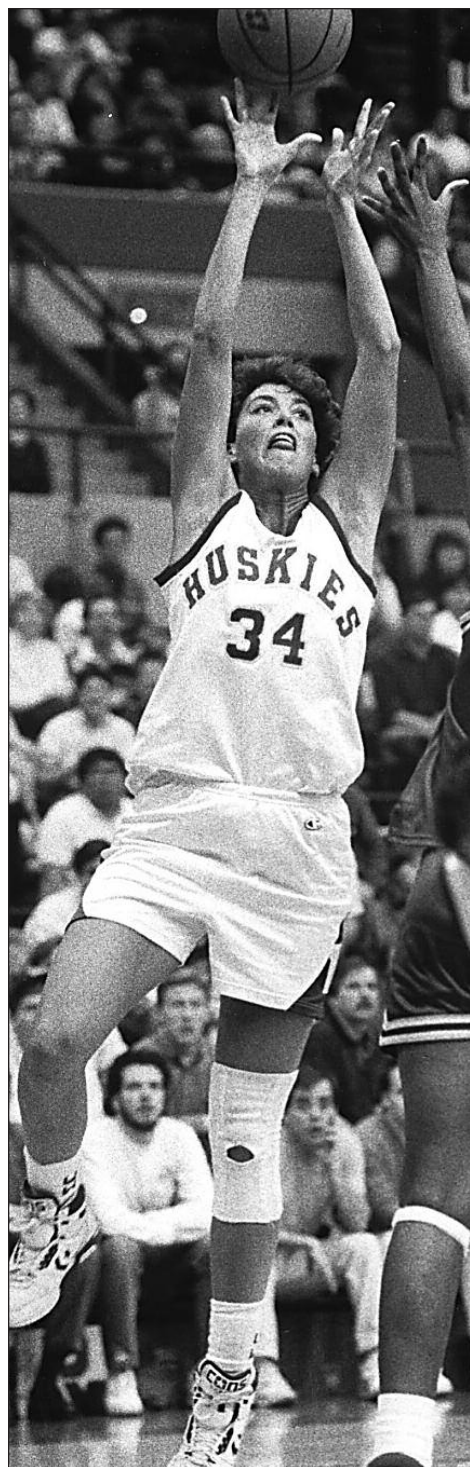


## 2015 Fall Newsletter

# 30 Years Ago: Brookings made our State Proud



*UW Photo*  
 Amy Mickelson captained the University of Washington as a senior when she averaged 14.9 points per game for the Huskies and was all-Pac 10.

**T**he prowess of the Brookings High School girls basketball team in 1985 was known from coast to coast.

USA TODAY ranked the Bobcats at No. 3 nationally. College coaches across the nation had Brookings prominently on their recruiting radar.

"Heading into the season we knew we were going to be very competitive," remembers Jim Holwerda, named USA TODAY's national Coach of the Year after his Bobcats won the Class AA state title. "Our kids had a high level of confidence. And we had two All-Americans in Amy and Renae."

Brookings was led by three all-state seniors. Amy Mickelson and Renae Sallquist were both 6-foot-3 and special players. Paula Kenefick was a 5-9 guard. Also starting were 5-8 senior Lisa Rollag and 5-9 junior Stacy Grorud.

The Bobcats had won a state championship the year before with Lisa Kurtenbach, Sallquist and Mickelson earning all-state honors. Kurtenbach had since moved on to star at South Dakota State University.

"Lisa's graduation was a tremendous loss. She was a real competitor," said Holwerda, 78, who now lives in Hot Springs Village, Ark. "But the kids we had back were eager to work and learn. Our girls were talented, dedicated players."

Mickelson went on to play for



**Renae Sallquist**

the University of Washington Huskies. Sallquist played at Vanderbilt University. Kenefick played for Yale University.

They concluded their prep careers with a memorable 1985 season. South Dakota's girls still played in the fall then and Brookings beat Yankton 45-29 in the title game to extend its two-year record to 48-0.

Sallquist then helped Vanderbilt of the Southeastern Conference reach three NCAA tournaments. Mickelson was all-Pac 10 Conference for the Huskies. Kenefick earned all-Ivy League honors at Yale.

Holwerda was a native of Lindsborg, Kan., and a starting guard at Kansas State University. He had coached the Yankton College men's team to a five-year record of 94-39 before moving to Brookings.

Coaching the Bobcats from 1975-89, he sent nearly 20 players on to college basketball. Among them was his daughter Kris, who graduated from Brookings in 1981 and became a standout at the University of Colorado.

"It was just one of those unique things that happen sometimes," said Holwerda of the success of his Bobcats. "We were blessed."

**"Our girls were talented, dedicated players."**

**Brookings Coach Jim Holwerda**

# Small Town Possessed Big Love of the Game

By Gene Smith

Thomas was a town that started along the tracks of the South Dakota Central Railroad Line in 1907. The Thomas School began around 1916 and by 1925 it added a four-year high school.

Thomas was the first school consolidated in Hamlin County, organized in 1915, and incorporated a number of districts into one school around 1920. It operated as a high school continuously until 1957, then closed its doors forever.

Sadly to say this was the scene throughout South Dakota when small enrollment numbers made it economically impractical to survive. Presently there are around 200 high schools in South Dakota that have either closed or consolidated.

