

## **KRIKORIAN: West was a crown jewel for the 49ers**

By Doug Krikorian, Sports Columnist  
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Former 49er Athletic Association secretary Pat West will be honored at the Jewels of the Night fundraiser. (Stephen Carr/Staff Photographer)

There are those individuals who go through life inspiring nothing but fondness, affection, tenderness, warmth and devotion - and nary a negative comment from anyone.

For sure, they are a rare species, since, no matter how well-meaning one's heart might be, no matter how pleasing and giving and law-abiding and God-fearing one might be, there's always someone somewhere who will find fault and disparage such a person on occasion.

But I doubt there ever has been a human being gracing the planet who's been heard to utter anything unkind about Pat West, and, of course, I'm not talking about the Pat West who is the Long Beach City Manager, a job whose inherent essence assures one of routine deprecation.

The Pat West I'm talking about is 81 years old, and it is probably a vast understatement to say she is among the most beloved people ever to hold a job at Long Beach State where she was a campus fixture for a couple of decades as a secretary in the 49er Athletic Association until her retirement at the end of last year.

I mean, when one hears the glowing words recited about Pat West from so many people, one wonders if a beatification movement is in the future of a person who will be honored at the Jewels of the Night athletic fund-raiser on May 16 for which she did so much noble work.

"Pat West is the kindest, most caring, most giving person I have ever met," says the former Long Beach State athletic director Perry Moore, who's known a lot of people across the years.

"Pat's knack is that she always makes you happy to be around her," says Jim McCormack, the former Press-Telegram sports editor. "You get a hug, you get a clear sense of appreciation and loyalty, done with a special level of honesty. One of her strengths, I think, is that when she feels someone is being treated unfairly, she'll say something about it. She is a champion to everyone who knows her ... athletes, coaches, administrators, boosters and even sportswriters."

"Pat exemplifies everything athletics is about," says Cindy Masner, senior associate athletic director at Long Beach State. "She cares about the kids, she cares about the coaches, she cares about the boosters. She is there for everyone."

"Pat is one of the kindest and most pleasurable people I ever have worked with," says Dave Benedict, also a senior associate AD at Long Beach State. "Pat has a remarkable ability to provide co-workers, student-athletes and her friends with whatever they might need at the time - good advice, a warm embrace, that delightful smile and, of course, her favorite candy. She's one in a million."

I sat down with Pat West recently after the press conference for the new Long Beach State women's basketball coach, Jody Wynn, had concluded at the Ukleja Room at the Walter Pyramid.

"I still go to as many Long Beach State athletic events as I can - and this was a big one today with the naming of a new coach," she says softly.

It's hard to conduct an interview with West in such a setting, as one 49er booster and official after another came up and bade a warm hello to this pleasant lady who still retains her thick accent from growing up in the Massachusetts hamlet of Wakefield that is 13 miles north of Boston.

She was a passionate Boston athletic loyalist, meaning she rooted fiercely for the Bruins, Celtics and Red Sox as a youngster.

"When you lived in the Boston area, it was in your genes to root for the Boston teams," laughed West, who graduated from Boston University.

She would marry a gentleman named Jim West in 1949, and they would have six children, five daughters and a son.

"All of them between 1950 and 1960," says West, who has 10 grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

She and her husband would relocate to Long Beach in 1965 at the behest of her older brother, Dr. Charles Morrell, who's a retired local surgeon.

"Got tired of the cold Eastern weather, and my brother said there were more opportunities for us out here," says West.

And her brother turned out to be right.

Her husband would go to work at the Harbor-UCLA Medical Center as a business administrator.

And she would become a secretary at the old GTE for several executives, including Roger Reyburn, who happened to be a strong 49er athletic supporter.

For years, Pat West and her husband, who passed away in 1993, Roger Reyburn and his wife along with the late Whitey Littlefield were front-row fixtures at 49er basketball games when they were playing at the old Gold Mine.

Pat's hubbie had quite a reputation for harassing officials when he disagreed with a call.

"Oh, I had a tough time calming Jim down when he'd start getting on the refs," remembers West with a smile. "But those were fun days at the Gold Mine. A lot of great memories."

While Pat West has given assistance across the years in 49er athletic fund-raisers like the Jewels of the Night, she herself shied away from seeking donations from boosters.

"I don't like asking people for money," she says.

She says what she liked most was dealing with the athletes.

"Sometimes it's not easy for them in college," she says. "They're getting yelled at by the coaches, are under pressure from the professors. There's a lot of pressure on them. I always liked to say something nice to them, give them encouragement, try to bring a smile to their faces. And I'd always tell them to keep in touch."

And a lot of them have over the years with this sweet woman with the soft hazel eyes that betray a goodness and decency that has made her so revered in the community.

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