

Lou Commendatore

Lou Commendatore was born in Buffalo, New York, where winters are long and cold. He was on the high school swimming team for several years and was scholastically in the upper third of the class of 600 graduates of Bennett High School, a college preparatory school.

He moved to the San Francisco Bay area with his parents, younger brother and sister in 1960 after graduating from high school. The move allowed his parents to find employment in a region where NFL games are seldom played in the snow!

Energy and drive mark everything he does. He joined the Navy in 1960 and became a radio operator, leaving the Navy as a Petty Officer 2nd Class in 1964. During that period, he also became skilled as an aviation electronics technician.

He married the love of his life, Diane, in Carmel, California, and they went on to have two children, Carrie and Vince. "In turn, Carrie gave us four children, two girls and two boys, and Vince added one girl to the growth of the family."

After the Navy, and with an impressive military career behind him, he went on to attend San Jose State College (1965-1972), earning a BA and MA in geography, as well as a teaching credential. Mapping his career moves with a precision that became his hallmark, he taught Social Sciences at Newark High School and, in the short term, was elevated to department chairman. Not long after, he was promoted to Assistant Principal of the school.

Never satisfied with the status quo, he became Vice Principal and Athletic Director at Fort Bragg High School in 1980. As Athletic Director he was an active member of the Timberwolf Booster Association (which has been in operation for 45 years) and a "Pit Boss" for the Black Jack fundraiser that he engineered and drove for 14 years. In 1994 he became Principal of Continuation Programs and led those programs up to his retirement in 2002.

After retiring, Lou and Diane moved from Fort Bragg to Windsor. Carrie became a second-grade teacher in Windsor, and Vince became a nurse, and eventually a chiropractor near Chico, California.

With a career marked by successes in the military, education and sports, he says he had met his life goals up to that point. “You can’t veer away from your goals – they’re a reflection of your dreams – but you can set out to achieve new dreams. I’ve looked back with pride, and now I’m once more looking ahead.”

“Throughout my adult life, I have lived the motto, ‘The best is yet to be.’
“I’ve got lots of energy left. And, you know what? It keeps me young.”