

06 MAY 2020

TRIBUTE: BOB BECK (1936-2020)



Robert 'Bob' Beck, who won two medals for the United States at the Rome 1960 Olympic Games, has died aged 83.

Born in San Diego, California in 1936, he was a highly skilled fencer whose versatility allowed him to compete at two Olympic Games and win several honours at the Pan American Games.

Aged just 23, he led from the front in Rome in 1960, winning the individual bronze medal and inspiring Team USA to collect a second bronze in the team event, alongside George Lambert and Jack Daniels. The Americans joined some legendary pentathletes from Hungary and the USSR on the podium.

Outside of sport Bob was a graduate of the renowned Harvard Medical School and a military officer, and his second Olympic experience came in 1968 in Mexico City. This time he finished 22nd in the individual event and 4th in the team classification, just behind medallists Hungary, USSR and France.

With other commitments rendering his sports career somewhat intermittent, Bob also enjoyed terrific highlights at the Pan American Games. In 1963 he won double gold in the individual and team events in Sao Paulo (BRA). And in 1971, aged 34, he claimed gold in epee fencing in Cali

(COL).

A practising dentist in San Antonio, Texas with a very high reputation, Bob continued to inspire other American pentathletes to pursue their sporting dreams throughout his life. He is survived by his wife Ana, sons Joshua Lee and Robert and a daughter, Elizabeth.

An obituary by USA Pentathlon was posted on the US Olympic Committee website.