

**Byron Athletic Hall of Fame
Class of 2023**



Marlene Syverson – Coach (1973 to 1991)

Marlene graduated from Worthington High School (MN) in 1969. She received an A.A. degree at Worthington Junior College and then continued her education at Mankato State University where she graduated in 1973 with a B.S. in Math and minors in Biology and Health Education. In the fall of 1973, Marlene was hired to teach Math and Earth Science plus coach girls sports in Byron. She coached B-Squad basketball for the first 3 years of the program and varsity track and field for that program's first 4 years. The most memorable time of that inaugural girls' sports competition was the performance of the 1977 track and field team. That team had a very successful regular season, won the Wasioja Conference trophy, and placed 3rd in the district meet. In addition, 5 team members and the mile relay team qualified for the regional meet, with 1 individual and the mile relay team advancing on to the state meet.

Throughout the rest of her teaching career, Marlene coached C-squad basketball for 3 years (1976-1978) and C-squad volleyball in 1981 and 1983, after taking some time off for maternity leave. Marlene then coached B-squad volleyball for 5 years (1984-1988) and assumed the head coaching responsibilities for varsity volleyball for 3 years (1989-1991).

Marlene retired from teaching in 2009, completing 34 years with the Byron Schools. She continued to substitute teach in the district for another 9 years. Her interest in sports has never faltered, as she cheered on her 4 children (Eric, Adam, Ann, and Brian) in their sports seasons at Kenyon-Wanamingo. Marlene has also remained active over the years, playing on a slow-pitch softball team for 30 years and playing on a granny basketball team for the last several years. She and her husband, Henry, are enjoying retirement, spending time with their 7 grandchildren and attending their sporting events.

Byron Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023



Martha Gehrking – Coach (1973 to 1991)

Martha grew up in Wanamingo. When she graduated from Luther College in 1973 and was hired to teach English at Byron High School, she also accepted the head girls basketball and softball responsibilities. Martha coached varsity basketball for 3 years and then the B squad for 2 years. Wins were scarce during those first 3 years. The girls were winless the 1st year and won 1 game each of the next 2 years. During the spring season, Martha coached varsity softball for 4 years. The team won 1 game that 1st season, a few more the 2nd, and by the 3rd year, the team finished 2nd in the conference. The 4th year, the team made it to district play.

Martha was always sooooo proud of how hard the girls on these early teams played. They always worked harder to get better! This commitment said a great deal about these early girl athletes---about who they were as young players and how determined these girls were to set the way for those who would follow!

Once Martha and her husband Ted started their family, her coaching duties were at the junior high level in volleyball, basketball, and softball throughout the 1980's and mid-1990's. Martha retired in 2008 after 33 years of teaching English at BHS. Looking back over the last 50 years of girls athletics, she is truly appreciative for the opportunity to have made her small contribution to this wonderful, athletic undertaking for the BHS girls!

Martha played on a ladies slow-pitch softball team, plus she and her husband Ted played co-ed softball for many years. Martha and Ted just celebrated their 47th wedding anniversary this past June. They still live in the Byron district and feel so fortunate to have their 4 children (Tyler, Marni, Trevor, and Taylor) and their families close by. Martha enjoys spending time with family/friends, reading, and traveling as often as possible!

Byron Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023



Sally (Trygstad) Rud – Athlete (1977)

While in high school, Sally participated in girls basketball, lettering twice. Her junior year, she won honors for scoring the most points, was named the best shooter, and pulled down the most rebounds for her team. As a senior, she was co-captain and won honors for best rebounder, was named MVP, and was the 1st BHS girl to be selected to the Wasioja All Conference team in basketball.

Sally was also out for track in the spring, lettering 3 times. Her sophomore year, she ran on the 440-yard relay team, the 880-yard relay team, and the 880-medley team. That year, the track team finished 3rd in the conference. Her junior year, she set a school record for the high jump and helped the 880 relay team win the conference championship with a time of 1:52.1. The team again finished 3rd in the conference. Her senior year, Sally and her teammates set a school record for the 440-yard relay team with a 53.2 time. The mile relay team also set a school record with a 4:12.8 time and a conference record with a 4:13.7 time. The 1977 team won 10 straight meets and finished 1st in the conference. At the district meet, Sally placed 1st in the 440-yard dash (61.6), advancing to regions in Austin and placing 6th. The mile relay team, consisting of Sally, Cindy Dahle, Liz Haukom, and Rose Daley, also placed 1st (4:13.0). This team advanced to regions, placing 1st (4:12.8); therefore, they went on to the state meet.