Many counties have built high schools that incorporate all the schools for miles around, like Hamlin County did in Hayti. Hayti was the county seat. Since it was centrally located, it was the logical site for a county high school.

Many of those old schools are gone but cannot be forgotten. It is for this reason I am writing this story about one of those old schools ..... Thomas High School.

Thomas' colors were orange and black. The team nickname was the Tigers. Boys basketball started in



*Thomas native Gene Smith scored 1,184 points at Huron College before spending the 1952 pre-season with the Minneapolis Lakers.*

1926 under Coach Charles Voas. There was no gym so they had to practice outside on a dirt floor. Their first game was against the Hetland Broncos. And their last game was in 1957 against the Brandt Bulldogs.

In 1934, Coach Donald Haber came up with the idea to use the old hardware building for a place to practice indoors. This building had no heating, no lights and a dusty

dirt floor, with a basket at one end only. The dust problem was solved by applying motor oil on the floor.

The media nicknamed the team "The Dirt Floor Cagers" of Thomas. When the temperature was freezing outside and the building had no heat, the boys wore gloves to keep warm. These were not the nice thin leather gloves modern-day NFL wide receivers wear; they were farmers' work gloves. Needless to say the team had some very good passers, which was an advantage as they played against zone defenses most of the time.

For 12 years the Tigers played all their games away. It was in the 1930s when the team started to win, and by 1936 they won their first Hamlin County Tournament. It would be another 10 years before they had their biggest success by going to the Class B state tourney in Sioux Falls in 1946 and bringing home the third place trophy.

The Tigers' success was due primarily to a new gym which was built in 1939. That year there were only nine boys in high school, not enough for an intrasquad scrimmage. So Bob Smith, an 8th grader, was called up to fill out the varsity. He went on to play five years for Thomas, making all-state his senior year.

During the most winning years in

## Board of Directors

Dave Wagner,  
Executive Director  
Bob Swanhorst,  
President  
LaMoine Torgerson,  
Vice President  
Lee Stoddard,  
Treasurer

Wayne Thue,  
Secretary  
Randy Jencks  
Greg Hansen  
Frank Brost  
Gordon Fosness

Mike Begeman  
Deb Finnesand  
Jesse Mendoza  
Elton Byre  
Colleen Moran

## To Contact Us

Executive Director  
Dave Wagner  
SDBBHOF  
2210 W. Pentagon Place  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107  
(605) 467-3010  
dlwagner@tnics.com

# Small Town Possessed Big Love of the Game

Thomas basketball history, 1936 to 1946, the Tigers had an average of only 23 students in high school. The largest enrollment was in 1946 when the team went to the state tourney with 30 students enrolled, 15 boys and 15 girls.

There is an old saying that winning isn't everything, but it does lift morale. Morale was pretty low in 1927 when the Tigers lost to Waverly 104-3. However, they were always good sports. They won the Sportsmanship Trophy in the conference in 1931 and 1934.

Teams in the Hamlin County Conference were the Hazel Mustangs, Hayti Redbirds, Bryant Scotties, Lake Norden Blue Jays, Willow Lake Pirates, Vienna Panthers, Castlewood Warriors, Thomas Tigers and Estelline Redmen.

Thomas had limited seating for home games. Many people stood along the sideline. The gym floor was cement with an enamel gray finish. When the gym was full of people and very cold outside, the humidity would get very high and the floor would get slick as glass. Players would slide all over and the game would be stopped. The two end doors were opened to cool the gym. Ten-below zero foggy air would engulf the gym and in no time the floor was ready to play. Welcome to basketball in Eastern South Dakota.

From 1947 to 1957 the Tigers were still very competitive, although enrollments were still a problem in small schools like Thomas. In 1956 the first hint of impending change came when the county conference basketball schedule for the next year was drafted.

At that time Supt. Wilcox of Thomas stated that Thomas would

## Tales of Thomas

**Gym Dandy:** Thomas built its gym in 1939 at a cost of \$14,795.

**Low Point:** In a 1927 game Waverly defeated the Tigers 104-3.

**Glory Days:** The best run in Thomas history was 1941-46 when the Tigers went 127-26. Records were 20-5, 16-7, 16-1, 19-6, 27-3 and 29-4.

**Big "B":** Vernal Madsen coached Thomas to its only state tourney in 1946. Players were Robert Boadwine, Wesley Griffin, Marion Irish, Orvis Robish, Richard Schooley, Gene Smith, Charles Stormo, Milo Stormo, Richard Strohfus and Vernon Tetzlaff.

**League Foes:** Hamlin County Conference members were Thomas, Bryant, Castlewood, Estelline, Hayti, Hazel, Lake Norden, Vienna and Willow Lake.

not field a team and that it be omitted from the schedule. In the fall of 1956, there were only four boys in the last graduating class of Thomas. The next year the high

school students went to Castlewood, Hayti, Hazel or Watertown to continue their schooling.

The Thomas School remained open until 1961 educating elementary students. After that it was used for many purposes, but was finally torn down in 1997 and a 30 x 40-foot building was erected which served as a meeting place for the Oxford Township community.

I hope that after reading this story about a small town in Eastern South Dakota, centered on the community school, that more people will write a story of fond memories of their school and not let a window of opportunity be forgotten.

During the past 50-plus years I have lived and worked in California, which is a long way from my original South Dakota prairie home. In writing this history of Thomas basketball, I relied on research done by Tom Cypher, my memory and alumni yearbooks. Therefore, I accept responsibility for any conclusions, oversights and statements contained herein.

