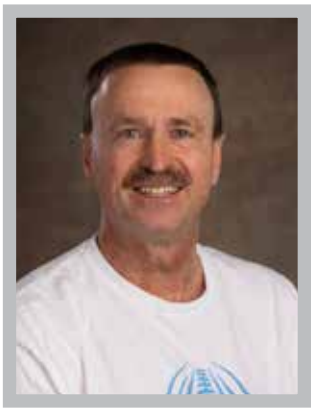
GRAND ISLAND CENTRAL CATHOLIC

HALL OF FAME

HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE MEMBERS



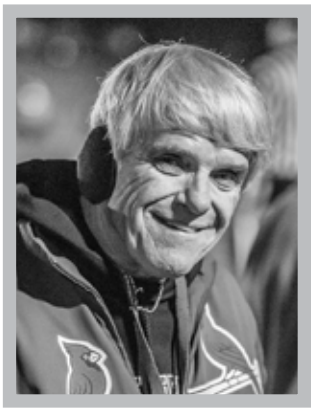
BILL GAVERS

KEITH KESTER

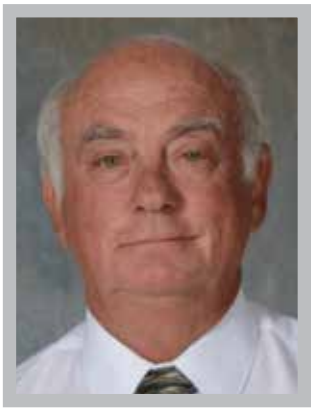
MIKE ROHWEDER

SHARON ZAVALA

HOWARD SCHUMANN



BOBBY MILLS



CARL TESMER

On behalf of Grand Island Central Catholic High School, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to our Athletic Hall of Fame Ceremony. Today, we gather to honor and celebrate the remarkable achievements of our distinguished inductees, whose contributions to our athletic programs have left an indelible mark on our school's history.

This ceremony is not only a celebration of athletic excellence but also a tribute to the spirit of dedication, perseverance, and sportsmanship that defines Grand Island Central Catholic. Each of our inductees has demonstrated extraordinary talent and commitment, setting a standard of excellence that inspires current and future generations of Crusaders.

As we reflect on their accomplishments, we also recognize the collective support of coaches, teammates, and families that has played a crucial role in their successes. It is through this community's unwavering support and shared passion that we continue to foster a culture of excellence in our athletic programs.

To our inductees, congratulations on this well-deserved honor. Your achievements have brought pride to our school and serve as a testament to your hard work and dedication. We are proud to celebrate your legacy and look forward to the inspiration you will undoubtedly continue to provide.

Thank you all for joining us this morning to honor these exceptional individuals. Let us enjoy this special occasion as we celebrate the past, present, and future of Crusaders athletics.

Bill Gavers

Bill Gavers, Activities Director

GABLE BALDWIN

CLASS OF 2003

Gable Baldwin, a standout graduate of the Class of 2003, is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Hall of Fame in recognition of his extraordinary achievements in athletics. A versatile athlete, Gable excelled in football, gymnastics, and track and field during his high school career.

In track and field, Gable made an indelible mark as an all-class state champion and record-holder in the pole vault. His achievements include setting an all-class state meet record and winning the Junior Olympic National Championship for boys aged 14-15 in pole vault. In gymnastics, he was a Junior Olympic National Champion in vault and a four-time national meet qualifier.

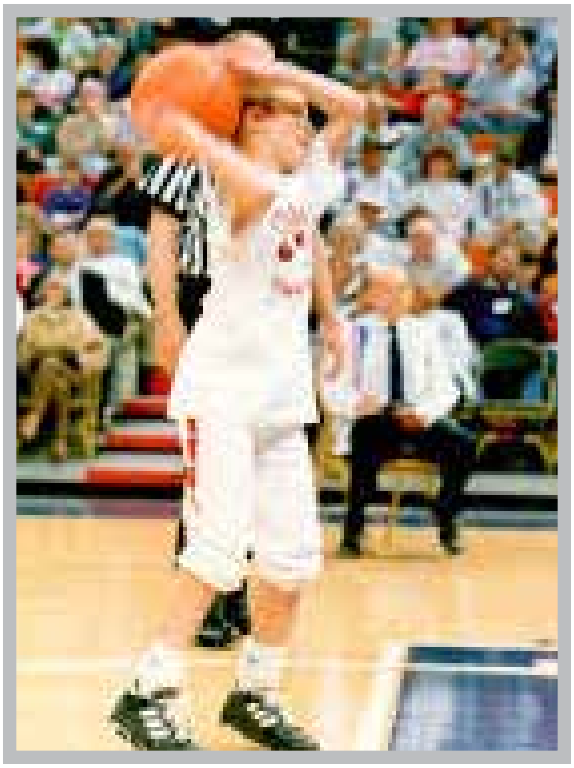
Gable continued his athletic career at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he competed in track and field. He earned NCAA All-American honors and was a Big 12 Champion, as well as a seven-time All-Big 12 selection. He also served as the UNL track team captain in 2007 and was named a USA Today High School All-American in 2003 and a member of the USA Track and Field Junior Pan American team in 2003.

