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**ONCE A COLONIST,
ALWAYS A COLONIST**

H. LORREN AU JR., STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jim Fassel has been around the pros as a player, coach and now a broadcaster, but never forgets his roots.

BY MATT HANLON
STAFF WRITER

After back-to-back losses in 2000, Coach Jim Fassel issued a guarantee that his 7-4 New York Giants would go to the NFL playoffs.

Whether or not the now-famous vow was a shrewd coaching trick, it worked; the Giants made it to the Super Bowl that season.

Fassel is still pulling a few tricks from his sleeves to achieve his goals — though now it is to draw a few more bucks from donors.

For the past five years, the former NFL coach has served as auctioneer for the Anaheim High Alumni Association's yearly fundraiser.

"I've washed your jocks and socks," the Anaheim native told prospective bidders at the fifth annual Golf Classic, Auction and Awards Dinner on Feb. 17. "So you definitely owe me on that deal."

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“ You remember those days, you know. Young guys, when they're having trouble, I tell them, 'You think that I grew up being the head coach of the New York Giants? Oh no. You think all the money I made doing that, I was always doing that? No, no, no, no.' I mean in a lull between coaching jobs I drove a beer truck. I drove a pinto station wagon our first move, with four of us and no air conditioning.”

JIM FASSEL
1967 GRADUATE,
CO-FOUNDER
OF ANAHEIM
HIGH ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION

Jim Fassel, a star quarterback at Anaheim High, later coached the New York Giants to the 2000-01 NFC title.

PHOTOS: ANAHEIM HIGH SCHOOL
AND THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
PHOTO ILLUSTRATION:
FERNANDO M. DONADO, STAFF

FASSEL: Short QB career leads to coaching



COURTESY OF ANAHEIM HIGH ALUMNI

Jim Fassel, right, attends an Anaheim High School 1970s CIF playoff game at Angel Stadium with, from left, his dad, Bud, and Mickey and Chuck Flynn.



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Fassel joins fellow Anaheim High School alumni at the Western Hills Golf Club in Chino Hills on Feb. 17 for part of the alumni association's fifth annual Golf Classic, Auction and Awards Dinner.

Fassel's commitment to Anaheim High is no secret. He helped found the alumni association in 2008 and has remained a committed supporter of his school. He sponsors two scholarships annually to Anaheim High athletes in his father's name.

"He's a great coach, he's a great human being," said Jerry Woodward, a 1957 graduate of Anaheim High and co-founder of the alumni association. "He put up a ton of money over 10 years ago to help support academics and athletics and he still continues to do the same."

IT BEGAN IN ANAHEIM

Fassel's road to the NFL started in Anaheim. His father, Bud, became the equipment manager for the Colonists in 1954.

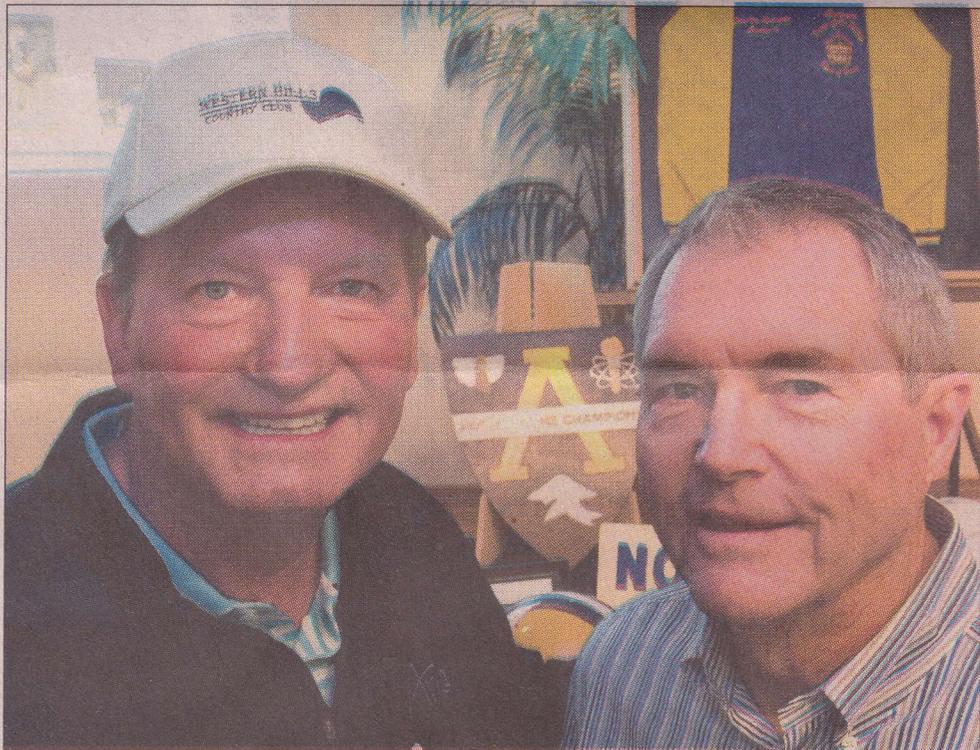
An Anaheim firefighter, Bud Fassel became a friend and father figure to many students; he was dubbed the team psychologist because of his constant counseling. Jim Fassel, 5 years old at the time, began joining his dad at the campus after school.

