

Pat West to Receive 2009 Jewels of the Night Diamond Award



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Submitted by Wayne Stickney

The first time I met Pat West, she made me remove the Dirtbag's baseball cap I was wearing – I was inside her office. She quickly gave me a hug and told me how proud she was of the great things I was doing as an athlete on the Cross Country team. It was both a teachable and uplifting moment. Anyone who knows Pat understands the great passion she has held for Long Beach State Athletics, and the compassion she has shown for student-athletes, coaches and boosters since 1971. The person that Pat West has become, through her journey and recent retirement, made the Jewels of the Night Committees' decision to select her as this year's Diamond Award recipient an automatic bid.

The Diamond Award was bestowed on Louise and Mick Ukleja at last year's festivities, and recognizes individuals who have made a significant impact on Long Beach State Athletics. Pat West is the epitome of impact on 49er excellence. Her journey began as a part of a team duo. Pat, a Boston University alum, and her husband Jim, a Northeastern alum, settled in Long Beach, and began attending Jerry Tarkanian coached basketball games in the Convention Center. It was easy for Pat because she would walk across the street from, her then employer, GTE at 100 Ocean. "It was so exciting to just be a fan. Jim and I eventually volunteered in stuffing envelopes and getting involved in committees. We just respected how much the student-athletes did throughout their day, just to compete for the university."

In 1989, a position became available, and Pat jumped at the opportunity. Roger Reyburn recommended her and she began working under Steve Holten, now an Associate Athletic Director at UC Berkeley. She worked for the 49ers through the best of times. Over the last 38 years, Long Beach State has consistently performed at a high level while maintaining a successful presence in the classroom and community. Pat West has seen the department capture six National Championships, 21 Final Four appearances, and 9 trips to a combination of the College World Series and the Women's College World Series.

Pat has also seen 14 former 49ers honored as Academic All-Americans, recognizing in-the-classroom success at the highest level. She has also supported alumni in their professional and Olympic careers, as Long Beach State players have competed and worked in the NBA, WNBA, Major League Baseball, professional leagues overseas, and as members of 10 Olympiads.

With all that Pat has been through at the University, her decision to retire was no easy matter. She loved her job. "I absolutely love the student-athletes, coaches, and boosters." Pat's most memorable experiences involved all the interconnections with the people – Ken Bartlett and his dog Misty, unconventionally walking in the office for an afternoon visit; Kathie and John McConnell their early morning walk; Pat and Charlie Collins stopping by for a chat; Student-athletes dropping in for a hug and piece of much-needed encouragement; coaches venting their latest challenges; boosters connecting; the list is extensive. "It's really a people thing," Pat said. "The interrelationships are what I miss most."

Through all the years of undying support, Pat raised six children, including twins, Doug and Dale, Pam, Susan, Laurie, and Lisa. She has ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Her selection as the Diamond Award recipient is ironic because her family has stewarded the registration tables for the event the last fourteen years. "It has become a family tradition. Everyone travels to the Walter Pyramid that weekend, then we get together and have brunch at the Long Beach Airport Marriott. It is one of the highlights of my year," said Pat.

Now, Pat West spends her time volunteering with the 49er Athletic Club, helping Jewels of the Night and the Annual Fund Drive. She spends a great deal of time with her brother, Dr. Charles Morrell, and good friend, Lucia Bartholio. To show your support of Pat West and her commitment to the Long Beach State Athletic Program, please contact Jennifer Pavlovich at jpavlovi@csulb.edu or (562) 985.4662.

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