Gable attributes his success to hard work, determination, resilience, preparation, accountability, and a bit of luck. He acknowledges the invaluable support from his family, coaches, teachers, teammates, and fellow competitors, who played a crucial role in his achievements.

Gable is married to Jamie Redman Baldwin, a 2003 alumna of Grand Island Central Catholic, and they have a daughter, Isla, who is six months old. His exceptional athletic career and dedication make him a deserving inductee into the Hall of Fame.

CJ COWGILL

CLASS OF 1996



CJ Cowgill is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition of his outstanding achievements in basketball and tennis.

In high school tennis, CJ won the Class B State Championship at #2 singles in 1993 and captured the Class B State Championship at #1 doubles with partner Dan Schreurs in 1995. He also played a pivotal role in leading his team to the Class B Team Title in 1995.

In basketball, CJ set remarkable records, including holding the record for the most three-point field goals made in a state tournament game with 11. He is also ranked in the top 5 for most points scored in a state tournament game. His excellence on the court extended to school three-point shooting records for game, season, and career, and he led the state in scoring.

CJ continued his basketball career at UNK, Liberty University, and Chaminade University. He played professionally for one year in the Netherlands with Aris in Leeuwarden, where he averaged 24 points per game.

CJ is supported by his wife, Shai, and their children Jordan (12) and Lailah (10)

STEPHEN DORAN

CLASS OF 1981

Stephen Doran, a distinguished graduate of the Class of 1981, is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Hall of Fame in recognition of his remarkable athletic achievements. An accomplished athlete in cross country, basketball, and track during his high school years, Stephen left an indelible mark on the sports community.

In cross country, Stephen secured the Class B state championship in 1980. He further distinguished himself in track by winning both the 1600-meter and 3200-meter Class B state championships in 1981. His performance in these events earned him the all-class gold medal in the 1600 meters and set a state meet record that stood for 43 years until recently.

Stephen continued his athletic career at Loyola University of Chicago, where he competed in cross country and both indoor and outdoor track. His collegiate career was marked by his dedication and sportsmanship, though he did not pursue a professional sports path.

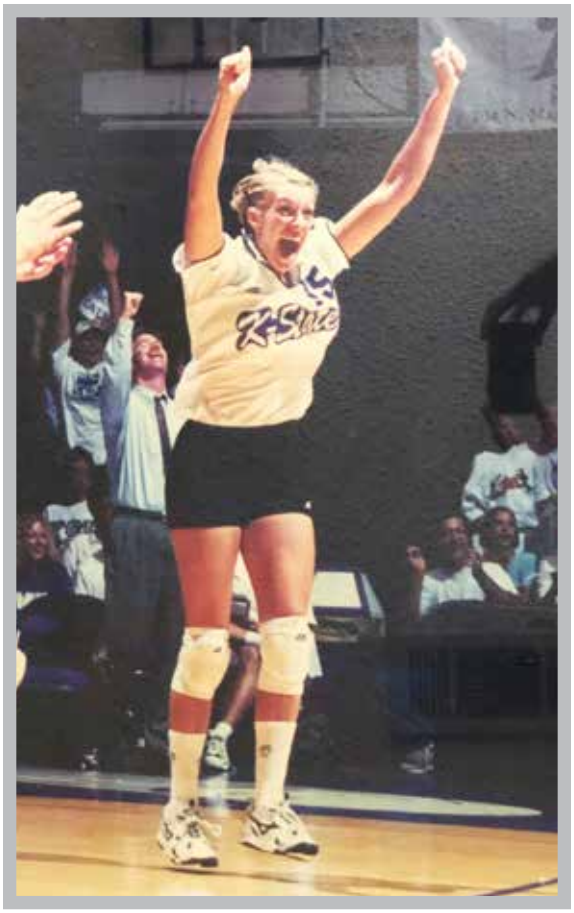
In addition to his high school and college achievements, Stephen was honored as the Grand Island Independent Midlands Athlete of the Year in 1981, highlighting his exceptional contributions to sports during his high school career.

Stephen is married to Sharon Lewandowski, a 1980 alumna of Grand Island Central Catholic. Together, they have five sons—Michael, Paul, Thomas, Peter, and John—and are proud grandparents to eight, soon to be nine, grandchildren.

As he is celebrated in the Hall of Fame, Stephen Doran is recognized not only for his athletic excellence but also for his enduring impact on his community and family through his sportsmanship and achievements.

VALERIE WIECK FRIEDEL

CLASS OF 1995



Valerie Wieck Friedel, a distinguished alumna of Grand Island Central Catholic, is being honored for her exceptional achievements in athletics. Graduating in 1995, Valerie made her mark as a formidable athlete in volleyball, basketball, and track. She was a key player on three state championship volleyball teams and holds a record for blocking in both the season and career.

