

**RESUME OF  
JOHN S. BIRKELBACH**

**Personal Information:**

John S. Birkelbach  
5200 Wimbledon Way  
El Paso, Texas 79932

Born in El Paso, Texas on May 23, 1949

**Education:**

Crockett Elementary School  
Bassett Intermediate School  
Austin High School ("AHS")  
University of Texas at El Paso, BBA with honors, 1971  
University of Texas at Austin School of Law, J.D., 1974

**Athletic Achievements:**

1967 - District 1-4A Shot Put Champion (4-A largest District in Texas)  
1967 - District 1-4A Discus Champion  
1967 - Region 1 Shot Put Champion  
1967 - Little State Championships, Corpus Christi, TX - 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Shot Put (top 8 performers in Texas)  
1968 - NCAA Indoor Championship - 6<sup>th</sup> place Shot Put  
1968 - Western Athletic Conference\* Relays - Shot Put Champion  
1968 - Texas Relays - 2<sup>nd</sup> place Shot Put  
1968 - NCAA Outdoor Championship - 8<sup>th</sup> place Shot Put  
1969 - NCAA Indoor Championship - 6<sup>th</sup> place Shot Put  
1969 - Western Athletic Conference\* Championship - Shot Put Champion  
1969 - U.S. Track & Field Federation - Shot Put Champion  
1970 - One of 8 athletes invited to the United States Olympic Committee Development Camp for Shot Putters  
2002 - Recipient of the Silver Anniversary Award from the University of Texas at El Paso in recognition of leadership in the community, success in career and commitment to the University of Texas at El Paso

**Best Performance:** High School

1967 - Shot 60 1½ (District & AHS record) - 2<sup>nd</sup> best in Texas  
1967 - Discus 177.7 - 5<sup>th</sup> best in Texas

College

1968 & 1969 – held UTEP record for indoor and outdoor Shot Put  
(still ranked in top 10 all-time at UTEP)  
1971 - Shot 60 7½

\*In 1968 and 1969, the WAC consisted of UTEP, Arizona, Arizona State, BYU, Utah, Wyoming, Colorado State and New Mexico.

**Professional and Civic Organizations:**

- Sunturians - Former Member and Director
- El Paso Center for the Deaf - Former Director
- Downtown Touchdown Club - Former President and Member
- El Paso Track & Field Association - Former Officer and Director (37 years)
- Assistance League of El Paso - Advisory Board Member
- International Association of the Visual Arts - Former Officer and Director
- Church of St. Clement - Former Vestry Member
- St. Clement's Parish School - Former Board Member
- VIVA El Paso - Former Board Member
- Richard G. Miller Memorial Foundation - President and Director
- El Paso and State of Texas Bar Associations - Member  
- Admitted to the Western and Northern Districts of Texas and the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals
- Best Lawyers in America - Listed from 1993 through 2019
- Texas Super Lawyers - Multiple years
- Martindale Hubbell Legal Directory - Preeminent Rating (the highest rating)

To: The Directors of the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame

From: John R Wedel, Former UTEP Men's and Women's Head Track Coach, Inductee Into the "El Paso Athletic Hall Of Fame", Inductee into the "UTEP Track and Field Hall of Fame", and Inductee into the "UTEP Athletic Hall of Fame".

Re: Nomination of John S. Birkelbach to "El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame"

I am writing this letter to recommend John S. Birkelbach to the "El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame.

I have know John personally for over 40 years and also remember him when he was competing for UTEP Track and I was competing for the University of Arizona. John was part of the best trio of Shot Putters in college when he was at UTEP. As can be seen by his Athletic resume John was a Champion throughout his Texas High School career and his Collegiate career while at UTEP. John always performed at the highest levels of competition in both High School and in College, which makes his achievements even stronger.

To compare his marks from 50 years ago, he would still be winning competitions In Texas High School today with those same marks and also that would still be true in college, his marks while at UTEP in the late 60's and early 70's would be winning marks in college competition today. Obviously, John was years ahead of in his performances.

Besides John's Shot Put career, he has also continued to support Track and Field here in El Paso for the last 40+ years through financial contributions and even more importantly through giving of his own time as an officer of the El Paso Track and Field Asociation and Head Shot Put Official. As Head Shot Put Official John Oversaw and Officiated dual meet, Invitational, and Conference Championships (WAC and Conference USA).

Overall John has been and Outstanding Athlete and Champion at UTEP along with a continued support of Track and Field in El Paso.

I recommend John Birkelbach due to his outstanding Athletic careeer and his continued contributions and support of Track and Field in El Paso to be inducted into the "El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,



John R. Wedel

From: Bob Kitchens Ex UTEP Track Coach and Hall Of Fame Member

I am writing this letter to recommend John Birkelbach for membership into the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. John was born and raised in El Paso. He attended elementary school and graduated from Austin high school in El Paso. While at Austin high school he was a valuable member of their track team, district champ in 1967, regional champion in 1967, and 2nd in Little State Champions in the shot put 1967 top 8 performers in Texas.

He then chose to attend Univ of Texas at El Paso to further his education. While attending UTEP he finished in the top ten 3 times at the NCAA indoor and outdoor meets. He set school records in the shot 1968-1969. Still ranks in top ten in shot put for UTEP. WAG conf champ shot and USTFF champion shot 1969. Invited to Olympic development camp. In 2002, UTEP selected him to be a recipient of silver anniversary award from the university-selected for outstanding leadership in community, success in business, and a commitment to UTEP. One of the first people I had a chance to meet when I arrived at UTEP was John. He was a part of our track and field officials' organization and served as treasurer of that organization for many years. The primary reason we have a scoreboard at our track and field site is do to the efforts of John, who saw we had a need and helped us to achieve that goal.

