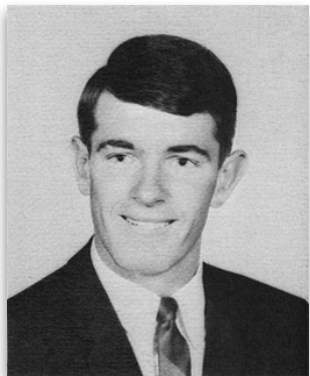




A Remembrance of Mel Bechtel

August 4, 1948—June 18, 2025



Melvin Stanley Bechtel Jr, simply Mel to his friends and family, was born in New York to Melvin and Midge Bechtel as their second of three children. Mel's family moved to Coronado early in their young family's life where Mel attended Coronado Elementary School.

Mel was very active at Coronado High School: He participated in activities outside the classroom during all four years including basketball, track, choir, and art club. Mel graduated with the Coronado High School Class of 1967.

After high school, Mel married the love of his life—Cathryn Anne Setterlund, also in the Coronado High School Class of 1967—Cathy and Mel were married 56 wonderful years. The family that Mel and Cathy created together includes two daughters, Dianne Bechtel Smith (spouse Caleb Smith) and Myka O'Leary (spouse William O'Leary), as well as six grandchildren Shannon, Travis, Katie, Seth, Rebecca, and Johnathan.



Mel said of this family life, "We do a lot of "glamping", which is with a motorhome, not a tent—we do a lot of hiking and traveling—and I love to teach the grandkids how to surf."

Mel worked for the Coronado Unified School District serving as Track & Field, Cross Country, Basketball, and Baseball Coach, Bus Driver (logging more than one million miles), and Maintenance Manager for the District, only retiring after 36 years.

Mel sustained a coaching career at the District that was truly phenomenal, for years coaching the CHS Cross Country teams, Mel was the Cross Country Head Coach for 22 seasons, including a six-year span when both the boys and girls teams were undefeated as Harbor League champions. In recognition of his efforts, Mel was named the CIF Coach of the Year in Cross Country in 1987, 1989, and 1994. Also, the CHS Boys won the CIF championship four consecutive years from 1991-1994 and the CHS Girls won the CIF championship in 1981, 1989-1992, 1997, and 2000.

In 2016 Mel was recognized as an Islander Legend and in 2017 he was inducted in to the San Diego Hall of Champions Coaching Legend. To say the least, Mel had quite a run!

For more details relating to Mel's coaching career, please see the wonderful Coronado Eagle & Journal article here: [CUSD Fixture Mel Bechtel to Retire After 35 Years](#)

Sources: Mel's family and friends.