

2020 Fall Newsletter

Winning Culture drove Pirates to the Brink

By Greg Hansen

Willow Lake High School went on a prolonged run in girls basketball which ranks among the most noteworthy in the history of South Dakota.

The Pirates reached the championship game of the State Class B Tournament four consecutive seasons from 1996 through 1999. They also advanced to the title game in 1991, 2004 and 2005.

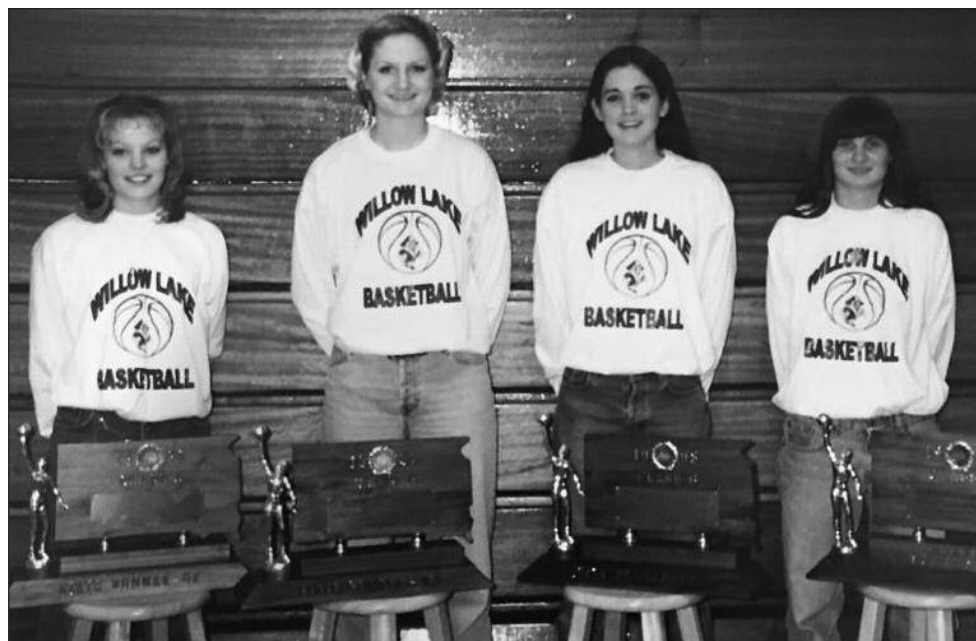
Yet incredibly Willow Lake emerged without a single championship trophy. Runner-up seven times. But there should be no doubt: the Pirates were winners at an elite level.

"It was kind of ingrained in the girls," says Paul Kelley. "Each season they wanted to carry on the tradition."

Kelley coached Willow Lake from 1994 through 2000. During that span his Pirates were 124-34. Kelley is now boys coach in his hometown of Custer, where his son Jace is a 6-foot-2 senior guard who has already scored 1,032 career points.

Prior to Willow Lake beginning its rewarding but frustrating drives to the brink of state championships, a model for future success was being crafted by Lisa Kannegieter. She provided an important example for the younger Pirate players to follow.

Kannegieter was the state's Miss Basketball as a Willow Lake senior in 1989 before earning all-North Central Conference honors at South Dakota State University. Two years after Kannegieter finished her prep career, the Pirates made their first journey to the championship game.



Kelley Family Photo

It is difficult for a team to qualify for a state tournament and even harder to reach the championship game. These girls helped Willow Lake do just that in 1996, 1997, 1998 and 1999. From left with the four trophies are Cassie Gehrke, Elizabeth Englert, Patti Symens and Julie Forbes.

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Coached by Dennis Sumption and led by Laura Stobbs, an all-state guard, Willow Lake lost to Northwestern in the 1991 finals.

The small town of Willow Lake is located in Clark County about halfway between Huron and Watertown. Kelley estimates that during his time there an average class consisted of between only 15-18 students. But there was never a lack of talent.

"One of the coolest things about Willow Lake was how different members of the same families kept coming through the basketball

program," says Kelley. "Sisters would follow their older sisters, and cousins would follow their older cousins."

Kelley played under legendary coach Larry Luitjens at Custer before graduating in 1988. He then was a 6-foot guard at Southwest State (Minn.) for two seasons before transferring and finishing his degree at SDSU.

Tia Michalski, Stacie Tellinghuisen and Virginia Englert paced the Pirates to their first championship game under Kelley in 1996. Baltic topped Willow Lake and the Pirates finished 22-2.

"That season we really had to battle. We were fortunate to get there and Baltic was really good," says Kelley. "The next year, '97, we thought was our year. We were experienced and had depth."

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Winning Culture drove Pirates to the Brink

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Michalski, a 6-4 center, and Tellinghuisen were all-state seniors then. The Pirates faced Tulare in the finals at the Watertown Civic Arena.

