



## **Toni Ruggle Class of 2020**

Toni graduated from Las Plumas High School (LPHS) in 1973 and was an outstanding Cross Country and Track and Field athlete and member of Block LP. As a freshman Junior Varsity (JV) cross country runner, he placed first in the league championships and 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Northern Section CIF (NSCIF) Championships. He was All Eastern Athletic League (EAL) and All Section in track. As a sophomore he won the EAL and NSCIF mile and two-mile, setting school records in each.

As a junior, Toni opened his varsity cross-country career finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the section, earning all EAL. In the spring he was EAL and NSCIF mile champion and named all-league. His winning the section championship earned him the right to represent the NSCIF in the CIF State Championships, making him the first ever Las Plumas High School athlete to run in that meet. 1972 also saw him setting school records in the 880, one mile and two-mile events.

Toni continued his success in his senior cross-country year winning every league race and the EAL championship. He finished third in the NSCIF championships and was crowned the LPHS Outstanding Runner of the Year. A highlight that year was Toni running in The Explore Olympics Meet, finishing third in the mile and presented the bronze medal by four-time Olympic Champion Jesse Owens.

Toni's senior year in track and field was another highly successful one and his farewell to LPHS running. He was undefeated in the mile and two-mile runs, posting NSCIF bests in those events as well as the half-mile. He also reset LPHS records in all three events. The LPHS records in the one and two-mile races stood for 45 years before being broken by Brian Hastings in 2018. Toni defended his NSCIF title in the mile earning his second trip to the CIF Meet. His senior year culminated in his being named Co-Most Outstanding Senior Athlete at LPHS.

As a student, Toni was also active in Saint Thomas Catholic Church where he was an altar boy and in Boy Scout troop 32, where he earned the rank of Star, two levels below Eagle.

Following LPHS, Toni enrolled at Chico State University (CSU) earning his BA degree and teaching credential in 1978. He lettered in cross-country and track and field all four years earning all-conference twice in cross-country and three times in track. The CSU cross-country team won the 1973 Far Western Conference (FWC) title when Toni was a freshman and finished sixth in the National Division II Championships.

While at CSU, he was nationally ranked in the 1500 and 5000-meter events for three years and qualified and competed in three National Championships in the 1500. As a senior he was nominated for outstanding male track athlete and remains on the all-time top ten list for the 1500, 5000 and mile. Toni was inducted into the CSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016.

Beginning in 1980, Toni spent 37 years working for California Water Service. He was in union field experience for 16 years and promoted to Superintendent of Production in Chico in 1996 where he served for 10 years. In 2007, he was promoted to District Manager in the Oroville District serving until his retirement in 2017. In 1996, Toni was recognized for 13 years of Exceptional Leadership for the Utility Workers Union of America and in 2005, received the William A. Dunlap Fellowship Award for outstanding support of the Kiwanis Cal-Neva-Ha Foundation. In 2017, he received special recognition from Assemblyman James Gallagher for meritorious public service during the Oroville Dam Crisis for assisting in the emergency efforts to save salmon eggs at the Feather River Fish Hatchery.

Throughout his career, Toni was active in community service as a member of the Kiwanis Club, serving as president of the Chico Club. He was also a member of Rotary International in Oroville, serving as a board member and receiving the Paul Harris Award. Other organizations to which Toni served were the YMCA, Salvation Army, Hope Center, Oroville Rescue Mission and Senior Meals on Wheels.

Running and attending local, national and world track meets are still a big part of Toni's life. He's a 37-year member of the Hoka Aggie Running Club and still competing at age 64. His support of his alma mater has helped make distance running a revelation at CSU.

Born and raised in Oroville, Toni makes his home in Chico with his wife of 39 years, Vickie.