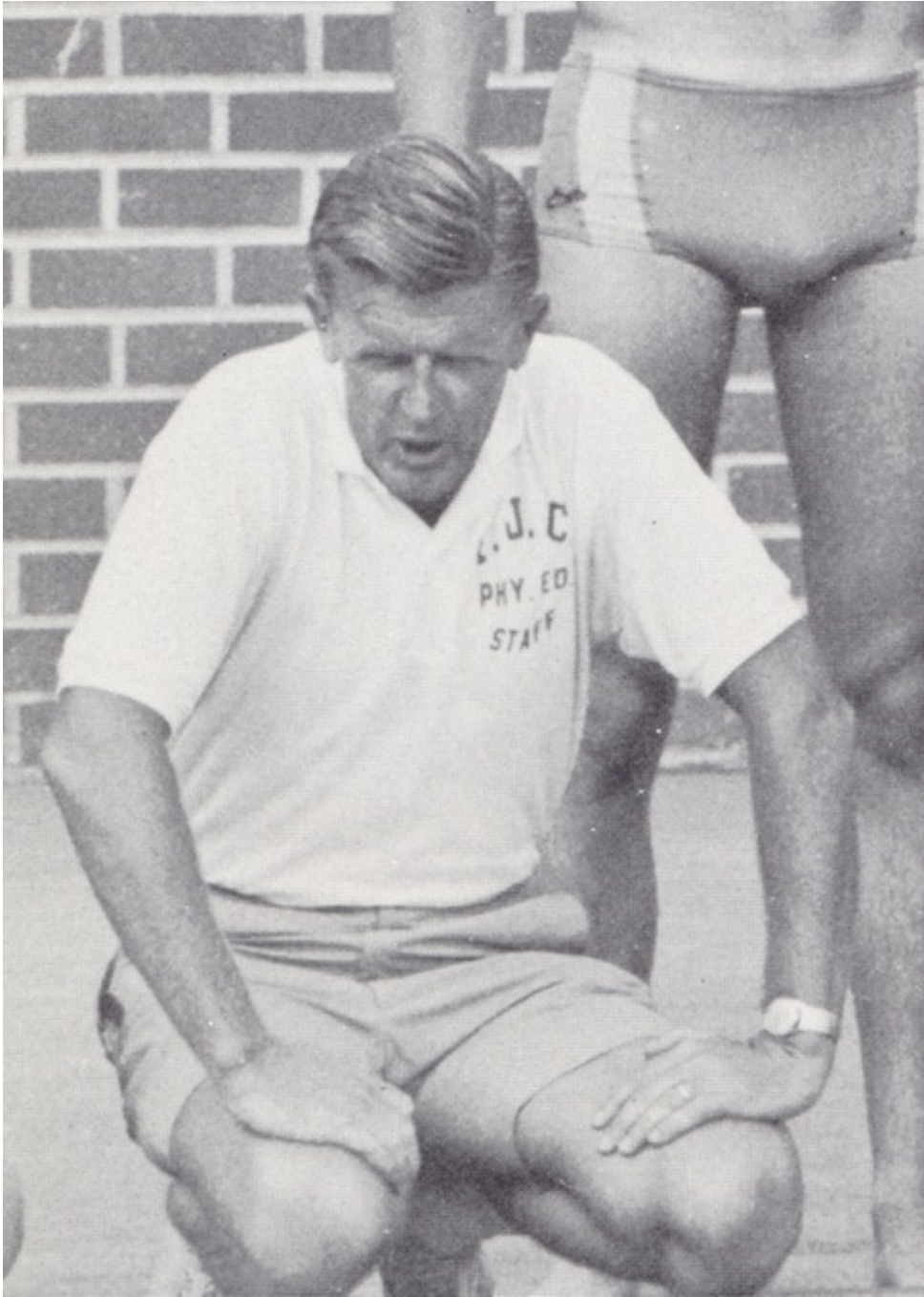
In the 1960's, Polte designed and began one of the earliest college SCUBA programs at Fullerton College that still runs strong and is very successful today.

Polte retired from FC in 1990 after 38 years of service, but still kept very active in Aquatics. In his eighties, Polte participated in some of California's premier competitive ocean swims like the Polar Plunge (San Clemente) Labor Day Pier Swim (Oceanside), the La Jolla Rough Water Swim, and the Pier to Pier Swim (Hermosa Beach).

Ernie is survived by his three sons Larry, John, and Jeff. The services for Ernie will be announced on a later date.









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