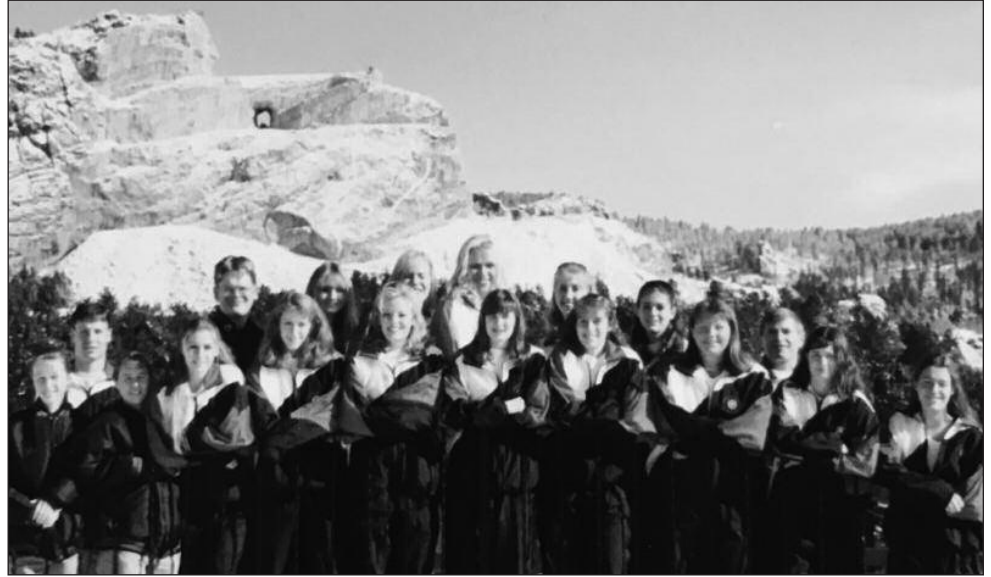
"We led late. Then with about 12 seconds left Tulare hit a 3 over our zone to go up by one," says Kelley. "We had plenty of time. We got some shots on that last possession. But they didn't go in. Things just didn't work out for us. It stung."

That heartbreaking 42-41 loss was the closest Willow Lake came to victory in any of its seven trips to the finals. Another outstanding 22-2 record was consolation and the Pirates once again looked toward the future.

But the next two seasons produced a continuation of the disappointing pattern of chasing an always elusive state championship.

Willow Lake had two all-staters, Elizabeth Englert and Patti Symens, in 1998 when it again fell to Baltic in the finals to finish 22-3.

The Pirates were 22-2 in 1999 when Selby Area beat them in the title game. Englert, Symens, Julie Forbes and Cassie Gehrke were seniors who had been part of a program that won nearly 90 games during their careers.



Kelley Family Photo
Coach Paul Kelley (second from left) and the 1997 Willow Lake Pirates visited the Crazy Horse Memorial while on a West River trip to play in the Custer Girls Basketball Classic.

In those four seasons Willow Lake went 88-9. And the school's appearances in the championship game weren't over yet.

Jennifer Warkenthien powered the Pirates to their next finals in 2004 where they lost to Mount Vernon. Then in 2005 she was Miss Basketball when Willow Lake, coached by Butch Brenden, again fell to Mount Vernon.

Just like Kannegieter before her, Warkenthien chose to attend SDSU. She became a Jackrabbits standout and earned all-Summit

League honors. Warkenthien (1,349) and Kannegieter (1,130) give Willow Lake two members of SDSU's prestigious 1,000-point club.

Exceptional talent. Consistently outstanding teams. There were no state championships, but the achievements of Willow Lake's girls stand as everlasting testimony to a program that thrived within a culture of winning. The school now joins with Clark to form the Clark/Willow Lake Cyclones.

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Old System is Suddenly new again in NAIA

Countless basketball players from South Dakota high schools have gone on to compete for colleges with membership in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. A big change is coming to the NAIA this season.

The organization held its first national tournament in 1937. It had only one division. That made reaching the tourney a daunting task.

For example, in 1974 there were 588 schools in NAIA. Only 32 earned berths in the national tournament.

South Dakota had 10 NAIA schools then: Black Hills, Dakota State, Dakota Wesleyan, Huron College, Mount Marty, Northern, Sioux Falls College, South Dakota Mines, USD-Springfield and Yankton College. NAIA schools in South Dakota, Montana and North



Dakota resided in District 12, from which only one team could reach the national tourney.

Huron won District 12 in 1974. The Tribe drew West Georgia in the national tournament. Fouts Walker scored 24 points for West Georgia as it won 102-71. Walker then spent 10 seasons in the NBA. Today more than 13,000 students attend West Georgia. Huron, with an enrollment of 329 in 1974, no longer exists.

The Tribe's experience was the norm. If a South Dakota team battled its way to the national

tournament it usually faced a much larger school. Many, such as West Georgia, have since left the NAIA.

To address the disparity, the NAIA switched to two divisions in 1992. Last season there were only 232 schools left in the NAIA that played men's basketball. They were divided into Division I and Division II with each planning its own 32-team national tourney before the pandemic intervened.

That system allowed 64 of the 232 teams to qualify for a national tournament. A similar format existed for the 236 women's teams.

This season, after 28 years of two divisions, the NAIA reverts to its original design. All schools will be in one division. The men will crown their single champion in March at the Municipal Auditorium in Kansas City, Mo. The women will do the same at the Tyson Events Center in Sioux City, Iowa.

Deadeye's picks were a pre-Tourney Ritual

For many years a mysterious, reclusive figure loomed as a celebrity of sorts in the days leading up to state basketball tournaments in South Dakota.

He was called Deadeye Dick and his reputation as a hoops prophet ebbed and flowed depending on how each tournament eventually played out.

Those at the *Argus Leader* swore that nobody ever saw Dick, that he discreetly delivered his picks to the newsroom in the cover of night.

Some reverently called him the Deadly One. One thing was certain: Dick's attempts to foretell the future with his tournament predictions were must-read copy in the *Argus Leader* each March.

Ole Deadeye had his critics, to be

sure. Many a coach through the years used Dick and his crystal ball as a means to motivate.