Sally also played clarinet for 5 years in Varsity Band, which consistently earned superior ratings at contests. She was the senior class secretary, co-editor of the BEAR FACTS (BHS school newspaper), homecoming queen, and an active participator in 4-H for many years.

After graduating from BHS, Sally attended Rochester Area Vocational-Technical Institute, received a legal secretary degree, and later, a medical transcriptionist degree.

Sally married her high school sweetheart Gary Rud (Class of 1977). They moved to Oklahoma in the early 1980's where Sally worked on a horse ranch, training and showing quarter horses in Western Pleasure. Their first daughter Heather was born there. When they moved back to MN in 1988, Holly, Heath, and Hunter were born. Sally retired from

Byron Athletic Hall of Fame

Class of 2023

Mayo Clinic after 19+ years as a medical transcriptionist. She and Gary live on their farm south of Byron and spend their time fishing, traveling, and enjoying their 4 grandchildren.



Nina (Petersen) Kreofsky – Athlete (2001)

Nina Petersen was a 3-sport athlete while at BHS. In the fall, she was a co-captain and the middle hitter for the volleyball team, earning 2 letters. In her junior year, Nina led her team with 56 ace blocks. Her senior year she led the team with 89 ace blocks, and currently, is ranked #7 for all time. She was named All Conference her senior year. In her career, she had 147 ace blocks (5th all time) and 306 kills (tied for #9 all time). Her kill efficiency is .266 (#15 all time).

Nina played basketball in the winter, earning 2 letters. She led the team in scoring her junior year (23 games, 187 points, 8.1 average) as well as rebounding. She was All Conference Honorable Mention her junior year. Her senior year, she was a co-captain, Team MVP, and Team Offensive MVP. She led the team in scoring (22 games, 265 points, and 12.0 average) and rebounding. She earned a career high of 47 games, 459 points, 9.8 pts/game as well as school records at the time for blocks (career 140, season 93, game 8). Nina was All Conference her senior year.

In the spring, she was on the track team. Nina earned 2 letters, was tri-captain both years, was All Conference her junior and senior years. Her junior year, she was on the 4x800 relay that was the HVL Champion (10:10:7). At sections, the 4x800 took 3rd place with a school record of 9:53:07. Nina's senior year, she took 2nd place at the HVL in the triple jump of 36'2.5". She was also the long jump champion with a jump of 16'1". In sub sections, she was the triple jump champion with a jump of 35'11". At the section meet, she placed 6th in the 800m with a time of 2:22.81 for a school record at that time. She was also the Section 1 champion in the triple jump with a school record and section record jump of 37'2" as well as the champion in the long jump (16'8.75"). Nina was All State her senior year and held school records for the 800 meter run and triple jump.

Nina attended college at the University of Wisconsin--River Falls and played volleyball there for 4 years. She was All Conference her junior year and helped her team make it to the Sweet 16. Her senior year, she was All Conference as well as All American Honorable Mention. In 2021, Nina was an UWRF Athletic Hall of Fame Inductee.

Byron Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023

After Nina finished college, she got a job as a clinical lab technologist at Mayo Clinic and has been working there for the last 18 years. She and her husband have 2 children---Jack, who is 9, and Kaylan, who is 4. They have 2 senior cats---Henry and Yoshi. Nina enjoys reading, walking, and being outdoors.



Sonya Mansfield - Booster

Sonya has served on the Byron Booster Club since 2003 (20 years and counting) as the Speech/Drama representative. She also has served as an interim president for 1 year and currently serves as the president of the Booster Club. Sonya has played an integral part in sustaining the Booster Club's primary focus in supporting Byron students while preserving a working relationship with the Byron School District, the 25 activities the Booster Club supports, and the Byron Athletic Department. She has assisted in securing funds for the needs of numerous activities, projects, and programs which directly benefit the Byron School District activities, students, and staff. She consistently advocates and promotes the importance of the Byron Booster Club and how the organization impacts the district's students and various programs. Go Bears!!!

