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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cal Poly Alumnus, Olympic Swimmer Dies

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Cal Poly alumnus and Olympic swimmer Eugene C. Lenz died Monday. He was 68.

Lenz, of Arroyo Grande, graduated from Cal Poly in 1960 with a degree in architectural engineering. He swam for Cal Poly from 1956 to 1959 and was a dominating force in the California State College Swimming Championships, winning titles in three different events for four consecutive years. While at Cal Poly, he held 14 individual records.

Lenz was the university's first All-American swimmer. He competed in 1959 in the Pan American Games and in 1960 represented the United States at the Olympic Games in Rome.

In 1987, Lenz was inducted as a charter member to the Cal Poly Athletics Hall of Fame. The first swimming inductee, Lenz was honored that year alongside such legendary alumni like Ozzie Smith, Mike Krukow and John Madden.

"It is a sad day for Cal Poly Athletics," said Athletics Director Alison Cone. "It is very special to have a former student-athlete stay so committed to his alma mater. We are grateful for Gene's many years of support and we will all miss him dearly. It has been my privilege to work with Gene and I know he has left a great legacy at Cal Poly."

Lenz was a driving force behind fundraising efforts for Cal Poly Swimming and Diving. Along with alumnus Geoff Capell, Lenz was instrumental in the 2004 naming of the Anderson Aquatic Center on campus and the establishment of university's first scholarships for swimmers and divers. Dick Anderson was Lenz' swimming coach and the naming of the facility honors Anderson for his many years of leadership to the Cal Poly Swimming and Diving program.

"Gene was the nicest, most giving man I have ever known," said Capell.

Lenz and Capell had organized a fundraising dinner for the Anderson Aquatic Scholarship Endowment to be held Oct. 21. The annual Alumni Swim Meet will be Oct. 22.

Lenz is survived by his wife, Ethel, also a Cal Poly graduate, two children - Scott and Todd - and three grandchildren. Gene and Ethel Lenz are generous benefactors to Cal Poly and have supported Cal Poly Arts, the Construction Management and Architectural Engineering departments and the Anderson Aquatic Scholarship Endowment.

Lenz served in the United States Navy for 10 years, including three tours of duty in Vietnam in the late 1960s. In 1972, he began a career in construction management for the Fluor Corporation. He worked in Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and the United States. He later retired and worked as a part-time stockbroker.

A memorial will be held Saturday, Oct. 15, at 2 p.m. at St. Peter's Episcopal Church, 402 South Lincoln Street, Santa Maria.

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