Valerie continued her athletic journey at Kansas State University, where she excelled in volleyball. Her college career was highlighted by being named a “Fab 50 Recruit” in 1995, earning All-Big 12 honors in 1997 and 1998, and serving as team captain in both years. Notably, she led the Big 12 Conference in blocks in 1997 and was a four-time letter winner, leaving a lasting impact on the program.

Following college, Valerie took her talents to the professional arena, competing on the AVP Beach Volleyball Tour from 2002 to 2007. Her contributions to the sport have been recognized through various awards and honors, cementing her legacy as a prominent athlete.

Valerie is married to Justin Friedel, and they have three children: stepdaughter Kirstie George, Augustus, and Victoria. She balances her professional achievements with a fulfilling family life, surrounded by a supportive network of extended family in Nebraska and Texas.

We are proud to celebrate Valerie Wieck Friedel’s remarkable career and contributions to athletics as she joins the Grand Island Central Catholic Hall of Fame.

JENNY GREEN

CLASS OF 2003

Jenny Green, a Grand Island Central Catholic graduate of 2003, distinguished herself as a multi-sport athlete with exceptional achievements in track and field, volleyball, and powerlifting. Dominating the pole vault, Jenny secured the All-Class gold medal at the state meet all four years and set a Nebraska high school girls' pole vault record of 13'3", which remains unbeaten. Her senior year was particularly noteworthy as she won gold in the pole vault, long jump, and 300-meter hurdles, and placed second in the 100-meter dash, contributing all 38 points for GICC to achieve a third-place team finish.

Jenny earned accolades such as Nebraska Gatorade Girls Track & Field Athlete of the Year (2001-2002) and The Grand Island Independent Female Athlete of the Year (2003). On the national stage, she claimed victories at the Nike Indoor Classic, Adidas Outdoor Classic, and USA Track and Field Junior Championships, and represented the U.S. at the Junior World Championship in Italy in 2004.

In volleyball, she led her team to a state runner-up finish and earned All-State honors twice. Jenny also excelled in powerlifting, winning the Nebraska State Girl's Class C Championship twice, and qualified for the state diving meet.

At the University of Nebraska, Jenny continued her success as a Big 12 Freshman of the Year, four-time Big 12 pole vault champion, and a two-time CoSIDA Academic All-American.

KEITH KESTER

COACH SINCE 1981 - PRESENT

Keith Kester is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame as a Coach in recognition of his exceptional contributions to the track and field programs. Since beginning his coaching career at GICC in 1981, Keith has dedicated himself to leading the boys' and girls' track and field teams with remarkable success.

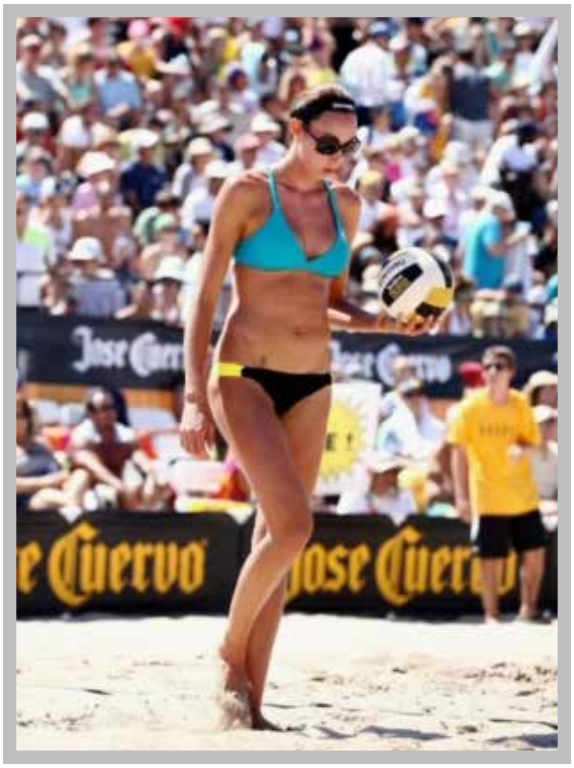
Under his guidance, the boys' team secured State Track and Field Championships in 2004 and 2022 and were State Runners-Up in 2021. His coaching achievements also include six District Championships for the boys and four District Championships for the girls, along with three Class B State Track and Field third-place finishes for the girls.

Keith has been recognized as the Grand Island Independent Coach of the Year in 2004 and 2022 and was honored as the Class C State Track and Field Coach of the Year in 2022.

Keith cherishes the relationships he has built with athletes, coaches, parents, and administrators throughout his career at GICC. He credits these individuals for their invaluable contributions to the success of the track and field programs, and he remains deeply grateful for their support and collaboration over the years. His enduring commitment and leadership continue to shape the track and field programs at GICC.