"This here Deadeye fellow says we're gonna lose, boys, so let's go out on that court and prove he doesn't know the difference between a backboard and a blackboard."

Yes, Deadeye had some very public failures. But he had his good days, too. More than a few times he accurately tabbed the team that went on to win the tournament.

Once when that very thing happened and Dick was off somewhere taking bows, a call came into the *Argus Leader* sports department asking for help contacting him. It seems they wanted Deadeye to be the honored

guest at the championship team's welcome home celebration.

Word of the invitation was passed along. Probably it was Dick's noble humility that intervened because when the festivities occurred he was a glaring no-show.

Through the years the Deadeye Dick column was eagerly awaited by basketball fans during the countdowns to tournament tipoffs. His predictions provided a platform for debate. They also incited an occasional argument.

Sadly, the Deadly One abandoned his swami gig at about the time the late, great sportswriter John Egan retired from the *Argus Leader* and moved to Arizona in 1989. They are both missed.

A Pandemic and Basketball, 1918-20

The Revelation of Facts

By Bob Swanhorst

In Haskell County, Kansas, three young military recruits and probably several others traveled from that county to Camp Funston (part of the Fort Riley complex) during the last week of February, 1918. At the same time in Huron, South Dakota, the city was preparing for the 7th annual state high school basketball tournament. When the recruits left Haskell County it was experiencing a rash of "severe influenza". By March 4th the camp hospital began serving soldiers with the influenza, and within three weeks 1,100 soldiers required hospitalization. Meanwhile the high school tourney in Huron went on as scheduled.

The 7th annual tourney in Huron was anticipated to be a special affair. On November 26, 1917, the Board of Control had initiated a district play-off before a team could enter the 1918 state tourney. The membership of fifty-five teams was divided into seven districts. 1918 was the only time that a state tourney would have seven teams. By 1919 the board ruled there would be eight districts. Up to that time teams could enter the state tourney with the primary requirement that they were paid members of the SDHSAA. It had become a difficult tournament to administer when upwards from 25 to 30 schools were entering annually since the inception of the tournament in 1912. Often times teams had to play two games, sometimes three, within the same day to win the championship.

That afore mentioned "severe influenza" soon spread throughout the United States. We



Archive Photo

As the influenza pandemic took hold in 1918 the Lead Golddiggers won the state basketball title. Pictured with Coach C.H. Wilkins were Henry Cotton, Charlie Urick, Bates Shedd, Homer Brooks, Jim Cotton, Herman Bowen, George Morthland, Ed Clark and Albee Halloran.

now have to reference WWI since the United States, somewhat like it is today, was facing several major challenges at the same time. Although the Great War started in Europe on July 28, 1914, the United States didn't enter until both houses passed the resolution on April 6, 1917. The influenza now had an opportunity to spread across the country via the military bases both at home and overseas.

By war's end the military death count for the United States was 50,000 while the influenza count was 675,000. The world death count from the influenza has been reported over and over by many countries, but 50 million seems to be one of the most recognizable numbers.

What about South Dakota and the state basketball tournaments? The influenza wave hit South Dakota the hardest in 1918. In 1917 the Bureau of Vital Statistics for the state listed only 54 flu related deaths, but by 1918 the number skyrocketed to 1,847 by the end of December. The Bureau estimated that a majority of those deaths occurred during the last three months of the year. The number of deaths attributed to the flu tapered off to 700 in 1919 and 551 in 1920. It was also reported that many deaths attributed to pneumonia may have actually been because of the flu. The basketball tournaments, however, were held each year during this time.

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A Pandemic and Basketball, 1918-20

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These were the glory years for Elkton. If anyone was looking for the first high school basketball dynasty, look no further. Elkton had won the championship in 1915 and followed that up with back to back crowns in 1919 and 1920. In 1918, however, the state title went to Lead. The Golddiggers squeezed by Mitchell (27-25) in the opening round, then Dell Rapids (19-18) in the semis. The finals saw them facing Elkton. Lead would pull away and win (20-11) becoming the first West River team to win the title. Lead stars included Cotton, Halloran and Bowen. There was no mention of the flu on the front page or the sports page of either the Argus Leader or the Huron Plainsman. This, of course was March, and the wave was coming in October.

Daum's Auditorium, Huron, was again the site of the 1919 tourney. Eight teams, winners of the districts, were represented. It was Yankton's first appearance. They must have treasured the experience because in the 1920s they went on to win six tournaments, four in a row, and become the first dominant school in boys basketball. In 1919, however, it was all Elkton. They beat Dell Rapids (28-11) and Flandreau (23-13) and in the tourney's most lopsided score ever, they walked over Mitchell (42-6).

The names of Leonard Lovley and John Trautman figured prominently in all games played by Elkton and Peter Petschow was noted for his defense. The Plainsman summed up the game: "Hundreds of people watched from the galleries and sideline to see the game. The contest was the slowest final game ever seen at a Huron tournament. During the contest



Archive Photo

*The small school of Elkton was a basketball power, winning the single-class state tournaments of 1915, 1919 and 1920. The 1919 team was, from left, front, William Kelly, John Trautman, Leonard Lovley, George Koehn and Louis Kearney. Back, Coach Ed Timm, Adolph Hartwig, Joe Smith, Peter Petschow and Superintendent Joe Bergeim. **Related story Page 6***

Mitchell was held to one lone field goal."

