

DAHLONEGA, GA. - Leonide Alfred "Buddy" Baarcke, Jr., 85, of Dahlonega, Ga., passed away after a short illness on March 10, 2017. Baarcke was one of the finest swimmers in University of North Carolina history and graduated from Carolina in 1953.

Baarcke graduated from Suwanee Military Academy in 1949, where he began his competitive swimming career. From there, he went to the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, N.C., and continued to swim competitively. He graduated from UNC in 1953, was drafted into the Army and served two years. He continued to swim competitively while in the service.

In 1954, he was the first American in history to set a world record in the butterfly stroke. Buddy was a college assistant coach for 10 years at UNC and the University of Florida and a club coach for 40 years. He coached many Olympic medalists, national senior champions, and national age group champions.

Buddy Baarcke won two medals in the 1955 Pan American Games. He trained with Tar Heel swimmers and divers at UNC leading up to that event and coached the freshman team at Carolina where he was very motivational and created enthusiasm. North Carolina combined with NC State as the North Carolina Aquatic Swim Club and I won the 1955 AAU Indoor National Championships held at Yale University. Ralph Casey was the Tar Heel coach and his brother Willis Casey was NC State coach.

In September of 2016, Baarcke was inducted into the American Swimming Coaches Association's coaching Hall of Fame after being involved in the sport for over eight decades.

In 1962, Baarcke was nationally recognized by Swimming World Magazine as Coach of the Month. Read about The Tiger of the South in the September 1962 issue.

Baarcke is survived by his sister, Susan B. Bryan and her husband, Judge John N. Bryan, his sister, Rebecca B. Forehand, his niece, Sandy B. Vitalis and her husband, Colonel Greg Vitalis, his niece, Betsy F. Green and her husband, Richard W. Green, Sr., his great nieces and nephews, Rich Green, Jack Bryan, Rebecca Green, and Kate Bryan. Buddy is preceded in death by his father, Leonide A. Baarcke, Sr., his mother, Olive W. Baarcke, his brother-in-law, Lee R. Forehand, his nephew, Lee W. Forehand, and his nephew, John N. (Nat) Bryan.