JENNY ANN KROPP

CLASS OF 1998



Jenny Ann Kropp is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition of her outstanding contributions to volleyball. A multi-sport athlete during her time at GICC, Jenny's exceptional career in volleyball, both at the collegiate and professional levels, has left an enduring legacy.

At the University of Nebraska, Jenny was instrumental in the Cornhuskers' 2000 National Championship team, leading them to an undefeated season with a perfect 34-0 record. Her remarkable performance earned her All-American honors in 2001, and she served as team captain that year. Jenny was a standout in the Big 12 Conference, securing conference championships in 1998, 2000, and 2001. She was named a First Team All-Region selection in both 2000 and 2001, and remains 5th on Nebraska's all-time list for blocks.

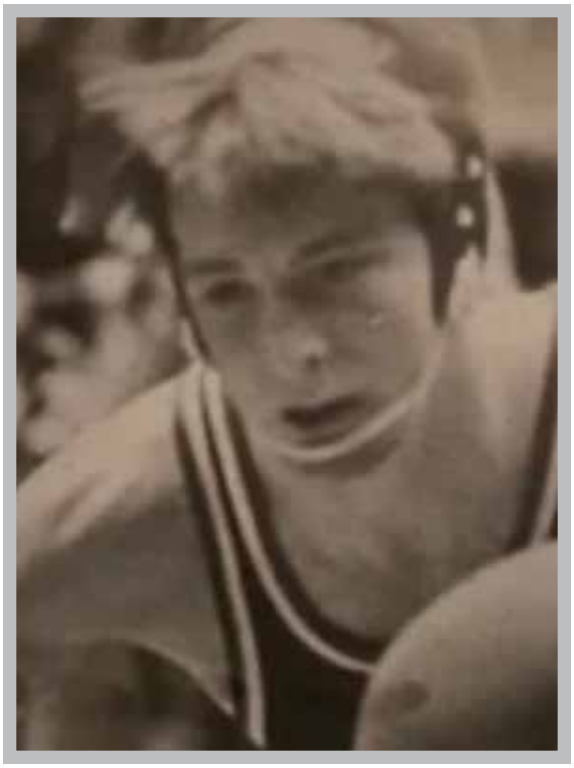
Following her collegiate career, Jenny made a significant impact in professional volleyball. She played indoor volleyball for two years in Puerto Rico with Indias De Mayaguez and Vaqueras de Bayamon. Transitioning to beach volleyball, Jenny enjoyed a distinguished career from 2007 to 2015. Her accolades include being named AVP Rookie of the Year in 2007, AVP Best Blocker of the Year in 2015, and winning the prestigious Manhattan Beach Open in 2011 and 2012, often referred to as the "Wimbledon of Beach Volleyball." Jenny also achieved notable success on the Jose Cuervo Beach Volleyball Series, where she and partner Whitney Pavlik went undefeated in 2012, and she was named Best Blocker in 2011 and 2012.

Off the court, Jenny's dedication to her sport is matched by her commitment to her family. She is married to Adam Goess, and together they have twins, Carter and Ella, who are in the 5th grade. Jenny and Adam met in California in 2006, lived there until 2022, and then moved back to Grand Island.

Jenny Ann Kropp's career is a testament to her skill, determination, and dedication to volleyball. Her achievements at every level of the sport make her a truly deserving member of the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame.

MICHAEL (MIKE) MCCLAREN

CLASS OF 1983



Michael (Mike) McClaren is being honored posthumously for his outstanding achievements in wrestling, cross country, and track and field at Grand Island Central Catholic. A four-year, three-sport varsity letter winner, Mike made an indelible mark on the school's athletic history.

In high school, Mike excelled in wrestling, securing back-to-back state championships in 1982 and 1983. He was also named the 1983 KRGI Athlete of the Year. His high school career laid the foundation for a remarkable collegiate wrestling career at Chadron State College, where he was a four-year letter winner. Mike was a NAIA National Champion in 1987 and was a runner-up in 1984 and 1985/1986. He set numerous records, including for most reversals and 2-pt and 3-pt near falls in both career and season.

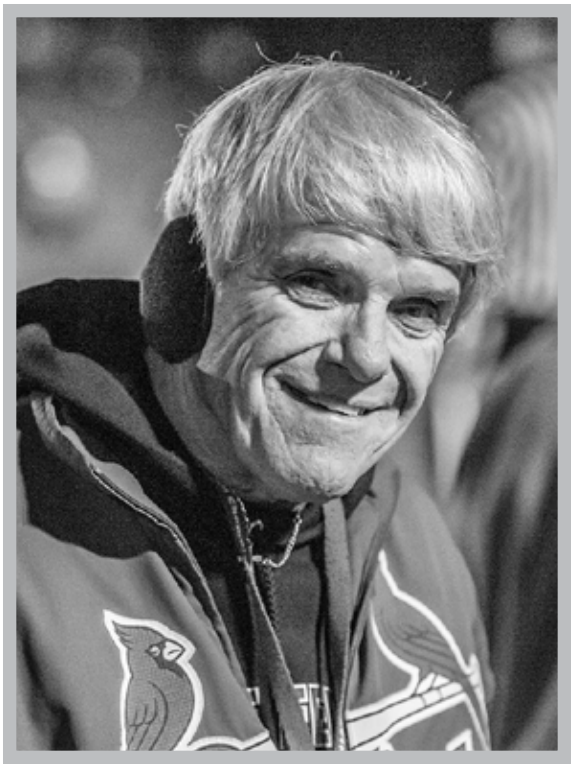
Beyond his competitive achievements, Mike contributed to the wrestling community as a coach and mentor. He was involved in coaching youth wrestling at local, state, regional, and national levels from 1999 to 2008 and served as an assistant wrestling coach at Grand Island Senior High from 2006 to 2009.

