

Sept. 24, 2021

Libertyville High School Announces Athletic Hall of Fame Inaugural Class

Libertyville High School is proud to announce the first class of inductees to its Athletic Hall of Fame. The inductees will be introduced and celebrated during Homecoming activities the weekend of Oct. 1, 2021. The LHS Athletic Hall of Fame was organized to recognize and honor those Wildcat athletes, teams and coaches who excelled in their respective sports or coaching roles and who helped bring honor, recognition, distinction and excellence to LHS.

Members of the inaugural class are:

Jim McMillen, LHS Class of 1920

Jim was a 1920 Libertyville Township High School graduate. He was only at LTHS for his junior and senior years but certainly made his mark during his time at LTHS.

Jim was our clear athletic star. He led our basketball team to a 7-1 record. His senior year he was the top running back and led our team to a 6-1 record.

Jim went to the University of Illinois where he played football and wrestled. He was an All-American lineman his senior year in 1923, helping his team win the National Championship. Jim also wrestled at Illinois where his only Big Ten loss was to an eventual Olympic gold medalist from Ohio State.

After graduation, Jim played five years for the Chicago Bears (1924-1928). In his off-seasons, he began professional wrestling. He retired from the Bears since he was making much more money in professional wrestling, leading to a 20+ year pro wrestling career that included two title fights.

Dan Holm, LHS Class of 1971

Dan was a 1971 graduate. He was involved with football, wrestling, and baseball at LHS. His top sport was wrestling. He was a 2-time All-State wrestler, as he placed 3rd in state in 1970 before winning the state championship in 1971 to cap a 37-0 season. He was named to the High School All-American team. He won the Junior National Freestyle Tournament during the summer after his senior year at LHS.

Dan played four years of football and was named to the All-Conference team following his senior season. He played three years of baseball. Dan was the 1971 Newsom Award winner.

Dan was a 4-year starter for the Iowa University wrestling team. He qualified for the NCAA Championships all four seasons, placing 3rd in 1973 and 1974 and winning the NCAA title in 1975. He was the captain of the 1975 Iowa team that won the NCAA Team title.

Brett Butler, LHS Class of 1975

Brett Butler is a 1975 LHS graduate. While in high school he was involved in athletics in each of his 12 sports seasons.

He played two years of football before moving to cross country his junior and senior years where he became captain of the team. He was on the wrestling team for four years and earned All-Conference honors three years. He was the conference runner up at 98 pounds for the LHS team that won the first conference championship in Libertyville Wrestling history. He was a baseball player for four years, on the varsity team for two. He was a starting outfielder his senior year for a team that reached the sectional finals, the farthest a Libertyville baseball team had advanced in the state tournament series to that point.

After a year of playing outfield for the Arizona State JV baseball team, Brett transferred to Southeastern Oklahoma where he was named to the NAIA All-American team his junior and senior years. He batted .439 in 1977 leading his team to a National runner-up finish.

Brett was drafted by the Atlanta Braves in the 23rd round after his 1979 senior season. He quickly moved up the ranks in the Braves farm system, first reaching the major leagues in 1981 becoming the first LHS baseball player, and only LHS baseball player, to reach major league baseball. He went on to play for 17 years in the major leagues, also playing for the Indians, Giants, Dodgers, and Mets. He played in the 1989 World Series for the Giants. He made the 1991 All-Star game for the Dodgers.

After spending a few years raising his children, Brett got into professional baseball coaching, first as the first base coach with the Arizona Diamondbacks in 2005, then in several minor league managerial positions. He was a very successful manager for the Reno Aces of AAA ball (2009-2013, winning the championship in 2012). He was the 3rd base coach for the Miami Marlins in 2014 and 2015.

Brett is now retired and living in Arizona. A devout Christian, Brett has spoken on behalf of several Christian organizations including the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Brett and his wife Eveline have four children and spend time today helping with grandchildren.

Pam Miller, LHS Class of 1976

Pam is a 1976 LHS graduate. She played four sports each year at LHS, including golf, volleyball, basketball, and softball. Pam was a Varsity letter winner in all four and was named the 1976 Girl's Newsom Award winner. Pam's father, Dick, was the LHS Newsom Award winner in 1951.

