

Foreword

When I arrived in Chico in 1975, I was excited to join a community with a strong culture of running—at all levels, from high school through college to post-collegiate adults, from jogging for health and pleasure to focused competitions. Beyond Chico, running had taken off throughout the country from the late 60s into the 70s, owing in part to wildly popular books like Bill Bowerman's *Jogging* (1967) Dr. Kenneth Cooper's *Aerobics* (1977) and Jim Fixx's *The Complete Book of Running* (1977). Locally, high school and college track was reaching new levels with many performances that remain in record books to this day. The same was true for road racing, from 5Ks to marathons. It was not only those at the top who flourished, so did middle-of-the-pack finishers. Large numbers of non-competitive joggers were seen on the trails of Bidwell Park and throughout the Chico-area flats and foothills.

During the summer of 1975, weekly evening track meets were held at the Chico State track, mixing high schoolers with collegians, and adults of all ages. Events varied week to week. One of those events was a 3-mile, leaving the track to run on nearby athletic fields and streets, returning to finish at the track. That's when I first met David Bruhn, a successful high school miler/2-miler. During my high school and college days, I had been an 880/mile specialist. By then, I was an enthusiastic distance runner, with an occasional foray back on the track. Mainly, I was training for marathons. That summer, I also met many others featured in this book. As you will read, the Chico Running Club emerged from those meets, continuing to this day.

Holding the stopwatch at some of those meets was Chuck Sheley, an inspiring, highly successful Chico High track and cross-country coach who had already mentored a host of successful athletes with many more to come. His career extended over more than four decades. His influences continue to this day, in the lives of individual runners (male and female) and on the high school programs at Chico High and beyond.

In this book, David Bruhn has documented training and racing performances of Chico-area runners through their high school years and, in many cases, extending through college and later. It is remarkable

history. There are stories of outstanding racers, like Doug Avrit whose Chico High mile record stands today and who went on to a successful collegiate and post-collegiate career, including high finishes at the 1983 New York City Marathon and the 1984 U.S. Olympic Trials. Toni Ruggle from Oroville's Las Plumas High School was outstanding 50-some years ago and continues to run to this day, often with others featured in this book such as Jim Walker and Tom Cushman. We learn about outstanding high schoolers Suzanne Richter, Darcy Burleson, Luanne Park, and Jill Symons. We get to know the racing twins, Mike and Pat Buzbee, along with many others.

This book is truly a treasure of running and racing history, focused on one community but with tales that will appeal to readers far beyond, especially those who lived through and still appreciate that era. The book is engaging, informative and inspiring. Enjoy your read!

Walt Schafer