Mike was inducted into the Nebraska Scholastic Wrestling Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2023, recognizing his lasting impact on the sport.

Mike is remembered fondly by his family: his parents Jim and Margaret McClaren, his sister Michelle Hicks and her husband Larry, his wife Shanda McClaren, and his children Chase McClaren and his wife Stephanie with grandson Waylon, and Tanner McClaren and his wife Kayla with granddaughters Aspen and Jordy and grandson Brayden. His legacy of excellence and dedication continues to inspire those who knew him.

BOBBY MILLS-MICEK

CLASS OF 1967



Bobby Mills-Micek is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition of his exceptional contributions as a sports contributor, historian, and records analyst.

Affectionately known as “The 1000 Yard Guy,” Bobby has made a profound impact on Nebraska high school football. In 1975, he founded the 1000-Yard Club, dedicated to tracking every 1000-yard rusher in the state. His commitment to the sport is unparalleled, having walked the sidelines every season since 1975 to meticulously document and celebrate the achievements of 1000-yard rushers.

Bobby’s dedication has earned him numerous accolades, including the NSAA Outstanding Service Award (2005) and the Nebraska Coaches Association Media Person of the Year (2013). He was inducted into the Nebraska Eight-Man Football Coaches Association Hall of Fame (2018) and the Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame (2020). His ongoing commitment to preserving and promoting high school sports history in Nebraska continues to make a significant impact.

Bobby’s family includes his wife, Carla; their daughter, Erin Martinez, and her husband, Tino Martinez, along with their daughter, Kennedy; and their son, Rob Micek, his wife, Ashley, and their daughter, Ariana.

TODD PETERSON

CLASS OF 2004

Todd Peterson, a distinguished graduate of the Class of 2004, is being honored for his remarkable contributions and achievements in athletics at Grand Island Central Catholic. A multi-sport athlete, Todd excelled in football, basketball, and track, leaving a significant mark on the school's sports history.

In track and field, Todd was a key member of the 2004 Class C Championship team and set a school record in the high jump at 6'8.5", which he still shares. He was also a four-year state track qualifier, medaling in three events at the state meet in 2003. In basketball, Todd's 2004 team went undefeated in the regular season, and he finished his high school career with the #2 career points total in basketball and the #1 career points total in track. He was a two-time All-State selection in C-1 basketball and served as the captain of the All-State team in 2003-2004. In football, he earned All-State honors and was named to the Heartland Super Squad.

Todd continued his athletic career at the University of Nebraska, where he played football and was a four-year letter winner. At the time of his graduation, he ranked among the top five in career receptions and receiving yards at UNL. His collegiate achievements include being a 2nd Team Academic All-American in 2008, a four-time Academic All-Big XII selection, and earning a spot on the Big XII Commissioner's Honor Roll nine times. Todd was also recognized for his community service with the Brook Berringer Citizenship Team and received the Cletus Fisher Native Son Award in 2008.

Following college, Todd signed as an undrafted free agent with the Jacksonville Jaguars in 2009, further showcasing his dedication and talent in professional football.

Todd is married to Lauren, and they have two children, Josephine (Joey) and Henry. His exceptional athletic career and commitment to excellence make him a deserving inductee into the Grand Island Central Catholic Hall of Fame.

ROBERT W. RUPP JR.

CLASS OF 1981

Robert W. Rupp Jr., a notable graduate of the Class of 1981, is being inducted into the Athletic High School Hall of Fame in recognition of his outstanding achievements in football, basketball, and golf. During his high school career, Robert was a standout athlete, earning All-City honors for three years and being named All-State Class B for two years. His exceptional performance on the field also earned him a spot on the 3rd Team All-Nebraska State football team.

Continuing his athletic pursuits, Robert attended the University of Nebraska-Omaha, where he played football and was recognized as a 1st Team All-Conference defensive back. Though he did not pursue a professional sports career, his contributions and leadership on the field left a lasting impact on his team and community.

Robert's dedication and skill in athletics were supported by his family, including his wife Kristi, with whom he has shared 16 years of marriage. They have two children, Jessica and Jake, along with four stepchildren and their spouses, and eight step-grandchildren. Robert extends his gratitude to his coaches and teammates, acknowledging their role in making his athletic experiences memorable.