Golf was Pam's top sport. She began playing seriously the summer before her freshman year. As a senior, she tied for 3rd in the state tournament and led the team to 5th in the State.

Following her LHS graduation, Pam attended Brigham University on a golf scholarship. While at BYU, She qualified for Nationals 3 times, finishing 11th her senior year. She continued to establish other records that include being the first BYU women's golf All American and holding the lowest single-round score (67) for 31 years. In 2016, Pam was inducted to the BYU Athletic Hall of Fame.

Pam was ranked among the nation's top 10 amateurs by golf digest. She then earned her LPGA tour card in '81 and had 3 top-five finishes in her rookie year.

The 1985 season was her final year of LPGA competitive golf; daughter Jenn arrived in 1986!

Pam currently lives in Athens, Georgia. She is a golf teaching professional and continues to play competitive sports.

Allison Marquart, LHS Class of 1991

Allison Marquart is a 1991 LHS graduate and an outstanding athlete, competing in four years of volleyball and soccer, and two years of basketball. Soccer was her top sport as she achieved the rare distinction of being named to the All-State team as a center midfielder each of her four seasons. She was named to the All-Midwest team her junior year, and the All-American team her senior year.

As a freshman, Allison helped lead the Wildcats to the state quarterfinals, losing in penalty kicks to Main South. During her sophomore and junior years the Wildcats reached the state title game, before falling to Palatine in 1989, and St. Charles in 1990. In Allison's senior year they reached the state final again, this time defeating Waubonsie Valley, which marked the first team state championship in school history.

Allison chose to play volleyball in college and chose Miami (OH) University. She was a two-year starter and a team captain in her senior year. Following graduation from Miami, Allison married LHS alum Terry McDonald and have two sons, Dillon and Ben. Dillon is a recent LHS graduate and Ben currently attends LHS.

Becky Coleman, LHS Class of 1993

Becky Coleman was a member of the LHS cross country and track teams all four years of high school. She was named the Newsom Outstanding Athlete of the Year Award winner.

In cross country, Becky was a 3-time All-State runner, winning the state title her senior year. In taking 25th place her freshman year she became the first-ever LHS girl to earn All-State in cross country. She was a part of our most successful girls' cross country teams; second her sophomore year, fourth her junior year, and third her senior year.

In track, Becky took 8th in state in the 3200m run her freshman year. She finished second her junior year and won the state in her senior year. She qualified for state in the 1600m run and reached the finals each of her four years.

Becky ran cross country and track in college for Iowa University. She was Iowa's top distance runner her junior and senior years, earning All-Big Ten honors. She has been coaching high school cross country, leading her 2007 Arrowhead (WI) team to a state title and was awarded Coach of the Year for Cross Country by the Wisconsin Cross Country Coaches Association.

Kelly Karl, LHS Class of 1994

Kelly was a 1994 LHS graduate where she earned 12 varsity letters. Kelly was a top cross country runner from day one, earning 3 All-State finishes, including a 3rd place state finish as a freshman. Kelly helped lead her teams to top 5 finishes in the state each of her four years.

In basketball, Kelly was the starting point guard during her final three seasons, earning All-Conference each season. Her teams won the sectional title during her junior and senior seasons.

In soccer, Kelly was the starting center forward all four years, finishing as the leading scorer each year. She earned All-Conference recognition during each of her four seasons. Her teams won the state title her freshman year and qualified for the state tournament during her senior year.

Following graduation, Kelly went to the University of New Hampshire to play basketball. She started at point guard all four years, earning All-Conference in her senior year. She is currently working on her doctorate.

Eric vanGoethem, LHS Class of 1997

Eric was a 1997 LHS graduate. His top sport was swimming, as he earned All-State honors during each of his four years as a Wildcat. His top race was the 100yd breaststroke. After finishing 12th as a freshman, he won state titles as a sophomore and junior and finished second during his senior season. Eric also earned All-State finishes in the 50yd freestyle, taking 5th as a junior and 3rd as a senior.