*(Gene Smith played at Thomas and Watertown high schools and at Huron College. He was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2010)*

## Smith sparked Thomas' run in 1946 Tournament

Thomas High School's only appearance in the Class B state tournament came in 1946. The Tigers made the trip memorable for their fans.

Gene Smith, who later would become one of the all-time greatest players in Huron College history, led Thomas to third place.

The Tigers defeated Spearfish

42-38 in the first round. Eventual champion Webster downed Thomas 45-36 in the semifinals. The Tigers beat Selby 31-29 for third.

Webster topped Hurley 47-27 in the finals.

Smith was named to the all-tournament team.

Webster finished 29-1.



## Hall of Fame Members



- A**  
Carla Allard-Watson,  
Bennett County '87 – 2015  
Rich Andrzejewski,  
Arlington '69 – 2014  
Richard "Milt" Authier,  
Woonsocket '67 – 2014
- B**  
Bruce Bad Moccasin,  
Pierre '67 – 2010  
JoElle (Byre) Benson,  
Washington '82 – 2011  
Scott Bosanko, Aberdeen '77 – 2013  
Julie (Harmacek) Bridge,  
Avon '83 – 2014  
Steve Brown, Hamlin '74 – 2010  
Gerhardt "G.E." Buenning,  
Parkston '66 – 2014  
Amy Burnett, Huron '91 – 2015
- C**  
Harry Carleton,  
Washington '43 – 2011  
Lee Colburn,  
Brookings '69 – 2015
- D**  
Katie Dailey, Jefferson '81 – 2015  
Chris Divich, Doland '52 – 2013  
Terry DuPris,  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte '76 – 2011  
Jim Dyer, Willow Lake '60 – 2015
- E**  
John Eidsness, Canton '66 – 2015
- F**  
Randy Fletcher, Reliance '65 – 2012  
Gordon Fosness, Presho '53 – 2011  
Mike Freier, Tripp '67 – 2015  
Bart Friedrich, Mitchell '85 – 2014
- G**  
Diane (Hiemstra) Gabriel,  
Yankton '80 – 2011  
Carol (Freeman) Galbraith,  
Canova '79 – 2013  
Barry Glanzer, Armour '78 – 2012  
Max Gonzenbach,  
Milbank '54 – 2010  
DuWayne Groos,  
Sisseton '62 – 2014  
Cathy (Coyle) Grubb,  
Belle Fourche '79 – 2011
- H**  
Clyde Hagen, Webster '66 – 2013  
Ray Hamann, Yankton '31 – 2015  
Steve Hammer, Pierpont '69 – 2014  
Becky Hammon, Stevens '95 – 2010  
Greg Hansen, Hurley '70 – 2012  
Garney Henley, Hayti '55 – 2013  
Luther Hippe, Washington '83 – 2014
- I**  
Chuck Iverson, Vermillion '69 – 2015  
Jim Iverson, Platte '48 – 2010
- J**  
Don Jacobsen,  
Lake Norden '57 – 2010  
Randy Jencks, De Smet '71 – 2012  
Becky (Flynn) Jensen,  
Wakonda '92 – 2010
- K**  
Eric Kline, Aberdeen '91 – 2012  
Mandy Koupal, Wagner '99 – 2014
- L**  
Jimmy Lovley, Elkton '20 – 2015  
Lance Luitjens, Custer '92 – 2010  
Jerry Lund, Belle Fourche '57 – 2013
- M**  
Tom Malchow, Aberdeen '61 – 2011  
Lien Marso, Harrold '51 – 2014  
Tom McGrann,  
Watertown '59 – 2010  
Jesse Mendoza,  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte '71 – 2012  
Rod Merriam, Huron '80 – 2010  
Phil Miedema, Hitchcock '58 – 2014  
Amy Mickelson, Brookings '86 – 2013  
Alan Miller, Stickney '81 – 2011  
Mike Miller, Mitchell '98 – 2013  
Jim Mitchell,  
S.D. School for Deaf '54 – 2015  
Myron Moen, Sisseton '63 – 2012  
Colleen Moran, Stickney '79 – 2014
- N**  
Chad Nelson, Yankton '74 – 2013  
Roger Nelson, Brookings '54 – 2011  
Rick Nissen, Miller '72 – 2011
- O**  
Lori (Wohlleber) O'Farrell,  
Summit '86 – 2014  
Tom Orton, Madison '65 – 2012
- P**  
Harley Petersen, Hayti '54 – 2011  
Courtney (Stapp) Pool,  
Newell '94 – 2012
- R**  
Marv Rasmussen,  
Claremont '55 – 2015  
Julie (Jensen) Rozell,  
Langford '91 – 2015  
Renee Ruesink,  
Castlewood '84 – 2013
- S**  
Rena Sallquist,  
Brookings '86 – 2011  
Jim Schlekeway, Britton '64 – 2013  
John Sivesind, Roosevelt '96 – 2015  
Terry Slattery,  
Salem St. Mary's '56 – 2011  
Gene Smith, Watertown '47 – 2010  
Taran Stapp, Newell '96 – 2012  
Karla Stevenson, Hamlin '83 – 2012  
Bob Stewart, Aberdeen '49 – 2012  
Wayne Stone, Mitchell '41 – 2013  
Jason Sutherland,  
Watertown '93 – 2012  
Jim Sutton, Onida '53 – 2011  
Bob Swanhorst, Cresbard '57 – 2010  
Wendy Swanhorst,  
Cresbard '78 – 2013  
Rex Swett, Huron '58 – 2010
- T**  
Jim Tays, Gettysburg '50 – 2015  
Kim Templeton, Miller '72 – 2011  
Denver Ten Broek,  
McIntosh '99 – 2014  
Mark Tetzlaff, Hamlin '81 – 2014  
Jack Theeler, Sisseton '63 – 2012  
John Thomas, Alexandria '65 – 2010  
Robin (Anderson) Thormodsgaard,  
Clear Lake '80 – 2010  
Harold Thune, Murdo '37 – 2010  
LaMoine Torgerson,  
Forestburg '59 – 2012
- V**  
Lisa Van Goor, Yankton '80 – 2010
- W**  
Marty Waukazoo,  
Rapid City '67 – 2013  
Chuck Welke, Warner '94 – 2013  
Vince Whipple, Rapid City '56 – 2015  
Willie White, Pine Ridge '87 – 2014  
Jerry Wingen, Canova '56 – 2011  
Kris (Holwerda) Woerner,  
Brookings '81 – 2014
- Read bios at [www.sdbbhof.com](http://www.sdbbhof.com)