As he is honored in the Hall of Fame, Robert W. Rupp Jr. is celebrated not only for his athletic achievements but also for the lasting influence he has had on those around him through sports.

ERIC STRAND

CLASS OF 1995

.Eric Strand, a distinguished graduate of the Class of 1995, is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Hall of Fame in recognition of his outstanding achievements in basketball.

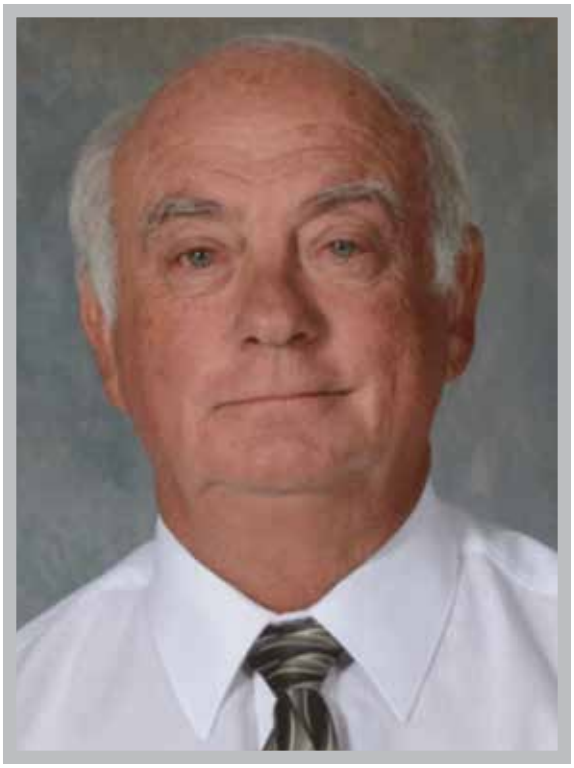
During his high school career, Eric was a standout player, earning a spot on the 1994-95 Class C1 All-State Team. He continued his basketball excellence at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, where he became the all-time leading scorer with 2,173 points. His collegiate career was marked by being named the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Player of the Year for both the 1997-98 and 1998-99 seasons, and he was also selected to the All-Tournament team and the Division II All-American team during those years.

Eric's professional career spanned eight years, during which he played internationally for teams in Holland, Israel, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico. Notably, he won a Brazilian national championship in 2005, further showcasing his talent on a global stage.

Eric is currently based in Seattle, WA, and is in a relationship with Aja Szumylo, who has two children, Sequoia (11) and Odessa (10). His exceptional contributions to the sport of basketball make him a worthy inductee into the Hall of Fame.

CARL TESMER

CLASS OF 1966



Carl Tesmer is celebrated for his remarkable contributions as both a player and coach. During his high school years, Tesmer was a standout athlete, earning letters in three sports, securing All-Conference honors in two sports for two years, and being named KRGI Athlete of the Year in 1966. His prowess on the field was further recognized with an All-State Honorable Mention.

As a coach, Tesmer's impact is nothing short of legendary. Over a career spanning 50 years, all spent coaching in Catholic schools, he has left an indelible mark on high school football. With 43 years as a Head Varsity Football Coach, Tesmer ranks third all-time in Nebraska high school football coaching with 349 career wins. His tenure includes over 100 victories at two schools: Grand Island Central Catholic and Hastings St. Cecilia. Tesmer has consistently delivered excellence, boasting a winning record in 41 seasons, averaging nine wins per season, and maintaining a winning percentage of 79% across 751 games.

Tesmer's coaching resume is distinguished by numerous accolades and milestones. He has coached over 50 All-State players, six Division 1 players, and two NFL players, including a Super Bowl champion. His influence extends beyond the field, having coached three priests and one bishop. His teams have achieved 13 undefeated regular seasons, won three Nebraska State Championships (2000, 2009, 2010), and earned four State Runner-Up titles. Tesmer has also been honored with three KRGI Coach of the Year Awards, two Nebraska Shrine Bowl coaching roles, and two Western Nebraska All-Star Football Game coaching positions. His excellence has been recognized with inductions into the Grand Island Central Catholic Alumni Hall of Fame (2016), Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame (2017), and the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame (2023). Coach Tesmer's career reflects his dedication, skill, and profound impact on the game of football.

KATIE (BRAND) VOGT

CLASS OF 2012

Katie (Brand) Vogt, a 2012 graduate of Grand Island Central Catholic, is celebrated for her exceptional athletic achievements in volleyball, basketball, and tennis. During her high school career, Katie was a dominant force, helping lead the Crusaders to a state title in volleyball in her junior year. Her impact on the court was profound; she finished her high school career ranked in the top 10 in school history in several categories, including digs, aces, kills, blocks, and assists. Notably, she set a school record with 28 kills in a single match. Her volleyball team also reached the state finals in her freshman and sophomore years, and finished third in her senior year.

