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NEO Honors 10 Hall of Fame Inductees on May 15-16

Miami, Okla. (Wednesday, May 6, 2009) -- Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College will make eight inductions into its Athletic Hall of Fame and honor two individuals who were inducted into the National Junior College Athletic Association Football Hall of Fame. The college will host an Athletic Hall of Fame Weekend in honor of the ten inductees beginning on Friday, May 15 and culminating with an induction ceremony on Saturday, May 16.

NEO's 2009 Athletic Hall of Fame inductees are Dr. Bruce Carter, former NEO president; the 1951 Golden Norse Football Team, the college's first undefeated football team; Gary Ward, Golden Norse Baseball player in 1959 and former Division I coach; Donne Pitman, a Golden Norse Football player who was named All-American in 1960; Ron Yankowski, 1968 Golden Norse Football player who was named All-American; Chuck Bowman, Golden Norse Football Coach from 1967 through 1971; Cletus Green, Golden Norse Basketball coach from 1964 through 1980; and Ray Judkins, head wrestling coach from 1975 through 1978 and from 1981 through 1986. The NJCAA Football Hall of Fame honorees are Richard Haynes, Golden Norse Football player from 1963 through 1964, and Bob Maxwell, former athletic director.

"We are proud to honor these individuals who helped to shape NEO's athletic program into the respected institution that it is today," said Dr. Jeffery Hale, president. "Their legacies will continue to inspire the Golden Norse for years to come."

This is the second year that NEO will honor those who contributed to the prestige of Norse athletics, said Edie Ingram, director of the NEO Development Foundation. The NEO Athletic Hall of Fame inductees were selected from a pool of 26 applicants by a committee of alumni, community members and members of the NEO Development Foundation Board of Directors. Other NEO Athletic Hall of Fame inductees include Red Robertson, NEO Football coach from 1945 through 1966; 1959 Golden Norse Football National Championship team; Homa Thomas,

Hall of Fame

baseball coach from 1950 through 1967; Jack Begley, Golden Norse Basketball player in 1953; Lonnie Graham, Golden Norse Football player in 1953; Bob Maxwell, Golden Norse Baseball player in 1957; Dixie Woodall, member of the Lady Norse Basketball squad in 1959; Gene Hart, Golden Norse Baseball player in 1959; Doug Mathews, Golden Norse Football player in 1968; Matt Blair, Golden Norse Football player in 1969.

Ingram said an entire weekend will be devoted to the Hall of Fame celebration so that those being honored may have a more memorable experience.

“We are inducting several individuals and an entire team of people who may not have seen each other for 50 years,” Ingram said. “We wanted to give them ample time to reconnect and reminisce about their years at NEO.”

The Athletic Hall of Fame Weekend will begin at 9 a.m. on Friday, May 15 with a reception in the ‘O’ Club Room inside the Gymnasium Building. Golf-fans can enjoy a game at the Peoria Ridge Golf Course at 12 p.m. Non-golfers may take a tour of the Coleman Theater at 12 p.m.

On May 16, a reception will be held at 9 a.m. in the ‘O’ Club Room, followed by a banquet and induction ceremony at 2 p.m. in the Student Union Ballroom.

The cost to play golf at Peoria Ridge is \$60 per person. Tickets to the Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony are \$20. To participate in the Athletic Hall of Fame Weekend, contact the NEO Development Foundation at (918) 540-6250.

2009 NEO Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees:



Dr. Bruce Carter

Dr. Bruce Carter: As President of NEO A&M College for 27 years, Dr. Bruce Carter served longer than any NEO president to date. A native of Chickasha, Carter came to NEO in 1943. During his presidential tenure, the college grew from approximately 200 to 2500 students. He promoted the college’s agriculture, vocational-technical education, and the athletic programs at the national level. He led the construction of five dormitories, the Library Administration Building, vo-tech buildings, Copen Hall, gymnasium, Fine Arts Building, four apartment buildings, an expansion to the football stadium, as well as other projects.



1951 Golden Norse Football Team

1951 Golden Norse Football Team: In 1951, the Golden Norse Football Team completed its first undefeated season in the history of the college and won the Oklahoma Junior College Conference Championship. The Norseman of 1951 also became the only unbeaten college squad in the state of Oklahoma. They managed a post-season game bid from the Texas Junior College Rose Bowl.

