

## HALL OF DISTINCTION

**Inaugural Class of 2019**

### **INDUCTION CEREMONY**

**Thursday, September 30, 2021**

### **Charles Red Ash**

Charles Red Ash was born on December 28th, 1915 in the northwestern Ohio community of Ada. He graduated from Ada High School in 1933, then earned his Bachelor of Science in Education from Ohio Northern University in 1937. Later in his career, he received his Master of Health Administration and Physical Education from Columbia University. Although he could never direct himself from Canton Township to the Stark County fairgrounds, he knew New York City like the back of his hand.

At the age of 26, he began teaching English and Physical Education at Canton South High School. Here, is where he would find his home, build an institution, and secure his legacy.

Ash coached baseball, football, and basketball, debuting as the basketball head coach in 1941. Accepting only the best from every student, athlete, and colleague, his commitment to excellence was shared on and off the court. As the Canton Repository wrote in 1977, Ash was known as a man “who never has let his affection for the game obscure the deeper love he feels for those who have played it.”

But as one of the winningest coaches during his 37-year tenure at Canton South, he certainly loved the game. His accomplishments include being selected as the Ohio Coach of the Year and National Coach of the Year for the Midwest region, as well as being inducted into the Canton South Athletic Hall of Fame, Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame, Ohio Northern Hall of Fame, and the Ohio Basketball Hall of Fame.

His blazing spirit and deep aversion to losing led him to a 636-202 lifetime record. It also helped cement his nickname, as fiery and bright as the hair on his head: “Red.”

As sportswriter Steve Doershuck stated, “Coach Red Ash’s big personality made trips to the gym a way of life at Canton South.” To honor that impact on the community and Wildcat basketball history, the Canton Local Board of Education named the gymnasium in his honor.

But, Red Ash was more than just sports. A fan of Shakespeare and symphony music, he was a family man who cared about the betterment of his whole community. This led him to serve 6 terms in the Ohio House of Representatives, using his well-respected voice to positively impact Ohio citizens.

Most dear to his heart was his wife, Esther, and their four successful sons and daughters-in-law: Charles Jr. and Martha, Dr. David and Erin, Paul and Francie, and Drs. Jon and Dorene. While Red fell ill and passed on March 3rd, 1991, his spirit lives on through his four sons, ten grandchildren, and thirteen great-grandchildren.

His legacy is further honored by the Charles Red Ash Memorial Fund and scholarship program. Each year, an exemplary male and female student-athlete from Canton South High School are awarded a four-year scholarship. This year marked the 26th year of this tradition, which continues to positively impact the lives of Wildcats.

Doershuck summarized the man best, “The endless wins and the thrilling finishes, win or lose, have smoothed into the sands of time. Left is the glow of one of the most colorful figures in county sports history. Mostly, Canton South people who remember him smile at the utterance of that syllable worth a thousand words, “Red.”