# Stickney Pipeline Supplied Talent to DWU

By Gordie Fosness

The Miller basketball story begins in Stickney, when Tom and Sheryl (Klein) Miller were high school sweethearts in the mid-1960s. But even before the Millers there was Tom Billars.

Billars graduated from Stickney High School in 1964 and signed to play with the Dakota Wesleyan University basketball team. He was an outstanding student both in the classroom and on the court.

A brilliant talent with his sights set on a career in optometry, he was the student body president his senior year. Billars was instrumental in helping to recruit his high school teammate, Miller, to also attend Dakota Wesleyan. Because of Billars' encouragement, the Miller basketball legacy was birthed at DWU.

For one year, before Billars graduated, the two Toms played together. Billars played center while Miller played forward.

Miller easily acclimated to collegiate basketball and it wasn't long before he proved to be a real leader on the court. An excellent student, he was by far the best physical education major in my 27-year tenure at DWU.

The recruitment of Miller to DWU nearly 50 years ago was followed by two of his brothers, both of whom also signed on to



**Gordie Fosness**

play for the Tigers. Chris came to DWU the fall of 1971, just months after Tom graduated, and younger brother Alan arrived in 1981. Unfortunately, because of their ages, the Miller brothers never had the opportunity to compete together as a team. Had that been the case, there would have been no stopping the Tigers.

South Dakota Intercollegiate Conference championships were the norm when the Miller brothers were playing. During Tom's tenure, DWU took the title three times, with Chris' team taking home the championship trophy twice. During Alan's career, the team was king of the court three years.

All of the Millers were "starters" during their 12-year tenure, an outstanding feat for any basketball family.

During my 22-year career as coach at Wesleyan, 17 of those years I had a starter on the court whose career began as a Stickney Raider. Billars was the first, followed by the three Miller brothers. And that tiny little community also produced Doug Odens, another young man who

contributed to the Wesleyan basketball legacy.

As a footnote, let me add that the Miller boys' parents as well as their grandfather, H.P. Howard, played a role in their attending DWU.

The brothers had so many honors I cannot account for all of them. But here are a few facts about the Miller legacy:

\*Together the brothers scored 6,188 points in DWU uniforms. Alan's son, Jade, a current Tiger senior, added 768 points to that total during his first three years and is likely to eclipse 1,000 this season.

\*Tom received the Emil Liston Award, based on athletic and academic ability and given nationally to the top NAIA junior basketball player in America. DWU owns three of those.

\*In 1975 Chris was named college athlete of the year for South Dakota. Alan was an NAIA All-American and is the all-time scoring leader for DWU, and second in the state, with 2,920 points.

\*Points aren't everything. Defense and rebounding count big in greatness also. Chris holds the all-time career rebound record in South Dakota. He twice had 32 in a game, certainly a great feat.

*(Gordie Fosness was 351-195 as basketball coach at Wesleyan from 1962-83. He then served as Director of Development.)*

## Hall of Fame Leadership Through the Years

Thirty-one people have served on an evolving board of directors during the six years of existence of the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame.

They have been responsible for establishing policy and for providing the direction which has allowed the HOF to grow and prosper.

Currently there are 14 people on the board. Here is the all-time roster of board members:

Joe Backus, Mike Begeman, Frank Brost, Elton Byre, Dann Cecil, Jim Cordts, Bob Ehrke, Ed Feigen, Deb Finnesand, Ron Flynn, Gordon Fosness.

Gene Furness, Greg Hansen, Dan Holsworth, Robert Hull, Rich

Husman, Randy Jencks, Jesse Mendoza, Myron Moen, Colleen Moran.

Roger Nelson, Harley Petersen, Lee Stoddard, Bob Swanhorst, Tyson Theeler, Wayne Thue, Leon Tobin, LaMoine Torgerson, Dave Wagner, Al Wieman and Stuart Zephier.

# Values Acquired in Doland Guided Divich

By Greg Hansen

Chris Divich heard the talk swirling around Lawrence in the summer of 1955.

