

# Clayton Sports

## Jerry Rice draws big crowds for book signing

RANDY ROWLAND  
Clayton Pioneer



Randy Rowland/Clayton Pioneer  
JERRY RICE, with Scott Kinney, and son Ryan Kinney, at Clayton Books.

Hall of Fame San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Jerry Rice made a memorable appearance at Clayton Books on Dec. 16, thrilling crowds who had waited up to four hours to meet the NFL great. Rice was on hand to sign copies of his new book, "Go Long, My Journey Beyond the Game and the Fame," and mingle with fans, some of whom came from as far away as Pacifica and San Jose.

Rice, arguably the greatest wide receiver of all time, if not the greatest overall player in the game's history, appeared ready to jump right back in the huddle and contribute to the 49ers offense. He looked to be fit and still in the incredible shape that defined his career as he greeted his fans warmly. He laughed and joked with the crowd, who had waited patiently to meet their idol and buy his new book.

Rice played for three NFL teams over the course of his 20 years in the league, but he is mostly remembered for his 16 seasons with the San Francisco 49ers. With the 49ers, Rice won three Super Bowls, including an MVP award for Super Bowl XXIII. He played four seasons with the Oakland Raiders and

Seattle Seahawks before ending his career in 2005. Rice holds virtually all NFL receiving records, including career yards, touchdowns and receptions.

Clayton Books owner Joel Harris organized the event. Clayton residents Mary Del Monte and Steve Jacobsen were also involved in helping with the book signing. Del Monte has worked with Rice for eight years and has been an annual supporter of his celebrity golf tournament at the Edgewood golf course in Lake Tahoe.

"He is such a superstar who shares himself graciously, and is so down to earth," Del Monte

said. "He is a family man, and him coming to a small town such as ours says a lot about him."

"He's a superstar, a legend, and a Hall of Famer," Jacobson added. "For a guy who was the greatest player of all time, he was as nice as can be to everyone."

Many Clayton families lined up to meet the football legend. Scott Kinney was a big 49er fan during the Joe Montana years and was thrilled to meet Rice. He brought his son Ryan with him to share the moment.

"My best memories of Jerry Rice were from Super Bowl XXIII, and a game I remember

against the New York Giants in the Meadowlands, when he took over the game. He was without a doubt the greatest receiver of all time," Kinney said.

Jim Wickware of Clayton attended the event with his son, Kyle. Wickware said meeting Rice is "meeting a living legend, and it gives me an opportunity to explain to my son about his work ethic. Jerry was from a small town like Clayton, and he is an example to our youth that if you work at it, you can make anything out of your life."

Robert Connel of Clayton stopped by to get a book signed for his father as a Christmas present. His Dad "is a huge 49er fan." Connel's sons Tyler, 12, and Bryden, 9, both remember their grandfather talking about Rice and the 49ers.

Clayton's Robert Helena was born and raised in San Francisco and followed the 49ers from their days in Kezar Stadium, and was thrilled to meet Rice. "Meeting Jerry is like a dream," he said. "Rice is one of the icons of the 49er along with Lott and Montana."

Like many in the crowd, he brought his entire family to buy the new book and to greet the man who left many lasting impressions on his legion of fans.

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## It's a brand new day at Mavericks

ANDRÉ GENSBURGER  
Clayton Pioneer

It is not the same old Mavericks Sports Club, although at first glance, the changes may not be so apparent. Sure, they have new locker rooms about to open, but members have watched that project drag on over a few years, despite promises to the contrary.

Mavericks is now under new management. Club president Craig Lazarchik and operations manager Kelly Busch have combined their experience in the health and sales industries to not only turn Mavericks into a premium facility, but to convince their membership that the tough old days have gone, along with the old management team.

"We've reworked everything that didn't work," Lazarchik said. "The members deserve it."

Lazarchik, whose background included six-and-a-half years as director of sales and service for the Golden State Warriors, has had lots of experience with Mavericks' owner

Gene Campbell, running sports facilities such as Pinnacle Fitness in San Francisco.

"I love working with Craig," said Dara Merritt, the Group-X Fitness Director, who has been with Mavericks for the past three years. Merritt said she was "ready to quit" when Lazarchik and Busch came along.

Lazarchik "is the most well-rounded person I know," Merritt said. "I respect (Busch) as well. They both are positive and very proactive."

"I'm the new guy here," Lazarchik said, "and the members have had to deal with a lot of promises in the past that didn't pan out, so I didn't want to just come in and seem indifferent."

In his six months with the club, Lazarchik has made many behind-the-scenes changes. "Kelly and I examined everything, looked at what was not working, and made the changes needed. The staff we have now are excellent people."

Tackling the never-ending locker room project proved



Randy Rowland/Clayton Pioneer  
Mavericks' President Craig Lazarchik with Operations Manager Kelly Busch have big changes planned for sports club.

more complex. In the end, a change of construction team was needed, with Lazarchik bringing in Ward Alan Emery, who quickly completed the men's locker room, now awaiting permit approval. The women's lockers are expected to be completed within approximately 13 weeks.

"It's like your home bath-

room," said Denise Menzie, senior sales and service representative for the club. "It's a reflection of how your business is run."

Enthusiastic about the new direction of the club, Menzie explained the new direction for senior programs under the

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