

Hans Poschmann-In Memoriam

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On September 22, 2006 Hans Poschmann passed away less than a month after his 74th birthday. Hans was a good friend and a man who was admired and respected by all that knew him both within and outside the chess community. A few hours back, a chess mother called me to ask me a question and I told her about Hans' death. She broke down in tears much like so many of us have done—if not externally than inside.

Hans was born in Germany in 1932 and as a young man his parents moved to Berlin. He was trained as a Cabinet Maker, but joined the Berlin police force at 19. There he loved to compete in track and field events. However, one of his fellow officers told him he had to develop his mind as well and taught him how to play chess. Hans took to the game with a passion even taking lessons from a German champion. He, his wife and baby daughter emigrated to the United States around 1959. His second daughter was born in the U.S.

Hans and his family settled in Fremont where he became part of the local chess scene. He helped to organize the Fremont Chess club and continued, up until his death, to be the moving spirit behind its continued life. He got involved in the politics of Northern California and help draft the motion to separate the State into two. He held every office there was to hold over the years in the Northern California Association that later was renamed CalChess. He started the organizations journal and ran numerous tournaments—another of his passions. He became a senior Tournament Director. Across the chess board he reached the A level and through the mail he became a correspondence Chess Master. In recent years, he continued playing correspondence chess internationally via e-mail.

Hans for the last 9 years developed a new passion—teaching. His ever present smile and the warmth he exuded made him a natural. The kids loved him in the same manner we all did. He enjoyed taking photographs of his charges and posting them on the net.

The thing I loved most of about Hans was that he was real. His smile, his laugh, his warmth, his love of people and his extrovert personality in social situations was really him. Damn he will be missed.

A little over a year ago, a short while after he was diagnosed with a form of leukemia, I asked him to allow me to produce his oral autobiography. I have placed a four minute QuickTime video on the web: <http://www.CalChessScholastics.org/Hans-Condensed.mov>. You can view the complete interview at <http://www.CalChessScholastics.org/HansPoschmann-2005.mov>