University of Kansas fans said the freshman class soon to arrive on campus included an 18-year-old who was nothing less than the greatest prospect in the history of basketball. Wilt Chamberlain would live up to all expectations.

Soon after Chamberlain became a Jayhawk he met Divich, who was a senior basketball player at KU. The friendship between the 7-foot-1 product of Philadelphia and the small-town boy from South Dakota lasted over 40 years until Chamberlain's death at age 63 from heart failure in 1999.

Divich grew up in Doland, a town of 350 in Spink County about halfway between Huron and Aberdeen. His graduating class at Doland High School in 1952 had 22 students.

As a player at Kansas he experienced the glamour of big-time basketball. But it was lessons Divich learned in Doland that he would later cling to throughout a distinguished military career. He entered the U.S. Air Force as a pilot in 1956 and eventually attained the rank of Major General. Among his many honors was the 'Order of the Sword', the highest award bestowed upon a senior officer by the enlisted corps.

"I was awestruck to play in huge arenas around the country for a legendary coach like Phog Allen," remembers Divich. "But there were many times I wished I was back home in South Dakota."

Divich's family lived one mile outside of Doland. His father worked on the railroad. Divich loved life in a small town.



*The prestigious 'Order of the Sword' was awarded to U.S. Air Force Major General Chris Divich (left) during a ceremony that was conducted on Jan. 15, 1987, at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.*

"My friends Joe and Tal Lockwood and I grew up together," he said. "Everything we did – hunting, fishing, swimming, sports – we did together."

The Wheelers competed in the Northeast Conference against larger schools such as Milbank, Redfield, Sisseton and Webster. Doland held its own because of athletes like Divich and the Lockwood brothers.

Divich was 6-3 and weighed 185 pounds. A four-year basketball starter, he also was a two-way end in football and a state meet-qualifier in track specializing in the sprints, hurdles and high jump.

During his junior and senior basketball seasons, Divich averaged 25 points per game with a high of 38. The Wheelers of Coach Bruce Canatsy lost only three times. One of those losses was especially painful.

"The district was in Aberdeen. Because of a snow storm when I was a junior the cars we were

driving could only get as far as Redfield. We all slept on the floor in the train station that night," said Divich.

"The next morning they decided a train was the only way we could get to Aberdeen. When we got off the train we went right to the gym. We lost to Pierpont. That really hurt. The people of Doland had high expectations that year."

Tal and Joe Lockwood both went on to successful careers at Huron College. Divich considered remaining in South Dakota, too. But his long-range ambition lured him beyond.

"I wanted to become an Air Force pilot and I wanted to go to a college that had ROTC," he said. "Missouri and Colorado offered me scholarships, but I decided on Kansas State. Jim Iverson was a big part of that decision."

Iverson was the former Platte star who had a stellar career at Kansas State. He and Divich were friends.



## Values Acquired in Doland Guided Divich

"I left home for K-State with one suitcase, only about half filled, and a pair of boots," said Divich. His time in Manhattan as a Wildcat was brief, however, due largely to a turnover in the coaching staff. He soon headed 85 miles down I-70 to Lawrence and transferred to KU.

The Jayhawks went 16-5 during Divich's sophomore season. But during a game in Baton Rouge against LSU, which Kansas lost 68-63, he fractured his left kneecap. After rehabilitation Divich returned to the court as a junior. He was there when KU's historic Allen Fieldhouse was dedicated on March 1, 1955. The Jayhawks beat Kansas State 77-67 that night.

Allen coached Kansas for 39 seasons with a record of 590-219. He is enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

"Phog knew how much South Dakota meant to me and that I missed home. He kind of took me under his wing," said Divich.

Allen recognized Divich's leadership qualities. When lingering knee problems would sideline Divich for his senior season, Allen asked him to coach the KU freshman team that featured Chamberlain. At that time freshmen were not eligible for the varsity.

"Wilt was such a good guy and we really hit it off," said Divich, who got 42 points and 29 rebounds from Chamberlain as the Jayhawks freshmen opened the season by upsetting the varsity in an exhibition game.

A year later Chamberlain moved up to the varsity as a sophomore and averaged 29.6 points and 18.9 rebounds per game. He led Kansas to the 1957 NCAA championship game where the Jayhawks fell to North Carolina 54-53 in three overtimes. Then as a junior



*Chris Divich, a 6-foot-3 forward, helped the University of Kansas Jayhawks win the Big 7 Conference championship in 1954.*

Chamberlain averaged 30.1 points and 17.5 rebounds. He did not return to school for his senior year.

It was an era in which integration was gaining momentum in college sports. Chamberlain, because of his size, talent, and African American race, was often the target of taunts. That still bothers Divich, who recalls

somberly, "Wilt was not treated as well as he should have been."

Chamberlain then spent 14 dominating seasons in the NBA with career averages of 30.1 points and 22.9 rebounds per game. He won championships with Philadelphia in 1967 and the Lakers in 1972.

Meanwhile, Divich had graduated from Kansas and embarked on a 32-year career in the Air Force.

"My crew was in Los Angeles once and Wilt had us over to his house for dinner," he said. "That was the last time I saw Wilt before his death."

Divich's departure from the military in 1988 signaled the beginning of a new career. He spent the next 26 years with a Texas-based financial service company, Southwest Business Corporation, as an executive vice president. Divich is now 81 and retired. He and his wife, Sue, who he met when they were students at KU, live in San Antonio.

