

# FORMER HELIX HOOPS COACH BOB SPEIDEL DIES AT 80 OF LUNG CANCER

## Guided Highlanders to pair of section crowns in the 1960s

By [Bill Dickens \(/staff/bill-dickens/\)](#) 12:01 a.m. Jan. 13, 2013 Updated 11:06 p.m. Jan. 12, 2013

In more than three decades of coaching basketball, Bob Speidel touched the lives of many blue-chip players.

Speidel, who guided Helix High to a pair of San Diego Section titles in the 1960s, died on Jan. 6. He was 80.

A graduate of Southeast Missouri State, where he played football and basketball, Speidel coached at Helix, Santa Ana College, Jefferson Count High, Grossmont College, Southwestern College and San Diego City College.

Speidel's Helix teams won section championships in 1964 and 1966, helping build a program that would become among the best in the region. Players who played for Speidel before or during high school included Bill and Bruce Walton, Bruce Menser, John Ugrin and Bob and Dave Grundstrom.

Speidel followed John Wooden's coaching style, employing the Pyramid of Success, and UCLA's philosophies on offense and defense. Many of his players' success in their careers due in large part to his teachings.

"He was a great coach, but more importantly (like Wooden), he was a great teacher," said Roy Gayhart, who played for Speidel. "To me, he was that I was able to spend time with him at a recent Helix varsity-alumni basketball game."

Among Speidel's longtime friends is Felix Rogers, a veteran coach who fielded teams at Monte Vista High and Grossmont College.

"We've had season tickets for San Diego State basketball games," Rogers said. "We've become close friends. Even when we retired from coaching, we'd meet two or three times a week for coffee or something. He was a great guy. Anything he attempted he did well."

Rogers said Speidel was diagnosed with lung cancer 2½ months ago.

"What is really strange is he never smoked a day in his life," Rogers said.

Current Helix basketball coach John Singer also picked up plenty of tips from Speidel. Singer coached two of Speidel's children, Jamie in girls basketball, in the 1980s.

Burial was scheduled for Saturday in Speidel's hometown of St. Louis. A celebration of life is planned locally, but no date has been set.

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