

Curry Clark GPHS Royalties Coach 1973-1993



Curry came to GPHS in 1963 as a French teacher, an English teacher, and a cheerleading coach. In 1973 she started the Grants Pass High School Dance Team, "The Royalties". Her philosophy was "to entertain and provide spectators with an exquisite show by exposing audiences to all forms of dance by performing Broadway shows in perfect unison". The team's style differed greatly from the traditional flag and drill style teams that fans expected to see at half-time. She prepared her teams to compete with the Portland teams, leading to showy costumes, stage make-up, elaborate props, and unique dance moves. Her dancers learned about discipline, responsibility and leadership, as well as how important teamwork is to success.

Curry was known for expecting high standards and demanding hard work. In their very first performance, the team received a standing ovation! That was only the beginning. The Royalties began amassing trophies at Invitational competitions as well as State competitions, establishing themselves as the team to beat.

Curry and her Royalties won both the ODDO and OHSDDA State Championships in 1980, and won the OHSDDA Championship again in 1985. In 1987 Dance and Drill became an OSAA activity, and from that point on, Curry's teams were nearly unstoppable. One judge commented that the team "looked too professional for a high school team". In fact, in 1987 the Royalties were invited to perform at halftime of the Hula Bowl in Hawaii, a once in a lifetime experience. Always working to achieve the pinnacle of success in every competition, Curry Clark pushed the limits of what a dance team could be in the state of Oregon. In 1988 the Royalties added male dancers and became the "Royals and Royalties". Her teams won first place every year except 1991 (losing by less than half of a point) until she retired. In 1993, Curry Clark was awarded the DDCA Coach of the Year.

1980 ODDO and OHSDDA State Champions
1985 OHSDDA State Champions
1987 OSAA Intermediate Show Champions
1988 OSAA Intermediate Show Champions
1989 OSAA Intermediate Show Champions
1990 OSAA Intermediate Show Champions
1992 OSAA Intermediate Show Champions
1993 OSAA Large Show Champions
1993 DDCA Coach of the Year Award
2023 DDCA Lifetime Achievement Award

After setting the standard for excellence in dance for 20 years, in 1993 Curry retired. In 2023 Curry Clark was awarded the DDCA Lifetime Achievement Award for her dedication, success, and service to the High School Dance Team community.

Many of Curry's students continued in the dance profession after high school. Some opened their own dance studios. Another performed as a Blazer Dancer (Portland Trailblazers). And some danced professionally from the west coast to Broadway!

But what makes her most proud are the dancers who went on to coach their own high school dance teams, taking them all the way to the State Championship. Most notably are Canby High School, winning 6 consecutive state championships (coached by students from the 1993 team) and Gresham High School, who has won both state & national titles (coached by a student from the Class of 1984).

Curry's Legacy has continued for over 30 years and will continue for years to come!