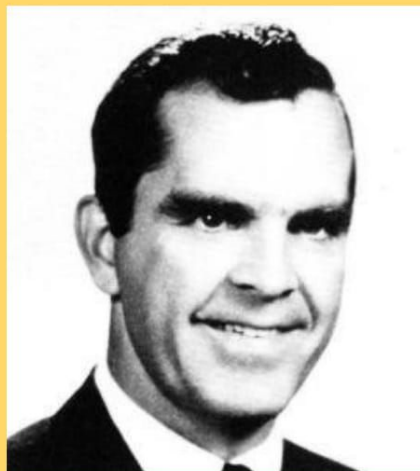




TOM BYRON



2018 SANTA BARBARA COURT OF CHAMPIONS INDUCTEE

Tom Byron came to Westmont College in 1965 as Athletic Director, Head Men's Basketball Coach and later, Dean of Students. He had a great concern for student rights, academic freedom and athletic achievement. He was a graduate of Wheaton College, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois. While there, he carved out an outstanding career as a football center and baseball player. He majored in philosophy and theology. He also earned his master's degree at Temple University and was a USC Doctoral candidate.

At Westmont College, his 1968-69 squad posted a 16-10 record, and the following year an outstanding 17-10 mark. The 1971-72 season was the last season that Tom Byron coached. While battling terminal cancer, he led his team to a 10-game winning streak before losing narrowly to Cal State Northridge. Two weeks later, at the age of 43, Byron succumbed to the illness. The next night, interim coach Ron Mulder (2017 court of champions inductee) and the Warriors dedicated their game against the University of Hawaii to his memory. The Warriors were facing the nation's 14-ranked division 1 team, whose record was 16-1, and possessed an outstanding starting five on the floor. Unsurprisingly, the Westmont crew fell behind by 16 points and trailed by 11 points at halftime. The Warriors fought back behind Fred Devaughn's 34 points and 22 rebounds. Considered one of the most exciting finishes ever witnessed in a Santa Barbara athletic contest, Westmont came from behind for a 90-89 victory. The Warriors had paid the greatest tribute possible for their deceased coach. It was one of the only three losses the Hawaiian team suffered that year, but just the beginning for the Warriors as they went on to win 21 games and the district iii championship.

Ron Mulder comments, "Tom was a great leader. He got the most out of people. He was also a spiritual leader on campus and in the community. Although small in stature, he was competitive and fiery-very determined. Tom was also instrumental in the planning of our athletic buildings and Murchison Gymnasium. Tom Byron was just a super person."

Tom Byron will be remembered for coaching his players to their fullest potential, sportsmanship, Christian development and their total growth as young athletic men. His wife Dorothy Byron-Hanna resides here in Santa Barbara and he also was a father to son Tom Jr., and daughter Annie.