"I have been so fortunate in my life to have been around so many wonderful people," said Divich. "And it all started in Doland."

Throughout the journey Divich's pride in his South Dakota heritage has never wavered.

### State Tournament Schedule for 2016

Following are the scheduled dates and the sites of this season's state boys and state girls basketball tournaments in March according to the South Dakota High School Activities Association:

#### **GIRLS**

March 10-12, 2016

**Class A** - Civic Arena, Watertown

**Class B** - Huron Arena, Huron

March 17-19, 2016

**Class AA** - Premier Center/  
Arena, Sioux Falls

#### **BOYS**

March 17-19, 2016

**Class AA** - Premier Center/  
Arena, Sioux Falls

**Class A** - Rushmore Plaza  
Civic Center, Rapid City

**Class B** - Barnett Center, Aberdeen

# In 1953 Basketball was Riding High in S.D.

By Bob Swanhorst

In 1953 basketball was riding high in South Dakota. A total of five state championships was at stake. There were 245 "B" schools and 32 "A" schools. There were 12 Catholic schools vying for a state title, and for the first time there were four protestant schools competing for a title as well. Also in March there was the fourth annual Rapid City Catholic Indian Basketball tournament. Lead was hosting the 29th annual Juvenile Black Hills Cage tournament. The final championship was for the State Indee tournament. That meant that well over 350 teams were playing for state championships on four different weekends in February, March and April of 1953.

What was missing? Not one women's team at any level was in the mix. Was it any wonder that a law known as Title IX would be formulated a couple of decades later? If one sentence could sum up Title IX it might read: "Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance including athletics and sports." Although Congress passed the Amendment in 1972 it faced numerous challenges for years. The bottom line, however, remained the same; there would be gender equality in funding athletic competition.

Presently, in 2015-16, there are fewer than 180 schools participating for six state championships. Women's teams have become an equal partner across the state and nation.



**Bob Marske**

Back in 1953 what were the events and who were the teams, coaches and players that made our state's history? \*Sioux Falls Cathedral won the Catholic state title at the Sioux Falls Coliseum.

\*Onida won the "B" at the brand new Huron Arena.

\*Aberdeen won the "A" at the Coliseum.

\*Andover won the Indee crown at Webster.

\*Augustana Academy of Canton won the Protestant tournament at Mitchell.

Jubilation and heartache follow sports and 1953 was no exception. First off it was becoming apparent that the Coliseum and the Corn Palace in Mitchell would no longer be considered as sites for the high school tournaments. Aberdeen, with the Civic Arena, and Huron, with a new 6,000 seat arena, now had the largest seating capacities. The number of fans able to attend in person had become the primary determining factor in future site selection.

The Class "A" tourney had added 16 more teams that had already been sanctioned by the Athletic Association in 1951. They were referred to as the orphans and joined the 16 largest schools by enrollment. This classification lasted through 1985.

1953 was also the first full year of Al Neuharth's grand experiment with a weekly sports

newspaper that covered all sports throughout the entire state. "All sports" meant everything from crow hunting to soapbox derbies. The paper was known as SoDak Sports, was peach colored, and across the state the motto had become, "Reach for the Peach". At ten cents for an edition and \$4.00 for a yearly subscription, it had the state and the sporting world buzzing like never before. It lasted just short of two years but during that time the coverage was thorough and some would say brilliant.

Cathedral won the Catholic tournament for the fourth straight year. That tied a championship winning string first established by St. Francis in 1937-38-39-40. Coach Franz Peterson's Irish entered the tournament with a 16-4 record. They swamped Notre Dame of Mitchell 66-33 in the championship game.

Onida entered the "B" tournament ranked by many to be the third best team after Hayti and Chamberlain. Hayti was the only undefeated team in the state, but Ravinia beat them 49-45 in the first round. Forestburg had already ousted Chamberlain in the first round of the regional tournament. Onida won the championship game over Ravinia 51-45.

Sioux Falls Washington was the ESD champ and number one rated team in Class "A". Brookings was considered to be their biggest challenge. That all changed quickly once the tourney began. Milbank ousted Washington 59-48 and Brookings fell to Aberdeen 68-67. Aberdeen under Coach Mylo Jackson



## In 1953 Basketball was Riding High in S.D.

worked its way into the finals and prevailed over Yankton 71-58.

At the Protestant tourney, Augustana Academy won the championship with a 66-49 decision over Freeman Academy. Wessington Springs College High School and Sunshine Bible Academy, located at Lake Byron near Huron, also competed. The Canton school had a total enrollment of 300 while Sunshine Bible had 33 attending the institution. Coach Eli Walter's boys held their own, however, with close scores against Wessington Springs and Freeman.

In the Indee ranks it was all Andover. Most Indee teams picked up former college players and were allowed to load up with two more players from their district tourneys. During the season Andover was comprised of a bunch of ex-high school players who had all turned to farming. Andover did pick up two ex-college players for the playoffs. When the tourney began the team had a 71-game winning streak. When the tourney ended they had a 74-game winning streak and a fourth straight Indee crown.