Eric was a key member of teams that earned three top 25 state finishes. In 1994 they finished 22nd. They finished 16th in 1995, and 14th in 1997.

Eric was also one of the top water polo players in the early days of the sport at LHS. He was the 1997 Newsom Award Co-Winner.

Following graduation, Eric swam for Auburn University where he helped lead the Tigers to an NCAA championship in 1999. The Tigers finished 2nd in the nation in 2000, and Eric earned All-American honors while helping his team to a 3rd place finish at the 2002 NCAA Championships. Eric was a 5-time All-American during his collegiate career.

Kevin Walter, LHS Class of 1999

Kevin was a 1999 LHS graduate. He played four years of football as a wide receiver and kick returner for the Wildcats. Kevin earned All-State recognition as a senior, representing a team that finished the regular season with a 9-0 record. He was also a member of the track and field team for two years.

Following graduation, Kevin went to Eastern Michigan University where he was a 4-year starter, setting several season and career receiving school records. He was a 2-time first-team All-Conference performer and earned team MVP honor his senior year. Kevin was inducted into the EMU Athletic Hall of Fame.

Kevin was drafted in the 7th round of the NFL draft by the New York Giants. He went on to play for 11 years in the NFL for the Bengals, Texans, and Titans.

Coach Max Sanders, LHS Class of 1959

Max was a 1959 LHS graduate. During his four years as a Wildcat, Max played football, basketball, and baseball. Max was a 3-year varsity football player, starting at quarterback in his junior and senior years. He was the captain of the 1958 team that finished 8-0, LHS's first football conference championship in 15 seasons. He earned All-Conference recognition.

Max was a 3-year varsity point guard in basketball, earning All-State Honorable Mention in his senior year. Max was recruited to play basketball at Bradley University, a top 15 program in the country.

Max was the starting shortstop for the baseball team all four years, earning three All-Conference honors. During his freshman year, the team won the first conference championship.

Max returned to LHS to teach and coach in 1965-66, serving as an assistant coach in football and basketball. He took over the basketball program in 1980 and led the program for the next 20 years. His top team was the 1991 team that finished 4th in state. He finished with a 318-220 record with the Wildcats. He was inducted into the IBCA Hall of Fame and the Lake County High School Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Jim Panther

Jim was a 1963 graduate of Highland Park High School where he played football, basketball, and baseball. He pitched for the Southern Illinois University-Carbondale baseball team. The Oakland A's signed him and he spent 3 years in major league baseball with the A's, Braves, and Rangers.

Jim came to teach and coach at LHS for the 1968-69 school year. He became the head baseball coach in 1983 where he remained for the next 20 years. His teams won 7 conference titles and 5 regional titles. His 1997 team won the Summer State Championship.

Coach Panther's final head coaching record was 526-169. He was inducted into the IBCA Hall of Fame and the Lake County High School Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Chris Trzyna

Chris began her LHS teaching and coaching career in the fall of 1976. She taught Physical Education and was the longtime Assistant Athletic Director.

Her first head coaching assignment was girls' track and field, a position she held for 6 years. Her track and field dual meet coaching record was 50-20.

Chris took over the head girls volleyball program for a year in the fall of 1985, when head coach Linda Delano went on sabbatical. She took over permanently in the fall of 1987. She was the head girls volleyball coach for 23 years. Her teams won 5 conference titles, 14 regional titles, and 4 sectional titles. Her 2007 team finished 4th in the state.

Chris was inducted into the Lake County High School Sports Hall of Fame.

Coach Randy Kuceyeski

Coach Kuz was a 1972 graduate of Alliance High School, in Alliance Ohio where he was a three-sport athlete, playing football, basketball, and baseball. His senior year he was named All-Ohio and went on to play at Northwestern University where he lettered three years as a nose tackle. He graduated in 1977 with a Masters in Education.

In 1978, Randy began a 34-year career at LHS teaching Physical Education and coaching football as the defensive coordinator. After sixteen years in this position, he was selected as the head football coach to start the 1994 season.

