

Peter R. Bacon

1942 - 2020

Peter Bacon - a 1965 Springfield College grad passed away from complications from pneumonia on December 8, 2020 at age 78. As an undergrad he was a member of the varsity gymnastics program under longtime coach and Springfield Hall of Fame member Frank Walcott where he also played soccer.

After graduation Peter continued his love of gymnastics from his days at Springfield all through life. He became a certified National Judge with the Eastern Gymnastics Judges Association in 1969. In his early years he judged high school competitions throughout the New England area. Throughout the 1970's and 1980's he was a prominent judge at the collegiate level. He was a judge for numerous EIGL/ECAC Championships. He was a judge for both NCAA Division I & II championships. In 1980 he earned his FIG Brevet judging certification at UIC in Chicago and continued his certification through the mid-nineties.

He was a member of a four-judge panel in what might be considered one of the all-time great dual meet competitions when in 1980 defending NCAA champion Nebraska traveled to New Haven in what would become a memorable competition. SCSU, coached by legendary coach Abe Grossfeld and Nebraska by Francis Allen were two undefeated titans in a packed Moore Field House (3800) on the campus of Southern Connecticut. In the lineup for Nebraska were future Olympians Scott Johnson, Jim Hartung, Phil Cahoy, current Nebraska coach Chuck Chmelka, and current Oklahoma coach Mark Williams. SCSU featured Olympic contenders Mario McCutcheon, Wally Miller, and Carl Antonelli. Saturday night's narrow SCSU victory (under 2.0) set an attendance record for all SC events that still stands today and occurred while the USA men's ice hockey team would defeat the Soviet Union at the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, NY to advance to the gold medal round later won by the USA. Announcing the hockey score after floor exercise event delayed competition almost twenty minutes. When both final scores were announced at the conclusion of the evening there was a roar for the Southern Connecticut Owls followed by chants of USA. For their part Nebraska would retain its NCAA championship later in the year while Southern Connecticut would finish 5th.

Later in the year as a result of the 1980 boycott of the Moscow Olympic Games Peter was among the judges selected to judge the International Friendship meet that summer in Hartford, CT for those countries supporting the boycott. As a result of the untimely death of 1952 Olympian Bob Stout In April 1981 on a days-notice he replaced him as USA judge for the World University Games in Bucharest, Romania filling in commendably. He was also a judge for the 1982 USA-Hungary competition in Atlantic City, NJ. Later the same year he was a judge for the USA Championships and on numerous other occasions an auxiliary judge for the American Cup. He also served several times as a judge for the National Junior Olympic championships. He continued his active collegiate judging career through the early 2000's. In 1996 Peter was elected to the Eastern Gymnastics Judges Association Hall of Fame.

In more recent years he was a floor manager at the Winter Cup a major Junior Olympic event held annually in Las Vegas, NV. For years Peter was instrumental in developing & sponsoring a Golf outing "Friends of Gymnastics" in the New England area which over many years raised thousands of dollars in scholarship money to assist aspiring high school and club gymnasts to pursue their dreams of collegiate gymnastics competition while pursuing their education. He was heavily involved with the organizing committee for the 1992 and 1996 Olympic Trials held in Boston. For many years he would supervise a gymnastics clinic at the Aramco base in Saudi Arabia.

Judge Bacon as he was referred to loved gymnastics and all the gymnasts, coaches, and gymnasts he came across. He will be missed by many. RIP JUDGE BACON.