Although the flu had let up significantly it still claimed 700 lives. There was also no mention of the pandemic on the front page or sports page in either the Argus or the Plainsman during the tournament on March 20-21. Some of the back pages were advertising various and questionable remedies offered by dubious products to say the least.

During these years Huron College was awarding each team that qualified by winning the district a sum of \$40.00 for expenses while in Huron. They also awarded a Silver Loving Cup to the winner and tantalized the teams by offering a second Silver Loving Cup to the first team to win three tourneys in a row. Teams were paired up by a draw from a bowl or hat with the first team drawn playing the second team drawn

and so on down the line. There was a limit of eight members to a team and no one below the ninth grade was eligible for the tourney. Players had to make passing grades in four full and regular studies (courses) the previous semester and also up to the time of the tournament in the current semester.

Elkton kept its winning ways in 1920 and beat Redfield (38-16) but found Mitchell much more formidable by eking by (39-37). Doubtless Mitchell had remembered 1919. The final was (31-20) over Madison. The flu was kept off the sports page and the front page in both papers again in 1920. Those attractive remedies were still pushed on the back pages, and appeared more often.

In November of 1918 South Dakota Governor Peter Norbeck was diagnosed with the flu and spent time in a hospital in

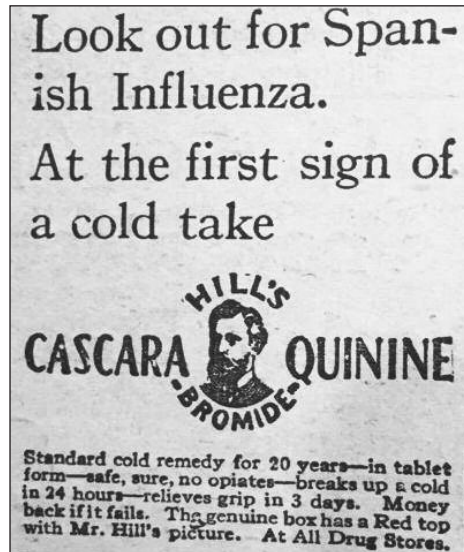
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A Pandemic and Basketball, 1918-20

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Deadwood. Of President Woodrow Wilson it was written: "President Wilson had been extraordinarily close-mouthed about the epidemic from the first," writes Sandra Opdycke. Historians "have been unable to find a single occasion on which he mentioned it in public."

After those three months in 1918 however, Peter Reitzel (writing from Pierre) found: "Throughout the state, churches, theatres, schools, pool halls, parlors and other public gathering places were closed indefinitely. The flu escalated to the point that the superintendent of the South Dakota Board of Health declared that, 'In any community where the disease is prevalent, public gatherings of all kinds are forbidden.' Individuals who had any symptoms of the flu were asked to refrain from public gathering of any kind. Public drinking cups and towels were prohibited. People were forbidden to congregate at train depots, requiring patrons to buy their train tickets one person at a time."



The public was inundated by advertisements promising remedies during the deadly influenza pandemic. The ad above appeared in South Dakota newspapers in 1920.

Reitzel went on: "Civic officials were trying any and every means necessary to end the spread of the flu. One of the best examples was in Rapid City. The Home Guard (equivalent of today's National Guard) roamed through the streets of Rapid City, fining and arresting people who were not abiding by the cities newly created sanitation

laws." It was also pointed out that one Rapid City man was charged with "flagrant violation of the anti-spitting ordinance" which carried a six dollar fine. That sanitation law said anyone "expectorating" spitting on sidewalks was subject to fine.

In 1918-20 it had become the same questions that we find today: How do we cope with risk management and decision processes? Are we an intuitive or a deliberative thinker? Or, do we let those around us shape our judgements? A century ago the basketball tournaments went on, but in 2020 they stopped. Who is to say what is correct and the most effective process to follow?

(Editor's Note: The 1918 virus picked up the name Spanish Influenza because Spain was neutral during WWI. While other European nations said nothing negative for fear of hurting morale - Spanish newspapers were full of reports about the virus. Their King Alphonse XIII died from the disease. The world soon accepted the term Spanish Influenza.)

Elkton Stars kept on Shining at Creighton

In the early stages of its basketball program, Creighton University relied on talent from the small town of Elkton. South Dakota had a single-class state tournament when Elkton won titles in 1915, 1919 and 1920.

Charles Kearney led the 1915 team. After graduation he left Elkton and headed 200 miles south to Omaha, Neb. There he was Creighton's scoring leader, averaging 16 points per game in 1918 and 17 in 1921.

Leonard "Jimmy" Lovley and John Trautman were Elkton mainstays in 1919 and 1920. Lovley became Creighton's first All-American (1923 and 1924). Trautman twice led the Bluejays in scoring average. Trautman's brothers, Harry and Louis, continued the Elkton pipeline to Creighton.

The Bluejays won the North Central Conference in 1923, 1924, 1925 and 1927 featuring Elkton players. Creighton

switched leagues and won the Missouri Valley Conference title in 1930 with Louis Trautman in his final season.

Lovley, who became a dentist, was inducted into the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame in 2015. He and John Trautman, who became a doctor, are members of the Creighton Athletics Hall of Fame.

Kearney, Lovley and the three Trautman brothers were all Bluejays captains at some time during their careers. Lovley is the only South Dakotan to be inducted into the Helms Foundation Basketball Hall of Fame.

Lovley was a 6-foot-2 forward and as a senior in 1924 he led Creighton to wins over such teams as Indiana, Iowa, Michigan State, Marquette and Notre Dame. The Bluejays were 13-2.