"I was just doing stuff and in awe of being on the sidelines for the game and to me that was huge," said Fassel, 64. "I loved my dad, loved to spend time with my dad, and Anaheim High football was the biggest thing going."

The Colonists games regularly had 10,000 to 15,000 fans in attendance.

"We were the only school," said Mickey Flynn, a legendary Anaheim tailback and Fassel's cousin. "Anaheim just had one high school. It was just a bunch of orange grove people."

Jim Fassel played quarterback for Anaheim and graduated in 1967. He led Fullerton College to the national title game in his second collegiate season and was recruited to USC. After a season there, he transferred to Long Beach State. He was picked up by the Chicago Bears in the seventh round of the 1972 draft.



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Fassel, Class of 1967, and Ron Pharris of Laguna Beach played football together at both Anaheim High and USC. Fassel was a quarterback; Pharris was a running back. Fassel spent one season at USC following two at Fullerton College, which included a national championship, and before finishing his college career at Long Beach State.

THE COACHING LADDER

His NFL career never took hold, however. He sat on the sidelines with the Bears and the Chargers and eventually languished in the Canadian Football League. After two years playing for Hawaii in the World Football League, Fassel considered getting his teaching credentials.

He turned to his old team psychologist for answers.

"Athletics was my life," Fassel said. "I remember talking to my dad one time about that and I said, 'Dad, you know there's really no money as a schoolteacher.' ... He said, 'Listen, all you got to do is make up your mind what you're passionate about. And whatever you're passionate about, you'll be good at.'"

In 1975, Fassel returned to Fullerton College to begin his coaching career. The following year, he earned a job as the quarterbacks and receivers coach at Utah State. Gradually, he worked his way through the collegiate ranks with stints as offensive coordinator at Stanford and Weber State before becoming the head

“ Stepping into Jim's shoes was hard, because he was a pure passer.”

- GEORGE FRASER
1970 GRADUATE,
COLONISTS'
QUARTERBACK AFTER
JIM FASSEL

coach of the Utah Utes in 1985.

In 1991, he left for the NFL to be offensive coordinator of the New York Giants. He coached for a handful of teams and ultimately returned to New York to be head coach of the Giants in 1997.

Fassel's first season, he earned the NFL Coach of the Year award. His bold guarantee in 2000 steeped his career in coaching lore. He'd survived and succeeded in one of America's toughest sporting markets.

"It's demanding, demanding as hell, but I never felt the pressure of, 'Oh I have to win this game,'" said Fassel, now an NFL broadcaster. "(When) I grew up, everything was pressure-packed at Anaheim. You won. You had to

win. When I went to Fullerton JC, had to win - (I was) just used to winning and you build up confidence, and pressure is pressure."

BROADCASTING BOOTH

Fassel was fired in 2003 and never got another head coaching job in the NFL. After coaching the Las Vegas Locomotives to two United Football League national championships - a league that eventually folded - he became a highly sought-after NFL broadcaster.

And each year he returns home to put that broadcaster's voice to use drumming up support for Anaheim High. This year's attendance at the golf tournament was the highest yet, the association said, bringing in an estimated \$15,000 to \$20,000. Fassel is just happy to be a part of it.

"I went there, and I really grew up there," Fassel said of his old campus. "I probably spent as much time as anybody that ever went there. I owe a lot to Anaheim High School."

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H. LORREN AU JR., STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Anaheim High graduate **Jim Fassel**, a former NFL coach with the New York Giants, co-founded the Anaheim High Alumni Association in 2008 and has been auctioneer for its fundraiser every year since.

Jim Fassel's football career

- 2009-12:** Head coach Las Vegas Locomotives (UFL)
- 2004-06:** Offensive coordinator Baltimore Ravens
- 1997-2003:** Head coach New York Giants
- 1996:** Offensive coordinator Arizona Cardinals
- 1995:** Quarterbacks coach Oakland Raiders
- 1993-94:** Offensive coordinator Denver Broncos
- 1990-92:** Quarterbacks coach/offensive coordinator New York Giants
- 1985-89:** Head coach University of Utah
- 1979-83:** Offensive coordinator Stanford
- 1977-78:** Offensive coordinator Weber State
- 1976-1977:** Quarterbacks and receivers coach Utah State
- 1975-1976:** Coaching assistant Fullerton College
- 1974-75:** Quarterback Honolulu Hawaiians (WFL)
- 1970-71:** Quarterback Cal State Long Beach
- 1969-70:** Quarterback USC
- 1967-69:** Quarterback Fullerton College

Notable

- 1997:** NFL Coach of the Year
- 2000:** New York Giants reach Super Bowl XXXV
- Career record:** NFL, head coach 58-53-1