



December 1, 2020

Dear Excel Families,

After 50 rewarding years as a swim coach, including 28 years as President and Head Coach of Excel, I am announcing my retirement effective January 1st, 2021. Excel remains in a solid position with great coaches dedicated to our swimmers' well-being and our partnership with Sand Point Country Club and its beautiful outdoor venue. I am happy to announce that Chris Matsumoto will assume the role of Board President and Chris Stoner will become your new Head Coach. Both are committed to continue the Excel mission and philosophy with which we started in 1993. We will greatly benefit from Coach Chris's talent, energy and enthusiasm for the sport, not to mention his dedication to your swimmers.

Though I knew this time would eventually come, there has been no way to prepare for the emotions of this moment in my life. In coaching, as in teaching, there is no end to the stream of talented students that find their way to the pool. The seniors graduate and the little ones just keep coming. When I started coaching in 1970, some of my swimmers were near my own age, then soon the parents became my contemporaries and now I share life experience with the grandparents. I have been honored to coach many children of my previous swimmers.

In coaching I found my passion and experienced profound joy, purpose and insight while passing on my knowledge of competitive swimming. It wasn't just the elite record setters that kept me inspired but swimmers of every skill level including the newbies, initiates to the sport grappling with the fundamentals of breath exchange, floating and diving, and basic survival in the water.

Now is a time for reflection, to remember and cherish the friendships forged between athlete, guardian and coach. If I have a regret, it is that I will no longer be there on a daily basis to protect, nurture, cajole and celebrate all the challenges met along the athletic journey. Some of the memories I appreciate most are the pool-side conversations about life with young athletes of all ages, hearing about their own passions, hopes, dreams and outlook on life.

I wish to express to you, the parents, my sincere and profound thanks for entrusting me with your most precious possession and allowing me a window into their remarkable lives. While there is a feeling of loss as I move on, each of these special connections will be remembered and treasured. Good luck to you all, and if you see me in attendance at a meet in the years ahead, I hope you will say hello.

Sincerely,

Thomas B. Linde

Tom Linde
tomlinde@comcast.net

1 8 1 9
NORTHWEST
BLUE RIDGE
D R I V E
S E A T T L E
WASHINGTON
9 8 1 7 7
206-781-0880
excelswimclub
@comcast.net