Creighton had an overall record of 63-18 during Lovley's career.

Hall of Fame Members



A: Amy Allard-Carmody, Jefferson '82: 2016
Carla Allard-Watson, Bennett County '87: 2015
Rich Andrzejewski, Arlington '69: 2014
Robin Anderson-Thormodsgaard, Clear Lake '80: 2010
Joe Ashley, Pierre '79: 2017
Dick Authier, Woonsocket '67: 2014

B: Bruce Bad Moccasin, Pierre '67: 2010
Dick Baun, Mobridge '44: 2018
JoElle Byre-Benson, Washington '82: 2011
Ron Bertsch, St. Lawrence '61: 2017
John Bertolero, Lead '56: 2018
SuAnne Big Crow, Pine Ridge '92: 2017
Howie Bich, Yale '58: 2018
Scott Bosanko, Aberdeen '77: 2013
Frank Brost, Murdo '55: 2018
Steve Brown, Hamlin '74: 2010
G.E. Buenning, Parkston '66: 2014
Jerry Buri, Hazel '60: 2017
Amy Burnett, Huron '91: 2015
Elton Byre, Reliance '56: 2016
Scott Beckstrand, Lincoln '89: 2019
Mike Begeman, Parker '75: 2019

C: Harry Carleton, Washington '43: 2011
Lee Colburn, Brookings '69: 2015
Conrad Collin, Huron '30: 2016
Cathy Coyle-Grubb, Belle Fourche '79: 2011

D: Katie Dailey, Jefferson '81: 2015
John Diefendorf, Irene '46: 2018
Chris Divich, Doland '52: 2013
Terry DuPris, Cheyenne-EB '76: 2011
Jim Dyer, Willow Lake '60: 2015

E: Kriss Edwards, Watertown '77: 2017
John Eidsness, Canton '66: 2015
Gary Evjen, Washington '68: 2017
Lefty Engebretson, Webster '46: 2019

F: Roger Faber, Canistota '58: 2016
Randy Fletcher, Reliance '65: 2012
Becky Flynn-Jensen, Wakonda '92: 2010
Gordon Fosness, Presho '53: 2011
Bart Friedrich, Mitchell '85: 2014
Mike Freier, Tripp '67: 2015
Carol Freeman-Galbraith, Canova '79: 2013
Dave Fischer, Wall '61: 2019
Rollie Furois, Deadwood '40: 2019

G: Barry Glanzer, Armour '78: 2012
Max Gonzenbach, Milbank '54: 2010
DuWayne Groos, Sisseton '62: 2014
Chad Greenway, Mt. Vernon '01: 2018

H: Clyde Hagen, Webster '66: 2013
Dale Hall, Ravinia '54: 2016
Ray Hamann, Yankton '31: 2015
Steve Hammer, Pierpont '69: 2014
Becky Hammon, Stevens '95: 2010
Greg Hansen, Hurley '70: 2012
Maury Haugland, Murdo '54: 2016

H: Julie Harmacek-Bridge, Avon '83: 2014
Fred Hecker, Washington '57: 2016
Garney Henley, Hayti '55: 2013
Kent Hyde, Onida '54: 2013
Diane Hiemstra-Gabriel, Yankton '80: 2011
Luther Hippe, Washington '83: 2014
Kris Holwerda-Woerner, Brookings '81: 2014
Cary Hornaman, Roncalli '75: 2018

I: Jim Iverson, Platte '48: 2010
Chuck Iverson, Vermillion '69: 2015

J: Don Jacobsen, Lake Norden '57: 2010
Steve Jansa, O'Gorman '64: 2016
Randy Jencks, De Smet '71: 2012
Julie Jensen-Rozell, Langford '91: 2015
Matt Jones, Alpena '01: 2016
Terry Jordre, Corona '57: 2017

K: Eric Kline, Aberdeen '91: 2012
Mandy Koupal, Wagner '99: 2014
Lisa Kurtenbach-Glanzer, Brookings '85: 2018
Mandy Kappel, Roosevelt '00: 2018
Freddie Knife, Cheyenne '59: 2019

L: John Lillibridge, Burke '58: 2017
Jimmy Lovley, Elkton '20: 2015
Lance Luitjens, Custer '92: 2010
Jerry Lund, Belle Fourche '57: 2013

M: Guy Mackner, Sisseton '65: 2017
Tom Malchow, Aberdeen '61: 2011
Bob Marske, Andover '44: 2016
Lien Marso, Harrold '51: 2014
Tom McGrann, Watertown '59: 2010
Jesse Mendoza, Cheyenne-EB '71: 2012
Rod Merriam, Huron '80: 2010
Phil Miedema, Hitchcock '58: 2014
Amy Mickelson, Brookings '86: 2013
Alan Miller, Stickney '81: 2011
Chris Miller, Stickney '71: 2016
Mike Miller, Mitchell '98: 2013
Jim Mitchell, S.D. Deaf '54: 2015
Myron Moen, Sisseton '63: 2012
Colleen Moran, Stickney '79: 2014
Scott Morgan, Mitchell '89: 2016
Josh Mueller, West Central '01: 2016
Donna Muir, Cheyenne-EB '78: 2017
Megan Mahoney, Sturgis '01: 2019

N: Chad Nelson, Yankton '74: 2013
Roger Nelson, Brookings '54: 2011

N: Dana Nielsen-Honner, Armour '88: 2012
Rick Nissen, Miller '72: 2011
Alan Nissen, Miller '68: 2019

