

Hiltoppers Induct New Faces Into Hall Of Fame

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Eight individuals and two teams were inducted into the Hillsboro High School athletic hall of fame during a banquet hosted by the Hillsboro Sports Boosters on Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Knights of Columbus hall in Taylor Springs.

Those inducted were Brian Pesko, Cecil Hart, Mark Hughes, Shane Cress, Adam Beeler, Bertie Smith, Irwin Little, Charles Grantham, the 1949 boys basketball team, and the 1982 boys baseball team.

They joined previously inducted hall of famers Mark Frailey, Tony Parola, Stan Wallace, Mary Beth Zimmerman, Harold Osborn, Ed Dahler, Buzz Ott, Pat McClurg, Tony Corso, Maria Pretnar, Brooke Beeler, Matt Hughes, Walter Westbrook, the 1914 boys basketball team, and the 2006 girls basketball team.

According to Hillsboro High School athletic director Andy Stritzel, who presented the award to each inductee, over the years the Hillsboro Sports Boosters have raised \$113,000 for scholastic sports.

"This is such an honor," Bill Helfer of Staunton said in accepting induction into the hall of fame on behalf of the 1949 Hillsboro High School boys basketball team that finished second in state. "It took 66 years to happen."

Helfer, who played on the team and hit an overtime game-winning shot that propelled Hillsboro into the quarterfinals at the 1949 state tournament, introduced his family, including his son Kevin who is winning a battle with cancer.

He called teammate Stan Wallace, already a member of the hall of fame, "probably the greatest athlete to ever come out of Hillsboro High School. If Stan wouldn't have gotten hurt, we would have been state champions."

"We're here 30-some years later with all but three team members," Coach Harland Scheibal said on behalf of the 1982 boys baseball team that finished second in state. Team members at the induction



HHS 1982 Baseball Team

Members of the 1982 Hillsboro High School hall of fame baseball team, front row from the left, are Steve Guinn, Dale Meyers, Assistant Coach Rick Huddleston, statisticians Julie Siltman and Pat Howard, Coach Harland Scheibal, Rich Westbrook, Troy Donaldson. Back row: Mike Moroney, JC Severs, Greg Smith, Neil Stanton, Hugh Satterlee, Jason Brown, Don Downs, John Combs, and Roger Bonney.

ceremony were Roger Bonney, Jason Brown, John Combs, Troy Donaldson, Don Downs, Steve Guinn, Dale Meyers, Mike Moroney, Hugh Satterlee, JC Severs, Greg Smith, Neil Stanton, Rich Westbrook, Coach Scheibal and Assistant Coach Rick Huddleston, and statisticians Pat Howard and Julie Siltman.

"You're always a good coach when guys step up," Scheibal said of the team.

Huddleston thanked Coach Scheibal and the Hillsboro School District. "This team had talent and played beyond that talent," he said.

Team member Neil Stanton thanked the Hillsboro Sports Boosters for recognizing the team, and Rich Westbrook recalled the team's excitement at finishing second. "We were happy to be where we were."

Brian Hart accepted induction into the hall of fame on behalf of his father, the late Cecil Hart, Hillsboro High School class of 1954, who lettered in four sports in high school and went on to a college career at Southern Illinois University where he was a football team walk-on as a sophomore but went on to be the MVP of a team that went 7-2 as a senior.

"If you told him he couldn't do something, he'd prove you wrong," Hart said of his father. "Dad would be really honored. He was not big on awards, but he'd be really honored tonight."

Brian Pesko, class of 1980, said when he was a child going to high school basketball games with his father, "all I wanted to be was a Hillsboro basketball player."

A member of his community college, college, and now high school halls of fame, Pesko still holds several basketball records at Hillsboro and Lincoln Land, and played on the 1984 national championship team at Central Missouri State.

He acknowledged teammate Mike Homa and also his high school basketball coach.

"Coach Scheibal, you can't imagine the influence you had on me," Pesko said. "There's not a day that goes by that I don't think about things that you said."

Shane Cress, class of 1998, earned three state track meet medals and went on to run on a national championship team at Greenville College.

He thanked his college coach, Brian Patton, who also coached him at Hillsboro Junior High school and "helped develop my love of track."

"I want to thank God," Cress said. "Although you have to develop it, speed is something you're born with."

He remembered inspiration for track coming from the 1988 Olympics. "Track and field has always been something I've enjoyed," he said.

Mark Hughes, class of 1992, finished second in state in wrestling and competed on a team that finished fourth in state in 1990, 1991, and 1992.

During his acceptance remarks, he thanked God, his high school wrestling coach, Dave Ball, and his father.

"We worked like equipment on the farm," Hughes said of his childhood years.

His brother, Matt Hughes, was inducted into the hall of fame last year, and "we grew up very competitive," this year's inductee said.

He also had words of praise for the high school team he wrestled on.

Adam Beeler, class of 2003, is also the second member of his family inducted. His sister, Brooke Lynch, was inducted last year.

Beeler earned state medals in wrestling and golf while at Hillsboro High School, and thanked his teammates and wrestling coach, Andy Stritzel.

"I know it's only been 12 years, but time flies," he said.

Each inductee thanked his family and the Hillsboro Sports Boosters.

Also inducted were three athletes who earned medals at the state track meet in the 1920s: Charles Grantham, class of 1923; Irwin Little, class of 1923; and Bertie Smith, class of 1925.

Displays honoring each inductee will be in the Hillsboro High School gym in the hall next to the concession stand.

Brian Patton asked a blessing before dinner, catered by the Knights of Columbus, and the DP Experience provided entertainment.