A few notable achievements during his career included being selected to coach in two East-West Shrine All-Star games, being chosen as the inaugural winner of the Randy Walker Award given by Northwestern

University, being selected by the NFL to represent Illinois at the NFL symposium in Canton, Ohio, being voted 2004 Nike "Coach of the Year", and chosen as the Chicago Bears "Coach of the Week".

During his 19 year tenure, the Wildcats posted 133 wins with only 33 losses. The 'Cats appeared in the playoffs thirteen times and won or shared eight conference championships. In 2003 the 'Cats lost the State Championship game in double overtime but came back in 2004 to go undefeated and win the Class 7A State Championship, the first in LHS history.

Coach Kuz has also been selected to the Alliance High School Hall of Fame, the Lake County Sports Hall of Fame, and the Illinois Coaches Hall of Fame.

He and his wife Martha have four children, Erin, Britt, John, and Kristen, and eight grandchildren.

Coach Andy Bitta

Andy is a 1972 graduate of Prospect (IL) High School where he played basketball and baseball. He came to LHS in the fall of 1978 to teach health education and coach, a position he would stay in for 33 years.

Andy took over the head soccer coaching position his first year at LHS and stayed in the position for 31 years (1978-1999, 2007-2016). His teams made four state tournament appearances, finishing second in 1986 and 2010, and winning the 2015 state title. He finished with a career boys head coaching record of 455-145-55.

Andy began the girls program in 1982 and coached for 21 years (1982-1999, 2014-2016). His teams made 9 state tournament appearances, finishing 3rd in 1996, second in 1989 and 1990, and winning the state title in 1991. He finished with a career girls head coaching record of 310-77-26.

Andy was named to the Illinois Soccer Coaches Association Hall of Fame and the Lake County High School Sports Hall of Fame. He was also a 20-year varsity boys basketball assistant coach to Max Sanders (1980-1999).

1991 Girls Soccer Team

After finishing 2nd in the state in 1989 and 1990, the 1991 LHS team was one of the favorites to win the state title, losing just two starters from the previous year, and loaded with many more young players returning, including four All-Staters from the 1990 team.

The first two state series games played out as expected, with an 8-0 win over Grayslake and a 6-0 win over Carmel. But things got serious in the sectional semifinals as the score with Barrington was tied at 1-1 with time running out. Nikki Klainos hit the go-ahead goal with 3:10 left in the game to lead the Wildcats to a 2-1 victory.

There were more challenges in the sectional finals against Fremd as the score was 0-0 with less than one minute remaining in the game. With :25 on the clock, Kim Marshall hit a direct kick for the winning goal, sending us back to state.

Scoring was at a premium in the state tournament, but our defense was up to the task. Our quarterfinal game against Sandburg finished up 1-0 in favor of the Wildcats on a Sarah Morrison goal. A 1-0 win in the semifinals over Schaumburg, with a goal by freshman Kelly Karl, sent us into the state final matchup against Waubonsie Valley.

Waubonsie Valley was led by Debbie Keller, a high-scoring All-American and future University of North Carolina player. The first order of business was Coach Bitta putting Tiffany Boston on Keller. Keller took seven shots for the game but all of them were outside of the box and not a serious threat.

In the meantime, Sarah Morrison scored an early goal before exiting the game. The defense made that goal hold up for our third 1-0 win of the state series tournament. Sweeper Jori Seymour was named the tournament MVP. If Jori had not won the award, goalie Caroline Cerbus would have won it for her three tournament shutouts. It brought Cerbus' season shutout total to 20 in 23 games, only giving up 3 goals on the season. Other LHS All-Tournament team picks were Morrison and Karl. Allison Marquart was named to the All-State team.

LHS athletics date back to 1917 and include five IHSA State Championship teams, over 30 state trophies, as well as hundreds of conference, district, regional, sectional, and super-sectional team crowns. Additionally, LHS athletes have earned more than 400 IHSA State medals, including 48 individual State Champions. The LHS Athletic Hall of Fame will honor our past, celebrate our present, and inspire future generations to carry the legacy of those that have walked the revered and historic halls of LHS and donned the black and orange.