CARL THOMAS

At Castro Valley High School, Carl Thomas became a two-time North Coast Section swimming champion, a two-time high school All-American, an all-league and all-East Bay selection four straight years and East Bay Swimmer of the Year in 1968.

All those accomplishments earned Thomas a full-ride athletic scholarship to UCLA where he continued to swim and also played water polo. He competed on two NCAA championship water polo teams (1969 and 1971) and set a UCLA single-game scoring record with 10 goals in a 1971 contest. He later played on the U.S. National water polo team and was an AAU All-American in the sport.

In swimming, Thomas set two UCLA school records (in the 200 individual medley and the 400 IM), was a nine-time NCAA All-American and was captain of the Bruins’ swim team his senior year (1972). Carl was also a finalist in the Olympic Trials in 1972, falling just short of making the U.S. team that competed in Munich. He was ranked seventh in the world in the 200 IM.

As impressive as his athletic career was, the Castro Valley native’s post-graduate accomplishments in the world of sports have been equally noteworthy. With a degree in kinesiology from UCLA, Thomas went into sports management and helped bring the sports of beach volleyball and triathlon into prominence. He was instrumental in bringing the AVP Men’s Pro Beach Volleyball Tour to live television via NBC Sports in the three years leading up to the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

Thomas is also credited with establishing the triathlon format of a 1500-meter swim, a 40-kilometer bike ride and a 10,000-meter run. Those were the distances when the sport made its Olympic debut at the 2000 Sydney Games and they remain the standard. Thomas was inducted into the USA Triathlon Hall of Fame in 2009.

Thomas currently lives in Encinitas (San Diego County). He and his wife, Lori, have three adult children, two daughters and a son.