

Aztec Tennis Reporter

VOL 15 NO 3 SERVING THE SAN DIEGO STATE TENNIS COMMUNITY SINCE 1999

OCTOBER 2014

His Sunny View From a Balcony

One morning in 2009, I brought some newspapers, muffins and tea from a nearby coffee shop, deposited them on his doorstep, and stepped back to chat as Hugh McArthur stood on a balcony overlooking his front yard in Mission Hills.

He was 98 years old and shy, yet his hair was steaked brown and gray, his voice strong and friendly. "I'm pretty healthy," he said with a satisfied smile. Months earlier he told me "I was the best in Southern California," a rare moment of justified bragging.

In 1929, McArthur won the Dudley Cup inter-scholastic championship, defeating Jack Tidball. In 1933, Tidball, repre-



McArthur 1932 and 2013
senting UCLA, won the U.S. intercollegiate title.

Hugh was born on Sept. 21, 1911 in San Diego, the son of a Canadian-born real estate developer and his Indiana-born wife. On that morning when we talked, he was sharp. I felt blessed to chat with one of our gentlest Aztec teammates. — John Martin



Photo Courtesy Susan Cordt

Hugh McArthur wore his Aztec men's tennis jacket in 2011, the year he turned 100.

Who Were His 1932 Aztecs?

The Aztec men's tennis team led by Hugh McArthur wore white shirts and trousers and played for a fun-loving coach with an eye for the ladies

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Aztec Tennis Reporter Photo

REUNITED: Hugh McArthur led his 1932 Aztec men's tennis team and returned during the 2103 SDSU tennis reunion to watch his latest teammates battle Memphis U.

Hugh McArthur Led 1932 Aztecs

Hugh McArthur, the thin, bespectacled Aztec who led the 1932 Aztec men's team and dominated San Diego tennis for decades as he became a respected businessman, passed away in his Mission Hills home on October 4 at the age of 103.



His final appearance at a San Diego State tennis match had come 18 months earlier when he joined scores of returning teammates from all years at an Aztec tennis reunion.

"The power!" McArthur said, telling his daughter and son-in-law, Susie and Don Cordt, that the change in play was dramatic. They watched matches for more than an hour.

McArthur, who celebrated his 101st birthday the previous September, found himself saluted by a parade of players and coaches, including Peter Mattera, Gene Carswell, Jeff Thomsen, Derek Siddiqui, and Hunter Nicholas.

"Very nice to meet you," Nicholas said, smiling and

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Looking Back 82 Years: Hugh McArthur and His Aztec Teammates

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and a penchant for three-piece suits (see below). In 2005, McArthur told *ATR*: "I'll be 94 in September. I'm a retired businessman. I live in Mission Hills with my granddaughter, Sarah McArthur (she's a writer). I was the top Southern California high school player in my day while at San Diego High. I won at Fullerton and

Ojai and many San Diego tournaments. I was the county men's champ a number of times. I went to state college, quit, got married, and went

back to it. In 1940, I started a little business at 3d and G Streets with several friends.

"About 1949, we built a steel yard down on Harbor Drive, where the bridge now goes across to Coronado.

We moved 1,000 tons of steel out of there.

"We had 80 people; then we repaired

and sold tractors and farm machinery from International Harvester. I sold the business in 1972 and retired at 62.

"I played tennis all the time I was working and I stayed with it until I was 78. My teammates? Maurice Hoke studied to be an engineer. Last I saw of Ben Hayward, he was run-

ning a big apartment building on Sixth Avenue, across from Balboa Park; Ned Anthony (the son of a Bank of America officer)

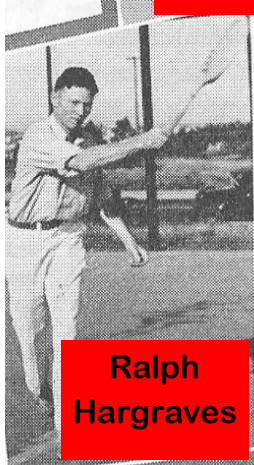


Maurice Hoke

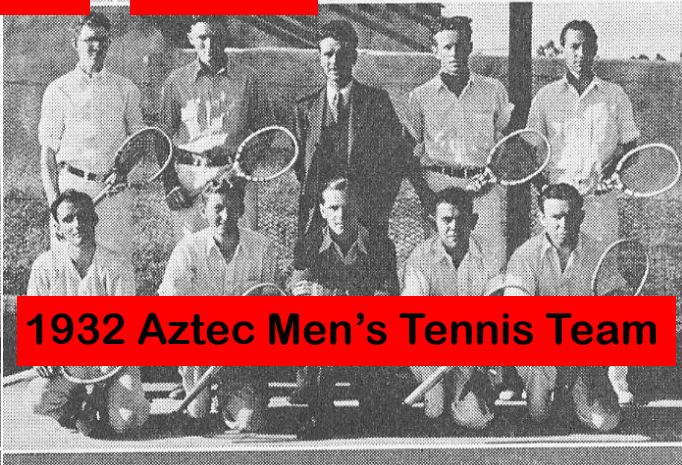
Hugh McArthur

Leslie Wilbanks

Ben Hayward



Ralph Hargraves



1932 Aztec Men's Tennis Team



Ned Anthony

was working in the parts department of an automobile agency; Hal Hanson (not identified in picture) became a banker in Coronado."

Aztec Tennis Reporter *October 2014*
Aztec Tennis Reporter is a newsletter created in 1999 for players, coaches, alumni, and friends of San Diego State tennis. Neither the university nor its athletic department is responsible for its content. This is the 58th issue. To comment, correct, or subscribe, email aztectennisreporter@yahoo.com. Editor: John Martin (1957)

1932 San Diego State Yearbook SDSU Library Special Collections

Hugh McArthur, Top 1932 Aztec Tennis Player, Passes Away at 103

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shaking hands. "Thank you very much," McArthur said, "wonderful to see you."

Among fellow spectators that day were Graham Espley-Jones (1983), Tad Yamaguchi (1958), Bernie Feldman (1970-71), and Shelley Susman (1983-84).

"What a wonderful time my Dad had," said Susie Cordt, an avid player

"He just loved seeing how hard the ball is hit and having all the team and coaches come over made him very emotional. I know he felt very special."

Her father avoided attention, Cordt said, "but I think he honestly enjoyed meeting all those who stopped by to shake his hand."

As a sophomore at San Diego State Col-

lege, where he was elected treasurer of the Associated Men Students, McArthur and Ben Hayward reached the semifinals at the Ojai Tournament, losing to a UCLA team in a "terrific struggle," according to the 1932 Aztec yearbook.

The writer added: "As a first-rate tennis player, McArthur ranks in a class by himself. His game was one of steady and relentless hammering."

McArthur celebrated his 103rd birthday on September 11. Three years ago, the two Aztec teams saluted his 100th year with a monogrammed jacket and a birthday card titled "Happy 100 Hugh from your Aztec Teammates."

The card bore photos of SDSU Athletic Director Jim Sterk and 24 Aztec tennis players and coaches.

