

Hall of Fame Banquet a Smashing Success



THE 2004 COALGATE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS STATE CHAMPION TRACK TEAM was among the first class of inductees to the Coalgate Athletic Hall of Fame. Shown from left (**front**) – Megan Sims, Kacee McCulley, Jamaica Pebworth, Hillary Holliday, Teran Mixon; (**back**) – Echo Adcock, Lauren Sandmann, Constance Thompson and Jenna Airington. (*Note: Team members are listed by their maiden names.*)

Wow!!! That was the reaction of most who entered the Coalgate School cafeteria on Saturday evening, May 24. The place had been transformed into a palace fit for kings and queens with the decorating skills of Jennifer Horton and Dawn Adcock.



Ernie Fanning presents the Hall of Fame trophy to his father, Ernest Paul Fanning.



Hall of Fame inductee Elvin Sweeten, left, is congratulated by former Coalgate School Superintendent Dr. John O. Linton.

Track Team. The entire team was in attendance with Megan Sims, Constance Thompson, Hillary Holliday, Teran Mixon, Echo Adcock, Kacee McCulley, Jenna Airington, Jamaica Pebworth, and Lauren Sandmann.

“I was overwhelmed with the attendance as we were expecting 130-140 people at best,” said Hall of Fame committee spokesperson Steve Hudson, a 1970 graduate. “The final tally showed 172 people attended the event.”

The banquet got underway following a reception for the crowd to meet with the inductees and 1956 graduate and keynote speaker Tom McDaniel. The master of ceremonies for the inaugural banquet was 1967 graduate John Hudson. The banquet began with door prizes of floral arrangements provided by Leslie Robson from The Flower Garden along with an

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Hall of Fame inductee Joe Avanzini, right, is congratulated by Bob Parkhill.



Hall of Fame inductee Jack Ward, right, with presenter J.D. Smith.



HIS MEMORY LIVES ON. Coalgate's never-to-be-forgotten coach, the late Donald Mike Mayer, becomes a member of the first class of inductees to the Athletic Hall of Fame. Shown from left – Sister Audrey Mayer, brother Tom Mayer, daughter Jamie O'Shields, and presenter Jim Cox.

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autographed football signed by Dallas Cowboy Hall of Famer Bob Lilly. Aaron Blue of Coalgate had the winning ticket for the football.

That was followed by a congratulatory video message

from SMU head basketball coach Hall of Famer Larry Brown. Brown is the only coach to have won both an NCAA title with Kansas in 1988 and the NBA Championship with the Detroit Pistons.

Harry Tunnel, class of '59, then presented the first Donald Mike Mayer scholarships to Wildcat senior athletes Shelby Martindale and T.J. Maynard with a major gift from Donald Mike Mayer's sister, Audrey Mayer.

The Hall of Fame induction ceremony began with J.D. Smith, a former teammate, who was the presenter for Jack Ward.

In succession, Ernest Paul Fanning was introduced by his son, Ernie, in an emotional presentation.

The 2004 Girls Track State Champion team was presented by Trent Bourland, class of 2000. Kacee McCulley gave a beautiful acceptance talk on behalf of the team.

Elvin Sweeten was next and was welcomed into the exclusive club by a former teammate and former superintendent of Coalgate

Schools, Dr. John Linton.

Former basketball coach Bob Parkhill gave a glowing recollection of the outstanding career and contributions to the community of inductee Joe Avanzini. Joe was serenaded by Mariah Carey's "Hero" and was gracious in his remarks to the people that had inspired him when he was a youngster to become the best that he could be.

The final inductee was the late Coach Donald Mike Mayer who died of Lou Gehrig's disease at the tender age of 40. "Dode," however, did more with his life in the short time he was here than so many who live a full life. Jim Cox gave a stirring synopsis of the career and friendship that he shared with Coach Mayer.

The acceptance speech was shared by Coach Mayer's daughter, Jamie O'Shields, brother Tom Mayer, and sister Audrey Mayer, a 1972 graduate.

The evening was getting late, but Tom McDaniel reenergized the crowd with the topic "A Night to Remember" in reference to the Hall of Fame inductees and the great accomplishments they had as athletes at Coalgate High School and beyond.

Mr. McDaniel was a valedictorian and outstanding athlete for the Wildcats and later at Northwestern Oklahoma State University. He previously served as vice-chairman of Kerr McGee Corporation and president of both Northwestern Oklahoma State and Oklahoma City University. He currently is president of American Fidelity Foundation in Oklahoma City and is very active in the community serving on numerous boards and commissions.

The program concluded with HOF committee member, Jim Page, a 1968 graduate, presenting a gift to outgoing HOF representative Bill Avanzini for his year of service.

Steve Hudson presented Coalgate High School Principal Kris Hall the first Hall of Fame plaque to be placed in the trophy case at the gymnasium. Mr. Hall gave closing remarks about the evening, saying the Athletic Hall of Fame is a new beginning for Coalgate High School.