

J. STEPHEN RITTER

Class of 1967



Steve started his Mynderse journey as the new kid on the block. Moving into Seneca Falls the summer of your freshman year is never easy but Steve felt maybe sports would help with the transition. Summer football practice seemed like a good way to start. Shocked when he didn't make the freshman team, he lamented to Coach Bullis that he had tried his hardest. He didn't know what else he could have done. Coach said, "Steve... you made the varsity squad".

That was the beginning of four great years at Mynderse Academy. A three sport athlete, Steve played football, wrestled, and played doubles in tennis. He did try track his freshman year but it was not his thing. For 3 years he was a halfback/defensive back on the football team, co captain his senior year and named to the All Wayne Finger Lakes All Star Team on Offense and Defense. His junior year he was honorable mention. Steve once carried the ball 18 times **In A Row**...not in a game, **In A Row**. He carried for the 19th time for the point after. Mynderse won that game against Geneva 7-0. Steve was selected as the athlete of the year in 1967 when he was presented with the Aldo Beatini trophy along with the Babe Ruth Award for Sportsmanship. He was an officer with Block M and the December 1966 Mynderse Student of the Month.

After football season Steve went right into wrestling. As well as he did in football, he excelled on the wrestling mat. Steve was Mynderse Academy's first Section 5 Class A champion with Bill Simson being the second. As a member of the undefeated 1965 and 1966 wrestling teams, Steve was inducted into the Mynderse Athletic Hall of Fame as a team participant in 2015, an award that he was thrilled to accept. Wrestling ended and tennis began. Playing doubles for three years with Lou Johns and Doug Werth the team was the 65 and 66 Wayne Finger Lakes Champions.

After high school Steve wrestled at RIT where he was the freshman team captain in 1967 and was undefeated during the regular season. Steve wrestled at RIT for

three years where he competed in the 1969 NCAA Division III Nationals in California. He was the Cadet commander with his Army ROTC unit and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant in the US Army in 1971. He spent 21 years in the Army Reserves retiring as a Major. During that time he shot in the All Army Pistol Championships and received numerous military awards for professional military conduct.

Not going into the Army full time as Vietnam was winding down meant Steve needed a “real” job. After following his father’s footsteps and working for GTE Sylvania for 6 years he moved into his passion: Law Enforcement. Steve started with the Thornton Police Dept. as a patrolman and worked his way up to a Commander, third highest rank in the department.. During the 27 years he was a police officer he worked as a firearms Range Master and a Field Training Officer where he trained over half of the new officers on the department. He worked undercover for 3 years in vice and narcotics and participated in a Police exchange with the Moscow Police Dept. where he spent 3 amazing weeks. Steve was a working detective for 4 years and then became a detective sergeant, overseeing the divisions investigations. He then went on to be a Watch Commander in the Patrol Operations. He ended his career as the Professional Standards Commander.

Steve and his wife Lynn have 4 children, Susie, Katie, Beth and Steve Jr. and 7 grandchildren. Steve turned from athlete to coach when the kids arrived. All three girls played Division I volleyball in college and Steve Jr., who Steve coached in wrestling from the time he was 4 until he was 14 (then the HS coach took over), played football in college. Steve became a high school wrestling official when Stevie went to high school. He never officiated against him but officiated at numerous tournaments that lead up to the state tournament in Colorado for 12 years. Scorekeeping duties kept him busy at the state tournaments for many years.

Steve and Lynn reside in Seven Lakes North Carolina where golf has taken over as the sport of choice.