O: Tom Orton, Madison '65: 2012
Melissa Olson-Guebert, Lincoln '83: 2016

P: Ann Pancoast, Washington '81: 2017
Harley Petersen, Hayti '54: 2011
Henry Park, Chester '45: 2019
Doug Peterson, Watertown '60: 2019
Jodi Pipes-Altenburg, Armour '88: 2019

R: Marv Rasmussen, Claremont '55: 2015
Wayne Rasmussen, Howard '60: 2016
Dona Ray-Reed, Yankton '78: 2018
Jared Reiner, Tripp-Delmont '00: 2018
Renee Ruesink, Castlewood '84: 2013

S: Renae Sallquist, Brookings '86: 2011
Jim Schlekeway, Britton '64: 2013
Jim Schmidt, Dell Rapids St. Mary '41: 2017
Harvey Schaefer, Hayti '54: 2018
Mike Sisk, Miller '57: 2017
John Sivesind, Roosevelt '96: 2015
Holly Sivesind-Borchers, Roosevelt '93: 2016
Terry Slattery, Salem St. Mary's '56: 2011
Gene Smith, Watertown '47: 2010
Rudy Soderquist, Rapid City '37: 2016
Taran Stapp, Newell '96: 2012
Courtney Stapp-Pool, Newell '94: 2012
Lolly Steele, Pine Ridge '84: 2016
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
Shannon Schlagel-Huber, Clark '01: 2019
Cregg Skarin, Hitchcock '70: 2019

T: Jim Tays, Gettysburg '50: 2015
Kim Templeton, Miller '72: 2011
Denver TenBroek, McIntosh '99: 2014
Mark Tetzlaff, Hamlin '81: 2014
Jack Theeler, Sisseton '63: 2012
John Thomas, Alexandria '65: 2010
Harold Thune, Murdo '37: 2010
LaMoine Torgerson, Forestburg '59: 2012
Louis Tyon, Pine Ridge '63: 2018
Lindsay Thomas, Roosevelt '02: 2019

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
Lori Wohlleber-O'Farrell, Summit '86: 2014
Sox Walseth, Pierre '44: 2019

Z: Harley Zephier, Dupree '55: 2016

To read bios go to www.sdbbhof.com

Fast Break of Things to Know

HOF Overview: The South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame is located at the Sanford Pentagon pictured at right. Exhibits are on display in the main Hall of Fame area on the ground floor with additional items on the second floor. We are a non-profit organization and chartered as a 501(c)(3) in 2009. To learn more about the Hall of Fame visit our website at www.sdbbhof.com.

Banquet Update: Uncertainty due to COVID-19 has touched all facets of our lives. The Hall of Fame banquet is set for March 27 at the Ramkota Hotel in Sioux Falls. The SDBBHOF will continue to monitor relevant issues associated with the pandemic. A decision regarding the banquet will be made after careful consideration of all factors.

Vol Contributor: The graduate manager of the Tennessee Lady Vols is former Sully Buttes player Caleb Currier. The Onida native was previously a student manager at Tennessee before he graduated in 2019. The Lady Vols have won eight NCAA women's championships with their most recent title coming in 2008.

Friends Helping: A successful golf scramble was held at the Kingsbury Country Club on Oct. 3 to benefit Marv McCune, who has a blood disorder. He helped De Smet to Class B titles in 1970 and 1971, then played at Huron College. McCune returned to De Smet and has coached the Bulldogs to state titles in basketball and football.



Sanford Photo

Final Four: Kelly Flynn, an all-state player at Parker, coached Fremont's girls to their first Final Four in the Nebraska State Class A Tourney last season. His star junior guard, Taylor McCabe, has committed to Iowa. Flynn previously won 508 games in 27 seasons at South Sioux City.

Big East: A 6-11 forward, Dawson Garcia of Prior Lake, Minn., is a freshman at Marquette of the Big East Conference. His mother, the former Stacey Nelson, helped Milbank win the Class A state championship in 1987 and then played at Black Hills State.

Past 500: Southern Oregon went 24-7 last season to lift Brian McDermott's career win total to 520. He coached Dakota State for 10 years before taking over the Raiders in 1996. The Cascade, Iowa, native was a standout guard at the University of South Dakota.

Top Prospect: Winner junior Bella Swedlund, who averaged 20 points per game last season, has a scholarship offer from Illinois of the Big Ten. The 5-8 guard has also been offered by several other Division I programs.

Fourth Ace: Making his fourth career hole-in-one, Rudy Gerstner of Yankton aced the 186-yard fourth hole at Fox Run in Yankton on Sept. 7. Gerstner started the Mount Marty basketball program, serving as the first Lancers coach from 1970-76.

Backboard King: Bill Bruns of Sioux Falls Washington scored 15 points and Jim Dyer of Willow Lake had 10 as USD faced the most prolific NCAA rebounder in history on Dec. 28, 1963. Creighton won 75-54 in Vermillion as 6-7 senior Paul Silas had 21 points and 24 rebounds. His 1,751 career rebounds are the most ever by a three-year player.

In Solemn Remembrance and Tribute

Larry Myers, 74, of Northglenn, Colo., died July 29, 2019. An all-state player at Wessington Springs, he then earned all-South Dakota Intercollegiate Conference honors at Dakota Wesleyan. He was a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

Gerry Ihrke, 82, of Le Mars, Iowa, died Dec. 23, 2019. After leading Webster to the Class A state tournament in 1954, he became an all-North Central Conference player at Augustana. He was a longtime optometrist in Le Mars.

