

Garth Courtois

1948-1996

A remembrance...

Most of you reading this will have known, or known of, Garth for as long as you've been involved with chess in Colorado. His dedication to our community spanned decades, and he was involved in a myriad of chess activities. Certainly his greatest visibility was in promoting, organizing and directing tournaments; not only for the general membership but also for scholastic events in particular (Denver Scholastic Chess League).

Garth was a very giving person. His commitment to the chess community led him to serve, over the years, in a variety of posts: with the Boulder Chess Club; the CCA; and also the USCF (as a Colorado Delegate). He was politically active, but not in a self-serving way. He would do what needed to be done, whether it was looking into USCF finances, or helping to get an issue of the Colorado Chess Informant mailed out.

Garth had the true pioneering spirit. He was perceptive in discerning the value of something new, and very persevering in seeing it actualized. (See for example Colorado Chess Informant of January 1995 and his discussion of the Acceleration Match IT tournament.). Garth was on the Internet before most people even knew what the Internet was.

Certainly, when it came to computer chess he was innovative. He was one of the early practitioners, and his first program, *ETATON SFORDLU*, placed third in the 1975 Computer Chess Championship in Minneapolis. Here is a game from that event: White: WFTA - Black: *ETATON SFORDLU* 1.c4 e5 2..Nf3 Nc6 3.d4 ed4 4..Nd4 Bc5 5..Nf5 g6 6..Ng8 Nf6 7..Bg5? Bf2+ 8..Kf2 Ng4+ 9..Kf3?? 2g5 10.h4 2e3+ 11.Kg4 d5+ 12..Nf3 Bf3#. Not a bad effort for a Chemist with a Master's degree from Northeastern.

Garth was very active with the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM), especially with regard to chess and AI. He gave numerous lectures and authored a tape (simply called Computer Chess). He helped bring an ACM computer chess championship to Colorado (1984?).

Garth's diverse chess interests took him from developing a graphical viewer for Ken Thomsons' endgame databases, to being instrumental in creating a new chess variant - Ren'e-zans (see *The Encyclopedia of Chess Variants* by D.B. Pritchard). An unfinished project he was working on involved a computer chess program which would emphasize playing traps - as he thought it would make a good learning device.

Garth was a player. He enjoyed the game of chess, was very solid in his play (class A) and was steadily improving over time. He was a classicist in his approach. He was a well balanced player and it was rare for him to lose to someone lower rated.

I will remember Garth for all those things and more; but mostly because he was a kind, generous, thoughtful individual - and my friend.

Paul Szeligowski

Scholastic chess legacy of Garth Courtois



Todd Bardwick
Colorado Chess

Longtime Colorado chess organizer and player Garth Courtois passed away after having a heart attack on June 29. He was 48.

Courtois moved to Colorado in the late 1970's and has been one of the state's main tournament directors since that time. He achieved a 1900+ rating in tournament play. One of Courtois' main contributions has been to scholastic chess, where he ran the Denver Scholastic Chess League for many years. He was a firm believer in the benefits of chess for kids.

Colorado chess players owe a large debt of gratitude to Garth Courtois for his numerous contributions over the years.

The 1996 Denver Open was held July 6-7. I was happy to

Wilcox (2057)



Bardwick (2222)

have won for the fifth consecutive year. Senior master, Michael Mulyar, recently returning from the U.S. Junior Invitational, took second. The Premier section, u/1800, was won by Steve Artis with David Barbour taking second. Twelve-year-old David Baldwin won the Reserve sec-

tion (u/1400). Eleven-year-old Brian Hughes won the unrated prize.

The diagrammed position occurred in the last round of the Denver Open between myself and Craig Wilcox. In this instructional endgame position, can you identify the strengths and weaknesses for each side and how each side should proceed? It is white to move. White has the advantage of better king position, which includes the proximity of the far advanced black queenside pawns. The open f-file is of no use right now to the white rook since there are not penetration squares. Black has the weakness of the "bad bishop" which is blocked by his own pawns. White played **42.Rc1!** (trading rooks magnifies the advantage of white's king position) **42...Kd7** (42...Nc4 fails to 43.Na4 protecting the b2 pawn) **43.Nb5 Rc1** (43...Rc5 puts up more resis-

See **BARDWICK** on 9D

Results of '96 Denver Open chess tournament

BARDWICK from 7D

tance) **44.Nc1 h6** (trying to free the bishop) **45.gh6 Bh6 46.Ne2 Bg5 47.Kc3 Be3 48.Kb4 Bd2+** (48...Bc4+ is better as black wins the b2 pawn for both of his queenside pawns after 49.Ka5 Nc4+ 50.Ka5 Nb2+ 51.Kb3. Black is still losing, though) **49.Nbc3!** (preparing b5 for the king) **49...Kc7 50.Kb5 Nd7 51. Na4 Nf6**

52. Nac3 Nh5 53. Kc4 Nf4 54. Nf4 e4 55. Kb3 f3 56. Nd1 and 1-0 in 9 moves.

The 1996 Colorado Open will be Aug. 31-Sept 2 at the Cherry Creek Inn, 600 S. Colorado Blvd. Call 719-685-1984 for details. Visitors are welcome.

Todd Bardwick is a National Master and a five-time Denver Chess Champion.



Garth Courtis – 1974 Mile High Open