# Marshall Clark, coached runners to greatness

By Betty Barnacle
*Mercury News*

For more than a half-century, Marshall Clark was a well-known figure in track and field, either for running or training others to award-winning status, from teenagers at Saratoga High School to athletes at San Jose State, Stanford and Montana universities.

"He said he was going to retire so many times and never did," said his daughter, Shannon Clark. "It was his vocation and he was so good at it. We always knew he'd be coaching when he passed away."

Mr. Clark collapsed last week from an apparent heart attack while 70 members of the Saratoga High School track team ran a three-mile loop. Kevin Skelly, school principal, said no one is sure how many of the youngsters were present Sept. 30 when the coach, who had run a different route, suffered an attack as he was giving individual team members their times at Los Gatos-Saratoga Road near Montalvo Road. One member of the team ran another quarter-mile to a nearby fire station to get help.

Mr. Clark was pronounced dead at Los Gatos Community Hospital. He was 69. The coroner's office is conducting tests to determine the cause of death.

"It's quite a shock," Skelly said. "We have grief counselors at the school. He'd been here 11 years."

The track at the school will be named in honor of Mr. Clark, said assistant principal Karen Hyde, who is helping the Saratoga track team prepare a memorial service for the coach to be held in the school gymnasium at 4 p.m. Saturday. The teenagers have decided they will enter to the music of "Chariots of Fire," from the movie of the same name, and file into the area reserved for family and friends.

The school and family members have received inquiries about services from people all over the nation who were coached by Mr. Clark.

Payton Jordan, former Stanford head coach and Olympic coach who is in the USA Track & Field Hall of Fame, described Mr. Clark as "one of America's greatest coaches," his daughter proudly said.

Mr. Clark, who lived in Los Altos, grew up in Southern California. He was close to his half-brother, Kenneth Morris, who died in 1991. Mr. Clark was a coach for the U.S. National Track Team at the 1972 International Indoor Meet in Moscow, since 1995 served the National Federation's Interscholastic Coaches Association Sub-Committee on Education, and was an adviser to India's Sports Authority on how to implement track clinics. In 1999-2000 he received the Central Coast Section award for track and field.

He was a modest man who didn't talk much at home about such successes as leading Stanford's cross-country team to a second place NCAA finish in 1968, his daughter said.

"It must be in the genes, though," she said.

All three of his children — his son, Richard, and daughters, Shannon and Stacy — ran track and cross-country at Mountain View High School in the 1980s. Richard Clark went on to run for California Polytechnic State University-San Luis Obispo, and Shannon Clark ran for the University of Southern California, her father's alma mater.

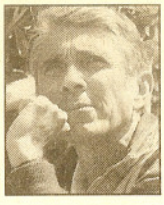
"Since he died," Shannon Clark said, "I've been repeating to others what my brother told me, that our dad was a father and coach to his kids and by the same token was father to other kids he taught, too."

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## MARSHALL CLARK

**Born:** April 27, 1933, in Santa Monica

**Died:** Sept. 30, 2002, in Los Gatos



**Survived by:** His wife, Carol Clark of Los Altos; son, Richard Clark of LaVerne, Calif.; daughters Stacy and Shannon Clark, both of Los Angeles, stepdaughters Michelle DeCamara of Half Moon Bay and Jacqueline DeCamara of Los Angeles; and six grandchildren.

**Services:** A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. Saturday at Saratoga High School, 20300 Herriman Ave. Burial will be private.

**Memorial:** Donations can be made in Mr. Clark's name to the Marshall Clark Track and Cross Country Fund, Saratoga High School, 30300 Herriman Ave., Saratoga, Calif., 95070.