

At Canterbury Woods, the Ball is in Coach Hoy's Court

Throughout his adult life, Tom Hoy always longed to return to his birthplace of Pacific Grove. From Redlands to Turlock, he moved up and down the state of California, serving in a variety of helping roles including principal, special education teacher, classroom teacher, football and baseball coach and volunteer. Now, the Canterbury Woods resident is finally home.

Coming Out Swinging

Tom is a Pacific Grove native, having attended its public schools in the '40s and '50s. Even as he builds new memories of his hometown in his 80s, he cherishes his early experiences in the close-knit Northern California town.



“Pacific Grove was a great place to grow up,” he said. “Everybody knew everyone else.” With a father who worked as a mailman and a mother who worked in the department store, “I couldn’t get in any trouble because everybody knew my parents!”

Tom was set on coaching from early on. Two seventh-grade teachers and several coaches in high school set an example for the kind of person he wanted to be. “They were quality guys,” he said. “I had great role models.”

Tom had innate athletic talent, earning several opportunities to play football at Division 1 universities. To avoid being redshirted — he wanted to play from the get-go — he opted instead for Monterey Community College.

Fast forward a few years, and Tom had already made strides in his career. He found an unexpected passion working in special education while coaching varsity baseball at Colton High School. After teaching for a while, he decided to become an administrator, testing the waters as a high school principal, and ultimately finding his fit as a middle school principal in Southern California.

Raising the Bar

In 1997, Tom was hired at California State Stanislaus to teach kinesiology. He also worked as a

public address announcer for the baseball program. In his retirement, he found a way to continue his involvement with schools by volunteering as a coach and mentor.

After his wife passed, he reconnected with the woman he had dated in high school in Pacific Grove and eventually returned home with her. She encouraged him to continue his passions at Canterbury Woods.

In 2019, Tom began volunteering at the local high school, coaching pitchers and catchers on the baseball team. In the fall he expanded his coaching roster, assisting the varsity football team. He also mentored elementary school children and kids with special needs.

When COVID struck, Tom helped the local baseball and football teams stay active. "We had to make the sport fit the safety," he said. They trained almost all year in a modified, pandemic-safe way by eliminating huddles and practicing outside.

The most rewarding bit of Tom's recent volunteer work has been watching his mentees grow. "Seeing a kid who once had trouble catching and throwing a baseball become a starter and get his first hit—it's so much fun," Tom said. "There aren't many guys who I know who are 85 years old and can still say they're having fun every day," he added. "I can say that."

At Canterbury Woods, he appreciates the variety of perspectives his fellow residents bring. "Everybody has a story," Tom said. "As people who are aging, we need to listen to other people's stories and celebrate the uniqueness that they bring to the table. Because everybody brings something really exciting."