



**Mike Grant**  
**1966**  
Inducted 2021

Mike Grant began his wrestling career at Lincoln Savage Junior High School. It was in his 9<sup>th</sup> grade year that he realized that he really liked wrestling - it was a turning point in his life. During his sophomore year Mike wrestled on the GPHS JV and Wildcatter teams. In 1965 Mike was a Junior and beginning to come into his own on the mat. As a member of the Varsity Team, he placed 4<sup>th</sup> at the State Tournament and was ready to do some damage the next year.

Mike's senior year began with joining the Caveman Cross Country Team. Mike's wrestling coach, Bill Ryder, believed that it was important for his wrestlers to get in shape in the fall for the wrestling season, so it was impressed upon them to go out for a fall sport. Mike chose Cross Country. This turned out to be a good choice because Mike was a strong runner and helped the team earn the district title and place 11<sup>th</sup> at State. Mike's senior wrestling season was electric. He achieved a 19-1 record, the most wins on the team – winning every post season match he wrestled. His season stats included 13 pins, 27 takedowns, and 73 team points to lead the team in all 3 categories. Mike was the State Champion at 141 pounds and then he followed that up with state Freestyle and Greco championships, becoming the only Triple Crown winner in GPHS history. Mike was the team co-captain and provided great leadership to the whole team. He also was selected to the Wrestling Cultural Exchange program that toured Japan in 1966.

Mike went on to have a very successful wrestling career at the University of Oklahoma. At OU, freshmen could not wrestle on the varsity team, but Mike made up for that his sophomore year by earning a record of 23-2-1, winning the Big 8 title, and placing 2<sup>nd</sup> at the NCAA Tournament. Mike's junior year he went undefeated, 22-0. He was the Big 8 champion and the NCAA champion at 145 pounds. Mike's Senior year was the toughest yet. Dan Gable, undefeated and the most decorated wrestler from Iowa State, made it known he would come up to Mike's weight class to wrestle him in February 1966. Gable had not lost a match in his wrestling career. Unfortunately, Mike lost to Gable by a score of 9-4. The field house at OU was a mad house of OU fans that cheered for Mike. It was an unforgettable match with Mike on the losing end. Afterwards, Gable pronounced Mike as one of the toughest wrestlers he had ever wrestled. Mike won the 150-pound weight class at the NCAA Tournament in March of that year. His collegiate record at OU was 69 wins, 4 losses, and 3 ties. He was a 3-time All American and will be remembered for being the wrestler that beat Larry Owens, who beat Dan Gable in the NCAA finals, who beat Mike Grant in the wrestling season of 1966. His style of wrestling was aggressive, attacking and according to one writer for the Daily Oklahoman "working his opponents down with the fierce tenacity of an eager animal stalking its prey".

In August of 2003, at the age of 54, Mike lost a long battle with cancer and will be remembered as one of the most outstanding wrestlers this community has ever known.

*Oklahoma coach Tommy Evans summed it up: "Mike Grant is the fiercest competitor I've ever coached."  
That includes fifteen national champions!*