In addition to her achievements in volleyball, Katie excelled in basketball and tennis. She earned All-State honors in basketball during her junior year and was named All-Centennial Conference as a freshman and sophomore. Her tennis career was highlighted by her undefeated regular season at the No. 1 singles position, and she was named All-State three times. Katie's remarkable performance across these sports earned her the Grand Island Independent Athlete of the Year award in her junior year and the Central Catholic Outstanding Athlete of the Year as a senior. She graduated second in her class academically.

Katie continued her athletic success at Kansas State University, where she made history as the first three-time All-American in K-State Volleyball. She was a finalist for the 2016 Senior CLASS Award and was honored as Third Team AVCA All-America in 2016. Her collegiate career included multiple accolades such as two-time AVCA All-America Honorable Mention, three-time AVCA Midwest All-Region First Team, and three-time All-Big 12 First Team. She also earned Big 12 Defensive Player of the Week honors and was named MVP at several prestigious tournaments.

In addition to her collegiate achievements, Katie represented the U.S. Collegiate National Team in China in 2016 and participated in the Collegiate National Team training programs in 2014 and 2015.

Katie is married to Levi Vogt, and together they have two daughters, Luella and Jolie. Her extraordinary achievements in high school and college sports, coupled with her commitment to excellence on and off the court, make her a distinguished inductee into the Hall of Fame.

SHARON ZAVALA (MULLEN)

COACH (1975 - 2024)

Sharon Zavala is being inducted into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame in recognition of her legendary coaching career. Although she did not graduate from Grand Island Central Catholic, her impact on the sport of volleyball at GICC is profound and far-reaching.

Sharon, a former track athlete and volleyball player, is celebrated for her extraordinary achievements as a head volleyball coach. With a coaching career spanning 49 years, she is the all-time winningest coach in Nebraska high school sports history, amassing an impressive record of 1177 wins and 220 losses.

Under her leadership, her teams captured 11 state championships, secured 9 runner-up finishes, and achieved multiple top-four placements. Her coaching excellence has been recognized with numerous awards, including the Nebraska Coaches Association Volleyball Coach of the Year (1984-85, 1987-88, 1988-89, 2005-06), Lincoln Journal Girls Coach of the Year (1988-89), World Herald Girls Coach of the Year (2005-06), and the National High School Volleyball Coach of the Year (2006). She was also honored as the Grand Island Independent Coach of the Year on several occasions.

Sharon's remarkable career includes induction into the UNK Hall of Fame and the Nebraska High School Athletic Hall of Fame. In addition to her coaching accolades, she was named Grand Island's Woman of the Year in 1993. Her influence extends beyond the court, having coached numerous players who advanced to collegiate levels, including Division 1, Division 2, NAIA, and junior college.

Sharon is supported by her family, including her husband Vince, who has coached for over 50 years, and her children and grandchildren: Jennifer and Jeremy Jakubowski with their five children (Bella, Jenna, Porter, Hailey, and Saxon), and Marc Zavala. She cherishes the support and contributions of her family throughout her distinguished career.

Sharon Zavala's legacy is defined by her unparalleled success and her enduring impact on high school volleyball in Nebraska.

1976 GRAND ISLAND CENTRAL CATHOLIC FOOTBALL TEAM

The 1976 Grand Island Central Catholic football team is celebrated for its remarkable spirit and determination, embodying a deep love for the game and an unyielding belief in one another. The season began with a narrow defeat, but what followed was one of the most exhilarating and dramatic seasons in the school's history. The Crusaders showcased a relentless drive and an extraordinary never-say-die attitude. Throughout the season, they faced a series of close and intense games, with seven of their eleven matches decided by two points or less. Their resilience was evident as they won three games in the final minute, two in the final seconds, and one with no time left on the clock.

In their final regular season game, the Crusaders secured a dramatic 15-14 victory over Columbus Scotus, a team that had previously defeated them for 15 consecutive seasons. This pivotal win was crucial, as it earned them a spot in the State Playoffs. The team continued to demonstrate their tenacity and commitment in the playoffs, where they faced the odds and played in challenging conditions. Despite the bitter cold and facing a heavily favored Schuyler team, they managed to keep the game exceptionally close, ultimately falling by just one point.

The 1976 Crusaders achieved several historic milestones, becoming the first team from the school to qualify for the State Football Playoffs. They finished with the school's highest postseason football rating and set a single-season team rushing record. Their final record of 7-2-2 reflects a season filled with extraordinary moments and unmatched excitement. The legacy of the 1976 team remains a testament to their exceptional grit, determination, and the unforgettable thrill of their journey.