Outstanding coaching performances are normally associated with championship teams. Bob Koenig (Onida), Jackson (Aberdeen), Peterson (Cathedral) and Luther Gronseth (Augustana Academy) certainly all deserved the recognition. Ken Kessinger of Chamberlain gained respect and upheld the integrity of what athletics stood for by dismissing a star player for violation of team rules just before entering regional play. Lee Dolan took a mediocre Milbank team, by



**Carl Johnson**

Cal Mathison took tiny Franklin to the "B" tourney. They claimed 17 residents and two dogs. The school's enrollment had 56 students making it three times bigger than the town itself. Jerry Thomas and Paul Olson starred for the Flyers.

Outstanding players and their performances were easy to find and experience. Onida had Jim Sutton, Kent Hyde, Quentin Youngberg and Ron Lawrence all make first team all-tournament. Dale Hall won the SoDak Sports sportsmanship award for the "B" and Wayne Fix of Aberdeen won the same for the "A". Fix had a great tournament and would go on to play for the Gophers of Minnesota. Sophomore Harley Zephier of Mission scored over 90 points in the "B" tourney. After transferring to Dupree he earned all-state honors for two more years.

Then there was Carl Johnson of Milbank. When the dust settled at the Coliseum he had virtually rewritten the record book. Plagued by fouls against Aberdeen in the semifinals he only scored 23 points in the game. He held the following records after the tournament:

\*Most points in three tourney games: 96.

its season record, and almost won the "A" tournament while Ravinia coach "Ike" Oleson beat undefeated Hayti in the first round of the "B".

\*Most points in first-round game: 38.

\*Most points in consolation game: 35.

Johnson went on to become a great running back for the Coyotes of USD.

The Irish of Cathedral had Ralph Murphy, Fran Barnett and Steve Anawsko make all-state in the Catholic ranks. Another outstanding player was Junior Schumacher of St. Patrick's of Lead.

Andover and Bob Marske were another story. Marske, usually listed as somewhere around 6-6 to 6-8, led Andover to its only state high school tourney appearance in 1944 and scored 71 points in three games. But Marske chose farming over college. After the state amateur basketball association was formed in 1948, he made an unbelievable mark in South Dakota basketball. Year in and year out he dominated amateur basketball. At age 26, he was drafted by the Philadelphia Warriors but kept to South Dakota and "played strictly for kicks". Across the northern part of the state he was known as "South Dakota's answer to George Mikan."

1953 was indeed a great year for basketball across South Dakota. Thousands of boys and young men were playing on teams and most, if not all, dreamed of playing in the state tourney. Unfortunately the young women were destined to wait until the 1970s to compete. In time all girls sports moved onto the athletic stage in a big way.

*(SoDak Sports, 1953 editions, contributed to this story)*

## ≡ Fast Break of Things to Know ≡

**HOF Basics:** The South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame is located at the Sanford Pentagon shown here. We are a non-profit organization which chartered as a 501(c)(3) in 2009. Our mission is to identify, record and preserve the state's expansive basketball history for all to experience and enjoy.

**Stop By:** Normal hours at the Pentagon are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Monday through Friday. The Pentagon is one-half mile east of Interstate 29 and Benson Road in northwest Sioux Falls. The Hall of Fame is located near the main entrance with additional memorabilia on the second floor.

**Tour Time:** Group tours are available for school, civic and social outings. A representative of the Hall of Fame will direct your tour and will provide a wealth of information. To



*Sanford Photo*

schedule a tour call (605) 467-3010.

**Hear Us:** We offer a speaker's bureau. Groups can contact us if they would like to learn more about basketball history and the Hall of Fame. A board member will gladly visit you and share our story. Call (605) 467-3010.

**Website:** [www.sdbbhof.com](http://www.sdbbhof.com).

**Ring In:** An elegant ring is now available to commemorate membership in the Hall of Fame family. We have teamed with the

Jostens Co. to offer this meticulously crafted ring of beautiful white metal. Visit our website to see images of the ring and to learn how to order.

**Memory Lane:** Share your memories of your favorite players. Go to our website, click on Inductees, click on any player, and scroll to the bottom of the page. Provide your name and share your thoughts and memories.

**30 States:** We publish our newsletter twice yearly with spring and fall editions. Nearly 1,000 people receive the newsletter. Those on our mailing list reside in 30 different states. See the list of states on our website.

**Enshrined:** Already inducted into the Hall of Fame are 98 of the greatest boys and girls players that South Dakota has produced. Members of the Class of 2016 will be announced soon.

## In Remembrance

**Gene Furness** died June 18, 2015, in Clark at age 81. He was a member of the Hall of Fame's original board of directors. He graduated from Watertown High School and South Dakota State University. He was a teacher, coach and administrator at Clark and Waubay from 1959-2000.

**Rex Swett** died Aug. 2, 2015, in Denver. He was 76. A charter Hall of Fame member, he led Huron High School to the Class A state title and a 22-0 record as a senior in 1958. He was a three-year starting guard at the University of Nebraska. He was a dentist in Huron and Evergreen, Colo.

**Beau Keeter** died Sept. 23, 2015, in Mitchell. He was 19, a freshman at Dakota Wesleyan University and a member of the Tigers basketball team. He was from

St. Lawrence. An all-state player at Miller High School, he was a standout for the Rustlers and averaged 22 points per game as a senior.

**Marie Meade** died Oct. 24, 2015, at age 102 in Corsica. She was among the trailblazers of girls basketball in South Dakota. She graduated from Plankinton High School in 1931 and was a standout on one of the state's finest teams. She once scored 42 points in a game for the Pirates.