Gary Ward: In 1958, Gary Ward came from Ramona, Okla., to play for Homa Thomas' Golden Norse Baseball Team and Max Buzzard's Basketball Team. From NEO, Ward went on to compete in both sports at NMSU from 1960 through 1962. Ward has been inducted into the NMSU Hall of Fame for his accomplishments. He has served 21 seasons as a Division I head baseball coach and compiled a record of 1022-361-1. He is one of the few who have won more than 1000 games in a career. At Oklahoma State University, Ward led his teams to ten college world series appearances, 985 wins, and 17 Big Eight championships and 18 seasons with 40 or more wins. Twelve of his teams finished in Baseball America's Top 10. Ward mentored 56 All-Americans. While at OSU, 97 of his players were selected in the Major League draft. Ward has posted the top winning percentage in the history of all NCAA Division I coaches. Ward was inducted into the College Baseball Hall of Fame in 2008.



Donne Pitman

Donne Pitman: Golden Norse receiver Donne Pitman was a member of the 1959 championship team and received recognition as an NJCAA All-American in 1960. Pitman earned the Carl Rigney Student Athlete Award for his outstanding traits in scholarship, leadership and athletic ability. Pitman was recruited by the University of Colorado and played for the Buffalos for two years.

Ron Yankowski: Yankowski was a graduate of Picher High School prior to becoming a defensive tackle for the Norseman. He was a member of the championship team in 1967 and was named NJCAA All-American. In 1969, Yankowski was recruited by Kansas State University, where he started as defensive tackle for two years. There, he received the honor of being named All Big-Eight Defensive Tackle, knocking down 15 passes in two years. Yankowski was drafted by the St. Louis Cardinals in 1971 and played with the Cardinals for 10 years.



Ron Yankowski



Chuck Bowman

Chuck Bowman Football Coach: In 1967, Chuck Bowman arrived in Miami to serve NEO as head football coach and athletic director. In his first year as Norse head coach, his team won an NJCAA National Championship with a 9-1 record. Under Bowman's direction, the Golden Norse of 1969 won yet another NJCAA National Championship. Bowman garnered recognition twice by being named NJCAA Coach of the Year in 1967 and again in 1969. He coached nine All-Americans and brought home three bowl game victories in five years. Bowman's overall record at NEO was 41 wins and 8 losses. Bowman also served as president of the National Football Coaches Association.

Cletus Green: Cletus Green's coaching career spanned 50 years before his retirement in 2007. As a head coach in high schools and colleges, Green directed teams for 767 wins and 421 losses. While at NEO for 16 years from 1964 to 1980, he led the Norsemen to a 326-174 mark, which included eight conference titles and 11 invitational tournament crowns. Two of his teams played at the national tournament. During his years at NEO, Green served as president of the National Junior College Basketball Coaches Association. He has received numerous honors and awards, including being named to the Oklahoma High School Basketball Hall of Fame, Seminole High School Hall of Fame, 1999 NEO Outstanding Alumni, and several "Coach of the Year" awards.



Cletus Green

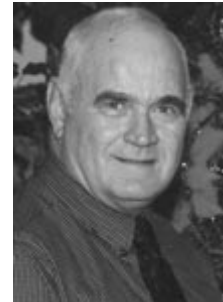


Ray Judkins

Ray Judkins: An alumnus of NEO, Ray Judkins played for Red Robertson in 1955 and 1956. He was also a starter for the NEO Baseball Team and an AAU Wrestler. Judkins later played football at Northeastern State University where he was a member of NSU's 1958 National Championship team. Judkins began NEO's first wrestling program in 1975. Under his direction, the Golden Norse wrestling program had two regional championships, two conference titles and a number of invitational tournament championships. Under Judkins' tutelage from 1981 through 1985, the Norseman took 36 wins in collegiate matches. In his six years of coaching wrestling at NEO, Judkins produced 12 NJCAA All-Americans and was named Regional Coach of the Year.

NJCAA Football Hall of Fame Inductees

Richard Haynes: Richard Haynes came to NEO from Sapulpa, Okla. He played for Red Robertson in 1963 and 1964. His first year at NEO he helped to lead the Norseman to the Oklahoma State Football Championship and an appearance in the 1963 Junior College Rose Bowl. Haynes was recognized by the NJCAA as an All-American in 1963. In 1964, Haynes reached an NEO milestone by becoming the first Norseman to receive back-to-back All-American honors. He went on to play for Central Missouri State where he received Mid-America Intercollegiate Athletic Association All-Conference honors.



Richard Haynes



Bob Maxwell

Bob Maxwell: Not only was Bob Maxwell an alumnus who lettered in four sports at NEO but through his service at the college he made great contributions to junior college football. Longevity and loyalty are two qualities that define Bob Maxwell's 35-year affiliation with the Golden Norse athletic programs. During Maxwell's tenure as athletic director the Golden Norse Football Program, NEO joined the Southwest Junior College Football Conference; the Lady Norse basketball and softball teams went to national tournaments; and the college created a state-of-the-art wellness center. A graduate of Miami High School, Maxwell served as an assistant football coach, head baseball and head softball coach during a 32-year coaching career.