Jack Powell, 83, of Vermillion died April 20, 2020. He was faculty athletics representative at the University of South Dakota and also was a former mayor of Vermillion. He was a graduate of Kingsley (Iowa) and Morningside.

Larry Lienemann, 82, of Littleton, Colo., died April 26, 2020. The graduate of Fulton played at DWU. He coached at Willow Lake; Pipestone, Minn.; and Littleton. He was inducted into the Colorado Coaches Hall of Fame.

Vince Scott, 76, of Phoenix, Ariz., died May 17, 2020. From Bellevue, Ohio, he played at DWU and was former director of the Redfield State Hospital and School. His son, also Vince, was a Northwestern standout in the Big Ten.

Henry Park, 93, of Chester died May 18, 2020. He led Chester to its first state tournament in 1945. He set a Class B tourney record with 59 total points, including 31 in one game. The SDBBHOF member served in the U.S. Army.

Larry Ireland, 74, of Vermillion died May 21, 2020. An all-state basketball player at Scotland and a football standout while attending Yankton College, he coached football at Pierre, Gregory, Hot Springs and Mitchell.

Brad Paulus, 46, of Fargo, N.D., died June 7, 2020. He was a graduate of Rapid City Stevens. He coached in the International Basketball Association, spending time on the staffs of the Fargo-Moorhead Beez and South Dakota Gold.

Gregg Voigt, 69, of Sioux Falls died June 19, 2020. A graduate of Spencer and Southwest State (Minn.), he worked with collegiate basketball programs while an athletic trainer at DWU, USD and San Diego State.

Bob Trapp, 80, of Aberdeen died June 26, 2020. All-state at Corona, he helped the Midgets to second place in the State Class B Tournament in both 1957 and 1958. He played at Huron College and then graduated from Northern State.

Dennis Flatten, 73, of Clark died July 2, 2020. He was an all-state player at Bradley. Later he was a member of the basketball team at Huron College.

Iro Mogen, 88, of Yankton died July 3, 2020. The graduate of Waubay and Yankton College was a member of the South Dakota High School Activities Association's board of control. He was an Army veteran and served as superintendent at Avon, Mobridge, Faulkton and Milbank.

Bud Belk, 91, of Watertown died July 27, 2020. A Henry product, he played at SDSU, served in the U.S. Navy and coached Aberdeen to the Class A championship in 1961. He spent time as head coach at North Dakota State.

Mark Meierhenry, 75, of Sioux Falls died July 29, 2020. The former South Dakota Attorney General was a graduate of Gregory, where he received all-state basketball recognition, and of USD.

Jim Hood, 73, of Marshalltown, Iowa, died Aug. 14, 2020. An all-stater at Irene, he then played at USD-Springfield. He guided McIntosh to the Class B state title in 1998.

Harold Thune, 100, of Central City, Neb., died Aug. 15, 2020. After a decorated career at Murdo and the University of Minnesota, he was a Navy fighter pilot who returned to Murdo as a longtime businessman and educator.

Gene Reich, 69, of Aberdeen died Sept. 1, 2020. For many years he was the radio voice of Northern basketball and football. A native of Aberdeen he graduated from NSU.

Dan Lynch, 68, of Yankton died Sept. 11, 2020. All-state in basketball at Yankton, he then played football at Nebraska. He was a defensive tackle as the Cornhuskers won national championships in 1970 and 1971.

Mel Thomas, 72, of Sioux Falls died Sept. 11, 2020. An all-stater at Alexandria, he helped the Beavers claim Class B state championships in 1963 and 1965. A fine player at SDSU, he went on to have a long career as a doctor.

Ed Champion, 72, of Rapid City died Sept. 13, 2020. He was a standout during his career at South Dakota School for the Deaf, as was his late twin brother Bill.

Dean Lee, 86, of Mitchell died Sept. 27, 2020. The Forestburg native attended the School for the Deaf for 12 years and while in high school was a starter in basketball for the Pheasants. He was a loyal supporter of the SDBBHOF.

Bob McDonald, 87, of Chisholm, Minn., died Oct. 14, 2020. He was the winningest coach in Minnesota history with an overall record of 1,012-428. His sons Mike in 1985 and Tom in 1990 coached Lyman to Class B titles in South Dakota.

John Bjorkman, 66, of De Smet died Oct. 20, 2020. The longtime referee was a graduate of Oldham and Dakota State. He served as superintendent at Castlewood, Gettysburg, Oldham-Ramona and Waverly-South Shore.

Gerald Gramm, 72, of Parkston died Oct. 20, 2020. All-state at Menno, he went on to graduate from Black Hills State and coach at Alpena, White Lake, Avon and Parkston.

Jim Iverson, 90, of Fort Wayne, Ind., died Oct. 26, 2020. An exceptional player at Platte and Kansas State, the SDBBHOF member coached SDSU to the NCAA College Division national title in 1963. He was an Army veteran.

Region 6 Tournament was solid Gold in '65

As the Class B district tournaments concluded in late February of 1965, and across the state the 32 champions were crowned, it became apparent to everyone who followed South Dakota basketball that the upcoming Region 6 Tournament promised to be something special.

The state's only two undefeated teams, Alexandria and Reliance, would both be there. And the combined rosters of the tourney's four teams boasted eight players who would be given all-state recognition at some time during their prep careers.