Sonya is a 1984 graduate of Stewartville HS. She is the daughter of Thomas and Darlene Myhre, Sr., who still reside on the family farm near Stewartville. Sonya and her 3 siblings all live near that family farm. Sonya has been married to her husband Pat for 37 years after they met while serving in the US Navy together. They have 2 sons, Dalton and Justin, both Byron graduates. Dalton is serving in the US Navy, and Justin works at the Byron Intermediate School as a paraprofessional. Justin also coaches JV boys soccer, junior high and varsity boys track, plus is the assistant speech coach. Sonya and Pat also have 5 grandchildren.

**Byron Athletic Hall of Fame
Class of 2023**



Mabel (Siewert) Lienau – Athlete (1924)

In the 1920's and early 1930's, the only varsity sport for girls at Byron High School was basketball. Mabel was on the varsity for 5 years and a starter since her freshman year. Girls played 6-on-6 with the playing floor split into an offensive half (3 players) and defensive half (3 players). On occasion, they played some of their games by the boys' rules (full court 5-on-5). Mabel was the star player (played right forward position) for Byron during that time period. In her senior year and the only time in BHS history, the team finished the season undefeated (Some articles state their record as 16-0). In March 1924 at a game versus Eyota, Mabel also set the school record of scoring 21 points of the team's 23. She had a sister, Lydia Leona (Siewert) Gray who was a sophomore on that 1923-24 team. Both sisters, as well as Byron High, are mentioned in the book DAUGHTERS OF THE GAME – THE FIRST ERA OF MINNESOTA GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL 1891-1941. Mabel married Clair Lienau and lived in rural Byron until 1941 when then moved to Kasson. One of her sons, Russ, moved to Byron, and his children/some grandchildren are graduates of Byron High.

Byron Athletic Hall of Fame Class of 2023



Front Row: LeAnn Stanley (10), Laurie Anderson (10), Deb Kuisle (9), Lonna Beaver (9), Amy Hanson (9), Renee Kragnes (9), Wendy Graham (9), Dawn Perry (9), Vicky Haukom (11); Middle Row: **Coach Marlene Syverson**, Julie Durhman (10), Tammy O'Neill (9), Sharon Lewis (9), Yolanda Colson (10), Michelle McDermott (9), Shawn McFarlane (9), Tracy Stephens (10), **Cindy Dahle (12), Nancy Nelson (12), Rose Daley (12)**; Back Row: Nancy Veerkamp (9), Shelley Tompkins (10), **Sally Trygstad (12)**, Sherry Meyer (9), Laurie Meyer (11), Michelle Meyer (9), Vanessa Graham (11), Kay Kuhlman (9), Judy Hawley (11), **Liz Haukom (12)**

1977 Girls Track & Field Team

"Fantastic!!" was the word used to describe the performance of the 1977 girls track team in the 1977 BHS Yearbook. Under the leadership of 5 seniors (Cindy Dahle, Rose Daley, Liz Haukom, Nancy Nelson, and Sally Trygstad), the team had their most successful season since the girls track program began in 1974. The team had a near-perfect season, winning 10 out of 11 meets and setting school records in every event, except 1, that year. Only Nancy Nelson's record for the 220-yard dash, set in 1975, remained untouched. Placing 1st in the Wasioja Conference meet, the team also had 5 new conference records set by Nancy Nelson, Yolanda Colson, Laurie Anderson, the 880-yard relay team, and the mile relay team. At the district meet, the team placed 3rd and had 5 individuals (Laurie Anderson, Yolanda Colson, Vanessa Graham, Nancy Nelson, Sally Trygstad) and the mile relay team (Sally Trygstad, Cindy Dahle, Liz Haukom, Rose Daley) advance on to the regional meet, a 1st for Byron. They placed 4th out of 31 teams at the regional meet in Austin where Laurie Anderson and the mile relay team advanced on to the state meet but did not place in their events there.

The 1977 team members were the true pioneers of the girls' track program. Conditions were much different in those early days of the track program. The girls competed on a cinder track, which was not the most favorable under certain weather conditions. Runners were timed by stopwatches run by coaches, who "picked" placements at the finish line. Track events were measured in yards and miles; thus, early records had to be refigured when metric measurements were adopted so records would be equal for comparison.

The 1977 track and field team members were truly talented and worked hard, making their achievements worthy of this honor. To this day, 11 of the girls still have their names listed on Byron's Track Records & Top Ten Honor Roll list.