

CLARK WILLE

Clark Wille is a 1967 graduate of Lindbergh High School where he played football, was on the swim team, and competed in track and field. He was a sprinter and excelled in hurdles. He attended Southeast Missouri State University, graduating with a B.S. in Physical Education in 1971 and a Master's degree in Physical Education in 1975. He was an All-American hurdler while at Southeast.

In 1971, Clark was hired by the Dunklin R-5 district to be an assistant coach in football, gymnastics, and track and field. In the fall of 1972, he began a Men's Cross Country program that would achieve continued success for decades.

Starting with just a few runners in 1972, Clark's cross country program would go on to put Herculaneum High School on the map. They won their first state championship in the fall of 1977 and succeeded with a string of seven consecutive state championships in Men's Cross Country by the fall of 1983. Along the way, he began a women's cross country team in 1980. They, too, went on to be state champions multiple times.

Clark left Herculaneum in 1983. Along with the spectacular run of state championships, he produced thirty-one state champions in cross country and track and field, 126 All-State athletes, seventeen team district championships, eighteen team conference championships, and fifteen St. Louis Post-Dispatch scholar athletes. He then went on to the college level to make his mark there. In 1983, he was hired as athletic director at Missouri Baptist University. He also served as department chair for Physical Education.

While at Missouri Baptist, Clark expanded athletic programs. In women's and men's athletics, he added indoor and outdoor track, cross country, and soccer. Plus, he brought in women's basketball. He received the Jewel Award for best athletic program in the conference for two years. Also, within his department, he oversaw a higher percentage rate of graduation and Dean's List student athletes than the overall student body.

Also, while at Missouri Baptist, he coached Track and Field, and was the head coach of Men's and Women's Cross Country. In the late 1990s, Clark coached at Lindenwood University. He coached the 1998 Men's NAIA Indoor National Champions in Track and Field. And in 1998 and 1999, he coached to second place in the National Championships four teams: Men's Outdoor Track and Field twice, Men's Indoor Track and Field, and Men's Cross Country. From 2010 to 2013, Clark coached at Millikin University as the head Men's and Women's Cross Country coach and assistant in Track and Field. In Indoor and Outdoor Track, his teams set thirty-five university records.

In between his last two college stints, Clark coached at two high schools, St. Clair High School and Washington High School. His teams won their conference and district championships nearly every year, and he produced seven individual state champions.

Clark has not only produced decorated athletes, but he has received so very many awards. He has sixteen times been named the Missouri Track and Cross Country Coaches Association Coach of the Year at the college or high school level, and in 1982, while at Herculaneum High, Clark was named National High School Cross Country Coach of the Year. Plus, there is the list of Halls of Fame. Clark has been inducted into the Lindbergh High School Hall of Fame, the Missouri Baptist University Hall of Fame, the Southeast Missouri State University Athletic Hall of Fame, and in 1990, was inducted into the Missouri State Track Coaches Hall of Fame.

Over the years, Clark has published numerous articles on how to coach, done motivational speaking, and written a suspense novel. He and his wife, Chris, were married for twenty-five years and have two grown children. His son in Florida and daughter in Alaska have given him seven grandchildren.

It is truly amazing how decorated a coach Clark Wille has been. He has dedicated his life to learning the secrets of success in track and field and cross country. From listening intently to the college track athletes in his old Track House at SEMO, to devouring books and articles on coaching techniques, Clark has been a study in athletic motion. He will never deny help for an athlete bent on improving. He is simply a phone call away to help coach a high school runner to better compete. From his days of being the fastest hurdler at Cape to today helping the sons and daughters of his former athletes, he has kept his one true focus and is always the guy with the stopwatch—the loyal and beneficent coach.