



Robert Jones, Decatur Lifetime Service to Wrestling

Robert I. (Bob) Jones began his wrestling career at Decatur Eisenhower High School in 1959 and was a state qualifier in 1962. After high school, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, where he wrestled and coached the Marine Wrestling Team while stationed at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. He was training for the Olympic trials when in 1965 his unit was ordered to Vietnam, where he would receive several combat awards, including the Purple Heart.

After being honorably discharged from the Marine Corps, Bob became a volunteer coach at Clinton High School, where he was a part of the school's 22-0 squad in 1969. He was also instrumental in starting the Decatur YMCA Wrestling Club. Bob became a wrestling official in 1968 and would referee in 34 IHSA Regionals, 31 Sectionals, 16 Individual State Finals and four IHSA Dual Team State Finals. He has been involved with the management of the IHSA state tournament as a referee, bench official and weigh-in official since 1977. He has also refereed over 80 post-season events for the Illinois Kids Wrestling Federation since 1971 and presided over three state finals for the IESA before retiring from officiating in 2006. A 1994 inductee into the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Association Hall of Fame, Bob was a Grand Marshal for the IKWF State Finals in 1999 and a Grand Marshal for the IHSA Individual State Finals in 2006. He also received the IWCOA Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012.



Bob continues to help at all levels of wrestling, including helping with the Clinton Holiday Tournament for all 48 years of its existence and volunteering at the IHSA State

Individual or Dual Team tournaments, as well as helping with other area tournaments. Bob has also been a member of the IWCOA Hall of Fame Selection Committee for the past five years.

In addition to the time and effort that Bob gives to the sport of wrestling, he is always accompanied by his wife, Sharron, who works side-by-side at events that Bob attends.