

In Memoriam - Larry Lampert



(left) Known by many as the "Godfather of Minnesota Chess," Larry Lampert, passed away 15 March 2007. He was the president of the School Chess Association since its founding in 1968, and a key in the development of scholastic chess in Minnesota. For more, [see p. 73.](#)

Region VI Championship

(right) Wilson Gibbins has been playing some good chess lately, book-ended by his co-championship (in a four way tie with John Buckland, Arkady Shemyakin, and Franky Johnson) in the Feb. 2006 Minnesota Open, and his 1st place finish in the Sept. 2007 Region VI Championship.



MSCA Scholastic Junior and Senior High School Championships 2007



This panoramic view of the 2007 Scholastic Championships shows two-thirds of the playing hall in Eagan HS. It is adjoined by Dakota Hills MS, where, among other things, players and coaches rested, IM Victor Adler gave simuls, WFM Sima Tsyganova gave game analysis, and concessions were sold. 276 players competed for individual and team awards.

A Coach's Coach - Remembering Larry Lampert

By Brian Ribnick

My mentor faced his final endgame this past March. However, his opening and middle game were awe inspiring.

Lawrence Lampert was the founder of the School Chess Association in the late 60's. At the time he was the coach of the Noble Knights, an elementary school in the Robbinsdale School District. He was interested in kid friendly experiences for his young players and could find no such experiences in our great state. So, he became a visionary. He found a need and filled it. He created an organization devoted to the needs of the young chess player. This organization gave the newer chess player inexpensive, short hour, kid friendly tournaments for kids. He was the Pied Piper of chess in our state as thousands of kids flocked to his organization. He was affectionately named the "Godfather of Chess" in Minnesota and lived up to that name. Kids can start their chess experiences by having fun, and that is the magic that the School Chess Association has.

The only state in the union with more national team titles is New York. Why would his relatively small state be the home of so many national titles? It is because there is an organization that nurtures our young players. It is because of a visionary named Lawrence Lampert. Many of the youth I have worked with have crossed the country in their travels and tell me that they don't find anything for youth chess close to what we have in Minnesota. Minnesota now has one of the largest and most successful scholastic chess programs in America. Thank you Larry for creating that vision.

Many today only know Larry as an organizer extraordinaire. I am fortunate to know him for something else. He was simply a coach and teacher beyond compare. His team won several state titles in that first decade. He was my first coach who inspired me with a spark that lives to this day. The reason I have had the inspiration to coach my squad over thirty years after I met Larry is because of the enthusiasm that Larry gave to his coaching and the love he gave to this students. To Larry, every student was like a special son or daughter. He cared about his students. Plus, his enthusiasm for the sport was unequaled. Larry loved chess and Larry cared about each student. I was simply one of thousands who caught the love of chess because of Larry. There is a famous quote, "A teacher affects eternity, you never know where the influence stops."

When I coach today, Larry is beside me. He is encouraging me and he is guiding me. He continues to live in the lives of the players he influenced, in the coaches he mentored and in his loving and dear family. Dear reader-teach a kid to play chess and do it with a smile and a warm heart and there will be an approving smile coming down from heaven from our dear friend Larry.



Larry Lampert, the SCA, and Hopes for Scholastic Chess

By Shu Lee

One day, my daughter, at an age around three, started to show interest in these wood and plastic objects all over the house. She knew, from watching me, that they moved square to square, and if one landed on another, it knocked it off the square. I set up a board, and we played. On each turn, I would make a legal move, and she would move a piece randomly. When she knocked my king off the board, I would tell her she won. She seemed to enjoy this.

After a few days, I showed her to move her pawns one square forward only. She got used to that, she didn't mind. Then I allowed her to move them two squares. Sometimes. On like this it went, until the rules for all the pieces were incorporated. She had fun. I think she liked the geometry of it. I don't remember the transition, but there soon came the day she was solving mate-in-two problems out of Lazlo Polgar's book. At every stage, even when the mate-in-two problems weren't so easy, it was fun. It wasn't about what the pieces couldn't do, it was about what they could.

I stumbled onto this by accident, but I think Larry understood it from the start. As a teacher, he knew that chess for kids must be kid-friendly chess, and that when you do it right, it's not about the rules, it's about the possibilities. Foremost, that meant letting kids play. So he took the idea to the next level, and the result is the School Chess Association. This organization has had many thousands of kids go through their tournaments. And they have done this with a simple rule, which is to let the kids play, have fun, and discover the possibilities. That's why they keep playing (I wonder how many people in the MSCA know where we would be if it wasn't for Larry and the SCA).

I celebrate Larry Lampert's life, and his contribution to chess education. SCA tournaments are right on the mark - because they let the kids play. May the SCA prosper for another four, forty, or four hundred decades, as long as they're letting the kids play, and discover the possibilities.

