Cal State LA coach makes plans for retirement

Longtime Claremont resident and Cal State LA women’s tennis Coach Sandy Kriegel holds a photo of her parents, Earl and Lenore Kriegel, in front of the Claremont home where she was raised. Coach Kriegel was a decorated tennis player in college who went on to have a 25-year career as a coach. She will retire from Cal State LA in June and plans to move to Chico.

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COACH

From the previous page

in 2002 and 2003, and Coach Kniaz was named the CCAA Coach of the Year.

Coach Kniaz has an overall record of 203-196, spanning 30 seasons as a head coach, including an 80-79 record with the Golden Eagles. Cal State LA achieved national top-20 rankings for six straight seasons from 2012-17, something the program hadn’t achieved since 1997. Coach Kniaz’s final home match will be against local rival Azusa Pacific on April 16.

“I’ve had so many great experiences and been privileged to coach so many wonderful student-athletes,” she said. “I have learned so much from these incredible young athletes and I want to think that I’ve helped them in their journey to be good citizens, kind and thoughtful and, of course, fierce competitors. My goal has always been to foster and mentor strong, independent and confident thinkers.”

Her teams have always been among the top in the division to grade point average, and one of her former players, Christie Lau, is the university’s only two-time CCAA Academic All-Americans.

“Their coaches are a joy to work with and their dedication to their sport is inspiring,” she said. “The university’s commitment to athletics is unparalleled and it has allowed our teams to compete at the highest level.”

Coach Kniaz has been the head coach of the women’s tennis team at Cal State LA for 30 years. She was named the CCAA Coach of the Year in 2002 and 2003.

“Coach Kniaz has been an incredible mentor and leader for our women’s tennis team,” said Azusa Pacific Head Coach Adam Kilar. “Her dedication to the sport and her students is truly inspiring. We are lucky to have had her as our coach.”

A former student of Coach Kniaz, she chose to return to her alma mater to continue her tennis career.

“She is a true leader and a role model for all of us,” said Kilar. “We are going to miss her and her influence on our team.”

Sandy Kniaz and her brother, Gary, and Dave, back row, Doug and Bill in front, pose for a picture in the backyard of their Claremont family home in 1971.

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