



Mike Sparlin
Athlete: Class of 1958
Inducted 2021

Mike Sparlin had an outstanding athletic career as a Caveman. He was a 3-sport athlete, competing in football, basketball, and track. He earned many awards during his Caveman career including:

- All-Conference honors in football during his junior year
- All-Conference honors in football during his senior year
- All-State selection during his senior football season
- All-Conference in basketball during his senior year
- State Champion in the pole vault in 1958

As a result of his achievements during high school football, Mike Sparlin was also selected to play in the Shrine All-Star game on the State All Stars team and was named a NIC Wamwiseman Texas All-American.

After high school, Mike played a year of football for the University of Oregon, followed by 5 years in the Air Force where he competed in football, basketball, and softball. Mike's next endeavor was working as a Physical Education teacher at the Job Corps here in Grants Pass.

Teaching at the Job Corps from 1965-1967 is one of the highlights of Mike's teaching career. One of Mike's trainees was George Foreman, who became a heavyweight boxing champion and won the heavyweight boxing Gold Medal at the 1968 Olympics, only 2 years after his time in Grants Pass. George Foreman credits his time in the Job Corps in Grants Pass with changing his life. Following his work at the Job Corps, Mike played 2 years of football as the quarterback of the Southern Oregon College team and then began his coaching career.

Mike coached a variety of sports at the high school and collegiate levels. He coached football and basketball at Southern Oregon College in 1974. Next, he moved to Arizona for a year where he coached football at the University of Arizona (1975). Mike returned to Grants Pass in where he coached one year at GPHS before being hired as the first Head Football Coach at Hidden Valley High School in 1977. In 1982 Mike became the Head Track Coach at Grants Pass High School and remained there through 1988. In 1989, Mike moved back to Arizona to coach track and field as well as golf at Palo Verde High School in Tucson, Arizona, where his track team was the State Championship team in 1990 and his golf team won the State Championship in 1998.

Mike really enjoyed his coaching career, which included a number of athletes from his high school coaching years and from his teams at the University of Arizona, who continued to excel and had successful professional football careers.

Mike and his wife have traveled the world. They spent 3 years traveling in a 5th wheel throughout ALL the United States, from Key West to Niagara Falls. They now enjoy living in Grants Pass with their daughter.