**Richard "Dutch" Erickson** died Oct. 31, 2015, in Yankton. He was 82. He was a graduate of Vermillion High School and Hastings College. He was a longtime educator and coach. He was men's basketball coach at the University of Sioux Falls from 1969-80 where he had a 111-173 record.

# Donors Play Vital Role in Mission of HOF

'Friends of the Hall of Fame' is a group of businesses, institutions and individuals who have provided support during 2015.

The generosity of these donors through tax-deductible financial gifts allows the non-profit HOF to expand its outreach and to pursue projects that amplify the significance of basketball history in our state.

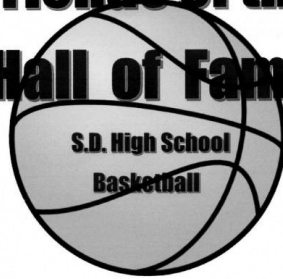
An example is the ambitious State Champions Project. A statewide search was undertaken to identify and obtain photographs of each championship team during the one-class and two-class eras of 1912-1984.

Those pictures have been transferred to seven attractive 40 x 70-inch panels. The project will be completed soon. When finished all seven panels will be on permanent public display in the second-floor corridor of the Sanford Pentagon, home of the Hall of Fame in Sioux Falls.

Donations also assist in many other ways. Such as making this newsletter possible. It is published twice yearly and distributed free.

To become a member of the 'Friends of the Hall of Fame' send your gift to SDBBHOF, 2210 W. Pentagon Place, Sioux Falls, SD 57107.

## Friends of the Hall of Fame



### Corporate Partners

Dacotah Bank  
Farmers Union Insurance Agency  
Prostrollo Auto Mall - Madison  
Sanford Health  
Sanford Pentagon

### Business Donors

Assist 2 Sell Realty - Rapid City  
Bank Star Financial - Elkton  
Brost Land & Cattle - Murdo  
Burlage Realty & Auction - Elkton  
CorTrust Bank - Mitchell/Sioux Falls  
East River Electric - Madison  
Edleman Ranch - Willow Lake  
Farm Bureau Financial Services -  
Rapid City  
First Bank & Trust - Brookings  
First State Bank -  
Armour/Geddes/Tripp/Delmont  
First State Bank -  
Groton/Langford/Claremont  
James R. Haar, Attorney at Law -  
Tripp  
Larson Manufacturing - Brookings  
Maggie's Salon - Jefferson  
Parkway Car Wash - Rapid City  
Prostrollo - Huron  
Scheels - Sioux Falls  
Security First Bank - Martin  
South Dakota Wheat Growers -  
Willow Lake  
Thrivent Financial - Madison  
Thue Farms - Hayti  
Tripp/Tripp-Delmont Alumni  
Association  
Veterans United Mortgage Company -  
Rapid City

### Institutional Donors

Dakota State University  
Dakota Wesleyan University  
Mount Marty College  
Northern State University  
South Dakota State University

### Individual Donors

Mike Begeman  
Ron Bertsch  
Bob Brink  
Frank Brost  
Gerhardt "G.E." Buenning  
Elton & Jody Byre  
Dale Christensen  
Chris & Sue Divich  
Gordon Fosness  
Bart Friedrich  
Cathy (Coyle) Grubb  
Clyde Hagen  
Greg & Debra Hansen  
Luther & Emily Hippe  
Dana (Nielsen) Honner  
Boyd & Dody Hopkins  
Jim Iverson  
George Kiner  
Jerry Lund  
Tom & Becky Malchow  
Myron Moen  
Tom Orton

Delbert Petersen  
Harley Petersen  
Russell Riley  
Jim & Marilyn Schlekeway  
Al Schoeneman  
Terry Slattery  
Gene Smith  
Lee & Betty Stoddard  
Dave Strain  
Bob & Trish Swanhorst  
John Swanhorst  
Wayne & Marilyn Thue  
Leon & Virginia Tobin  
LaMoine & Barb Torgerson  
Dave & Linda Wagner  
Jerry Wingen  
Kris (Holwerda) Woerner

### In Memory of Rex Swett

Bruce & Jacqueline Allen  
Jim & Maggie Bloom  
Gordon Fosness  
Marilyn Sprang Fransen  
Lucretia Gordon  
Wynn & Lorraine Gunderson  
Everett Hoyt  
Marilyn Hoyt  
Clayton Jacoby  
Harvey Kjellson  
Thomas Monheim  
Sherm & Vivian Monroe  
Sarah Riehl  
John Simko  
Dave Strain  
Bob & Trish Swanhorst  
Wayne & Marilyn Thue  
Elizabeth Timm  
Dave & Linda Wagner  
William Walsh





Sanford Pentagon  
2210 W. Pentagon Place  
Sioux Falls, SD 57107



## Date set for 7th annual HOF Banquet



Among the many highlights of the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame banquet each year are the memorabilia displays of the inductees. Shown above is the display of Warner star Chuck Welke Jr. when he was inducted in 2013. The seventh annual banquet is at 1 p.m. on April 2 at the Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls. The names of the former greats who will comprise the Class of 2016 will be announced soon. Banquet ticket information will then become available on the Hall of Fame website. An informal reception for inductees is from 4-6 p.m. on April 1 at the Ramkota. The reception is a free event. Family, friends and all fans are welcome and encouraged to attend.