PLAYERS

Mike Allen
Jerry Bixenmann
Dave Bixenmann
Rick Brown
Mark Chaulk
Gene Connelly
Don Daugherty
Bob Gorman
J Jakubowski
Mark Kiolbasa
Jim Lukasiewicz
Rick Matousek
J McDermott
Mark McGowan
Mark Mossman
D Mulligan
Dan O'Malley
Tom Poplau
Jim Scheuth
Jeremy Scripture
Roger Smith
Pat Sullivan
Bernard Yosten
Pat Beecham
Jeff Bixenmann
Toney Braun
Mark Callahan
Rocky Clark
Tim Czaplewski
John Fitzpatrick
Tim Hansen
Mike Jensen
Mike Kiolbasa
Dean Lyon
Mark Matula
Dave McGowan
Larry Meister
Vince Muchow
Bernard Nelson
Jim Parent
Joe Roach
John Schrier
Joel Smith
Dave Spanel
Kevin Willey

COACHES

Gary Gannon, Asst. Coach
Troy Lyon, Asst. Coach
Carl Tesmer, Head Coach
Tom Wetzel, Asst. Coach

1981 STATE CLASS C VOLLEYBALL CHAMPIONS

The 1981 Grand Island Central Catholic (GICC) volleyball team made history as the first girls' team to win a state championship in any sport at the school. With an impressive season record of 20-4, the team demonstrated exceptional skill and resilience throughout the state tournament, which was played to 15 points, with matches determined by 2 out of 3 sets.

STATE TOURNAMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

First Game: GICC faced Imperial and won with scores of 15-4 and 15-13. During the first set, All-State Hitter Karla Rork collided with setter Mary Curtis, causing Karla to break two front teeth and resulting in a significant injury to Mary, who required 6 stitches. Despite the circumstances, Karla continued playing, and the team adapted to all-bump setting to win the match after the official called several illegal setting violations against GICC.

Semifinals: GICC defeated St. Cecilia in straight sets, 15-7 and 15-3. To discreetly address Mary Curtis's stitches, all players wore band-aids on their foreheads.

Finals: The team triumphed over the defending champions, Howells, with scores of 15-7 and 15-7. Mary Brown Brand and Theresa Costello Birch led the team in aces, disrupting Howells' powerful offense with their aggressive serving.

The 1981 championship was not only a landmark achievement for GICC but also the first state title for Head Coach Sharon Zavala. This victory marked the beginning of a historic coaching career, during which Coach Zavala would guide the Crusaders to 10 additional state championships over her remarkable 49-year tenure. The 1981 team remains one of Coach Zavala's favorite teams, exemplifying her enduring impact on GICC volleyball.

PLAYERS

Theresa Birch (Costello)
Kim Bockhahn (Rogge)
Mary Brown (Brand)
Dawn Buck (Petersen)
Mary Curtis (Daringer)
Chris Jarecke (Bohuslavsky)
Kay Kowalski (Lange)
Monica Kozisek
Janiece Liske (Jones)
Dorine Lucht (Galusha)
Kim Nabity (Meister)
Karla Rork (Clarke)
Amy Schwenk (Doom)
Kate Stockman (Sloot)

STATS

Sue Zastrow (Nagy)

COACHES

Cathy Brown (Howard), Asst. Coach
Mary Janky, Asst. Coach
Sharon Zavala, Head Coach

1963 STATE CLASS B CHAMPIONS

The 1963 Grand Island Central Catholic Tennis Team is celebrated as the inaugural team to win a state championship in the school's history, marking a pivotal moment in the school's athletic legacy. Competing in the Nebraska Class B State Tennis Tournament, the team showcased exceptional talent and determination throughout the season.

Under the leadership of their coach, Peter Hayden, the team demonstrated remarkable skill and teamwork, culminating in a decisive victory. Grant Lien led the charge in singles, clinching the state title with a thrilling win over Ron Pugh of Norfolk in the final match. Lien's path to victory included crucial wins over Bill Roehrs of York and Randy Churchill of Fairbury, showcasing his prowess on the court.

In doubles, the dynamic duo of Jim Yilk and Tom Dolton made an impressive run to the finals. Despite a narrow loss to Dick Rieser and Rusty Ruller from Scottsbluff, their performance was instrumental in the team's overall success.

Grand Island Central Catholic's team accumulated 14 points to secure the championship, outpacing their competitors, including Fairbury and Scottsbluff, who each earned 8 points. This historic achievement laid the foundation for the school's future in tennis and remains a proud moment in its athletic history.

The 1963 tennis team's remarkable accomplishment is honored with their induction into the Grand Island Central Catholic Athletic Hall of Fame, celebrating their pioneering spirit and excellence in sportsmanship that continue to inspire future generations.

Tom Dolton

Jim Yilk

Grant Lien

NSAA Cup CHAMPIONS

Congratulations to the GICC Crusaders for having the most successful Class C interscholastic activities programs in the state during these recent school years!

2010-2011

2017-2018

2019-2020

2020-2021

2021-2022

2023-2024

Crusader successes at the state level in all NSAA-sponsored athletics and fine arts activities earn points for Central Catholic in this NSAA Cup competition.

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MEDIA TENNIS TRACK & FIELD GYMNASTICS CROSS COUNTRY