Enor, which has given me a chance to be a friend to a man that has never forgotten his roots of being from El Paso.

He graduated from the Univ of Texas Law School and is a member of one of the best law firms in El Paso. This man has earned the right to be included in the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. I hope you will give him the highest consideration.

Sincerely,

Bob Kitchens

El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame  
Board of Directors and Nominating Committee  
El Paso, Texas

To Whom It May Concern:

For what it's worth, I would like to support the nomination of John Birkelbach to the El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame. I have known John since his days as a stellar student athlete at El Paso Austin High School in the late 60's. My memory may not be quite as sharp as in previous days and therefore I am not 100% certain, but I believe that John was the first El Paso high school athlete that I recruited to UTEP (actually, I believe it was Texas Western College at that very moment). When John decided to cast his future with UTEP as well as trust my vision for UTEP Track & Field that individual commitment from John and his family helped to dramatically forever change the direction of the UTEP Track & Field Program and to further demonstrate that outstanding athletes can excel in the classroom as well.

John was an outstanding high school athlete that dominated the local and regional high school track & field scene; after moving on to UTEP, John surpassed his high school performances all while competing with the heavier international standard throwing implements (both the shot put and discus). John was a Western Athletic Conference finalist and placer in the Shot Put & Discus on numerous occasions, an NCAA Championship Meet Shot Put finalist and several times participant, and perhaps most importantly, a highly prestigious "NCAA Academic All American" award-winner. John had the distinct pleasure of being one of the UTEP trio of 60' shot putters along with fellow All Americans Fred Debernardi and Vincent Monari. Three 60'+ shot putters at one university during one school year and period was absolutely unheard of then and is unheard of today as well. Besides John's dedication to his athletic trade, he left no stone unturned in the classroom where he excelled and upon graduation went on to Law School before returning to El Paso to launch his professional career and family. As a teammate and leader, the years of John's participation were a joy and you could always count on John to do the right things and provide quiet leadership; however, when things may have begun to drift slightly off-course, John would become very vocal and "right the ship and help put it back on course". He was a coach's dream.

Today, John is a highly successful attorney and a leading citizen within the community. He always has time for important causes and continually provides leadership. He has quietly made donations to the University and is responsible for the Track & Field scoreboard at Kidd Field amongst some of his charitable endeavors.

John is a friend of mine for life and I call on him regularly to help with and to lead initiatives for both the El Paso and UTEP communities and he is always willing to jump in and provide both support and leadership and/or whatever is requested or required. He is truly an outstanding El Paso citizen and Hall of Fame inductee.

Sincerely,

Wayne Vandenburg  
Member, El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame





## Beene, Birkelbach, Breit Lead Cindermen In Readiness For Upcoming Track Season

By Jesse Gonzalez

**Editors Note:** In an effort to get you the general public better acquainted with this year's edition of the U.T. El Paso Track Team, which promises to be one of the outstanding cinder teams in the country, THE PROSPECTOR sports department will carry the "inside story" on three team members per issue.

The first member of this year's track team under the direction of Coach Wayne Vandenburg, to be spot-lighted is Eugene "Pinto" Beene, a 20-year old pole vaulter from Abilene, Texas. The "Bean", as he is affectionately called by his teammates, is a business major who transferred to this campus last year after attending Abilene Christian College for two years.

Regarded as an excellent student, he has a best official vault of 16' ½" and a practice vault of 16'6". His accomplishments include winning the Penn Relays crown with a 16' vault while he was a sophomore at Abilene Christian and being a former Texas high school vault champion while attending Cooper High School in Abilene. "Bean" is one-third of a trio of vaulters that Coach Vandenburg hopes will become the first three to compete for the same school and clear 16'.

Next on the line is local product John Birkelbach, a 6'1" 240 pound sophomore from Austin High. Undoubtedly the scholar of the team

with a 3.3 GPA, John, in one year of collegiate competition, has established himself as one of the most promising young shot putters in the country. Like "Bean", John too is a business major. As a high school athlete, he was a finalist in the state meet with best marks of 60'1" (12 lbs.) and 178'9" for the shot and discus respectively.

Last year, his first year of collegiate competition, John was rated as the second best yearling putter in the country and was a finalist in both the NCAA indoor and outdoor championship, something very rare for a freshman.

Probably the two most important factors for his great success are his hard work and dedication and his strength.

Coach Vandenburg describes him as being "a very dedicated individual with a very good attitude." As far as strength is concerned, he has bench pressed 400 lbs., 520 lbll squad, and 325 on a 45 incline press. As for the up-coming season, Coach Vandenburg expects him to improve on both his 58'4½" in the shot and 156'1½" in the discus with the possibility of being around the 63'-65' marks in the former.

The final member of this week's spot-light is Chuck Breit, a 6'1" 155 lbs. junior from Miami, Florida. A physical education major, Chuck transferred to this campus last year from Miami Dade South Junior College.

Last year as a Sophomore, he set the Miner school record for the vault with a best leap of 15'. According to Coach Vandenburg, "Church could become a real outstanding vaulter if he is able to project all of his ability the right way. He has the basic essentials for a good vaulter: speed, strength and coordination."

Chuck has only recently started to train after an appendicitis operation this last fall caused him to lose 16 lbs. and much needed strength.





John Birksbach (top) of Utah State and Mike Hoffman of Brigham Young will be favored in shot put and discus respectively, in Western Athletic Conference track and field championships at Arizona State's Joe Sellen Field.