

Department of Kinesiology
College of Education and Allied Studies
Cal State East Bay
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Obituary Calvin 'Cal' Caplan

The Department of Kinesiology is saddened to announce the death of our dear friend and colleague, Cal Caplan, who passed away at his home on March 14, 2024. Presently, there are no details on a community Celebration of Life planned for later in the Spring.

Cal was a native of California. He graduated from San Fernando Valley State College (now Cal State Northridge) in 1965 with a BA where he also competed in swimming and water polo. He earned his MS (1966) and EdD (1969) at the University of California, Berkeley. Cal was a student of the renowned Franklin Henry who was instrumental in the development and transition of Physical Education into the present-day academic discipline of Kinesiology. It was during this time that many sub-disciplines of the field began to develop, and Cal's academic focus was on exercise physiology, as well as acquiring a broad understanding of the integrated field of kinesiology.

In 1968, Cal joined the Physical Education Department at California State College at Hayward. He along with his colleagues in the department were instrumental in developing a vanguard program that was broad-based with a core that covered the breadth of humanities, behavioral, and natural sciences. This core breadth stands today. In 1972 the department was the first in the CSU to change its name to Kinesiology and Physical Education to reflect the integrated broad based core curriculum. Students have and continue to benefit from Cal's advocacy and dedication to this disciplinary study of human movement.

Cal was the head coach for the Pioneer men's water polo from 1968-1981 and springboard diving from 1972-1984 while also straddling his instructional responsibilities – a workload that is impossible to fathom today. In recognition of his distinguished contributions and achievements he was inducted into Cal State East Bay Athletics Hall of Fame (2006) and more recently, a Cal Caplan scholarship was established in 2021 to honor his accomplishments to athletics, kinesiology, and the university.

Cal Caplan was an exemplary professor, a dedicated and committed teacher, and a gracious mentor to students and junior faculty. As a Fellow of the American College of Sports Medicine, he attended the conference every year and encouraged his students and colleagues to participate. Maintaining currency in the field and bringing the latest advances to his classroom was a hallmark of his instructional success. He thoroughly enjoyed getting to know his students, pressing them to think critically and understand that “words have meaning so chose your words wisely.” He was a mentor and research director for numerous graduate students in an era when all graduate students had to complete an academically intense thesis. To say that this process was “time consuming” is an understatement. Cal was involved with his academic activities 7 days per week. And he did it all with joy, even inviting his entire graduate class for dinner at his house at the end of the term.

Outside of the classroom, he was an advocate for and fiercely committed to university shared governance and faculty rights. He regularly served on the academic senate, as well as the state-wide

academic senate for many years. In 2007-08 he was the recipient of the Sue Schaefer award from the Senate in recognition for his service to the University. He was always interested in assisting his colleagues at all levels of service, his constant refrain being "what can I do to help?".

In 2005 upon retirement, he was awarded emeritus status, but his service did not stop. He returned to his passion for coaching and continued his service contribution from the pool deck as the volunteer goalies' coach for women's water polo program. During this tenure, three ACWPC All-American players were recognized, and he was credited with making critical contributions in the development of the student-athletes' skills and in strength and conditioning, keys to the continuing success of the program. He was given the endearing moniker, "Cappy." It was common to see him intently listening to players, offering advice like only Cappy could do.

Cal's achievements and contributions have brought honor and recognition to the Department, Athletics, the College, and the University. He leaves a legacy and reputation of unwavering dedication to his students and staff and faculty colleagues, and he was a fierce advocate and defender of shared governance and faculty right.