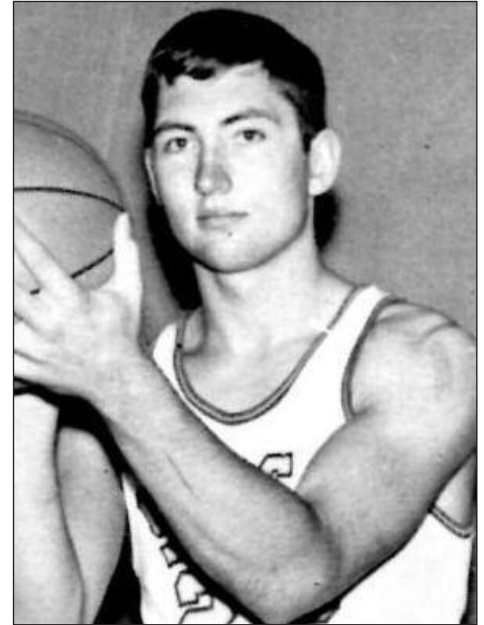
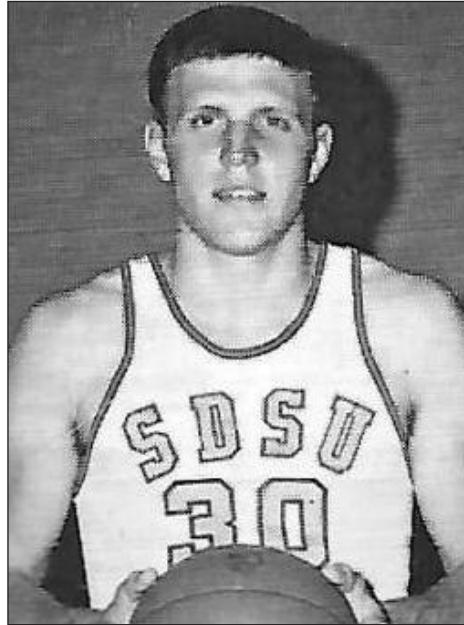
Three of those standouts - John Thomas, Dennis Womeldorf and Randy Fletcher - were so gifted that they were destined for eventual induction into the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame.

Yes, the Region 6 Tournament at the National Guard Armory in Chamberlain was loaded with talent. Fans throughout South Dakota were anxious to see which team would emerge and carry the Region 6 banner into the State Class B Tournament.

Alexandria entered the regional with a 22-0 record. The Beavers, who had come out of District 22, were coached by former Northern State University star Gerald Sayler and were favored to go on to win the state championship.

But before Alexandria reached the Region 6 title game the Beavers had to first withstand an epic performance by a sharp shooting 5-foot-9 senior guard from Kimball.

Ole Olson exploded for 45 points against the Beavers as the tournament opened before a capacity crowd. He connected on



SDSU Photos
John Thomas (left) and Dennis Womeldorf, two of the 1965 stars of Region 6, went on to be teammates at South Dakota State University and all-North Central Conference players.

15 field goals for Coach Frank Odens' upset-minded Kiotes and was a perfect 15 of 15 on free throws.

Alexandria nevertheless defeated the District 23 champion Kiotes 74-59. Thomas, a 6-5 senior forward, paced the Beavers to their victory by notching 20 points.

In the other opening game Reliance of District 24 put its 22-0 record on the line against Wessington Springs.

The Spartans represented District 21 and were coached by Chuck Kirchmeier and led by Womeldorf, a defensive minded 6-foot junior guard.

The Longhorns of Coach Darrel Cadwell won 93-80 behind 36 points from 6-foot senior guard Fletcher. Womeldorf responded by scoring 32 for Wessington Springs, which also got 19 from freshman Jim Higgins.

Alexandria was rated No. 1 in the

final regular season statewide poll. Thomas was joined in the Beavers' front line by his 6-4 brother Mel and 6-5 Al Blankenship. Backcourt mainstays were John Wenande, Greg Heineman and Leon Michael. In the finals Alexandria's superior size wore down Reliance, which had no starter taller than 6-1. The Beavers won the battle of unbeaten 81-58.

The following week Alexandria played in the state tournament at the Sioux Falls Arena and proved Region 6's excellence. The Beavers beat Agar in the opening round and then topped Brandon Valley in the semifinals.

Tripp was Alexandria's opponent in the title game and the Beavers prevailed 59-54 behind 25 points from John Thomas.

Alexandria finished with a perfect 27-0 record and claimed its second state championship in three years. The Beavers also reigned in 1963.

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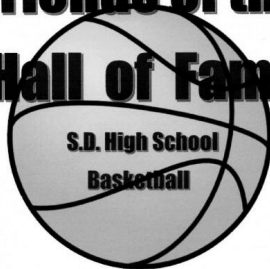
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Saluting the Pheasants

For nearly 50 years, from 1941 through the late 1980s, the South Dakota School for the Deaf participated in basketball as a member of the South Dakota High School Activities Association.

In recognition of the contributions of SDSD, the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame has the signboard pictured at right on display at the Sanford Pentagon.

Perhaps the greatest season for the Pheasants was 1945. They beat Brandon 38-35 to clinch the Little Sioux Conference title and also won the Minnehaha County Tournament and District 18.

Jim Mitchell, a member of the SDBBHOF, averaged 27 points per game as a senior in 1954 and was named United States Deaf Basketball Player of the Year. Gilbert Little Spotted Horse was all-state as a senior in 1970 after scoring 1,168 career points. Mitchell and Little Spotted Horse were two examples of many fine players at SDSD.



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