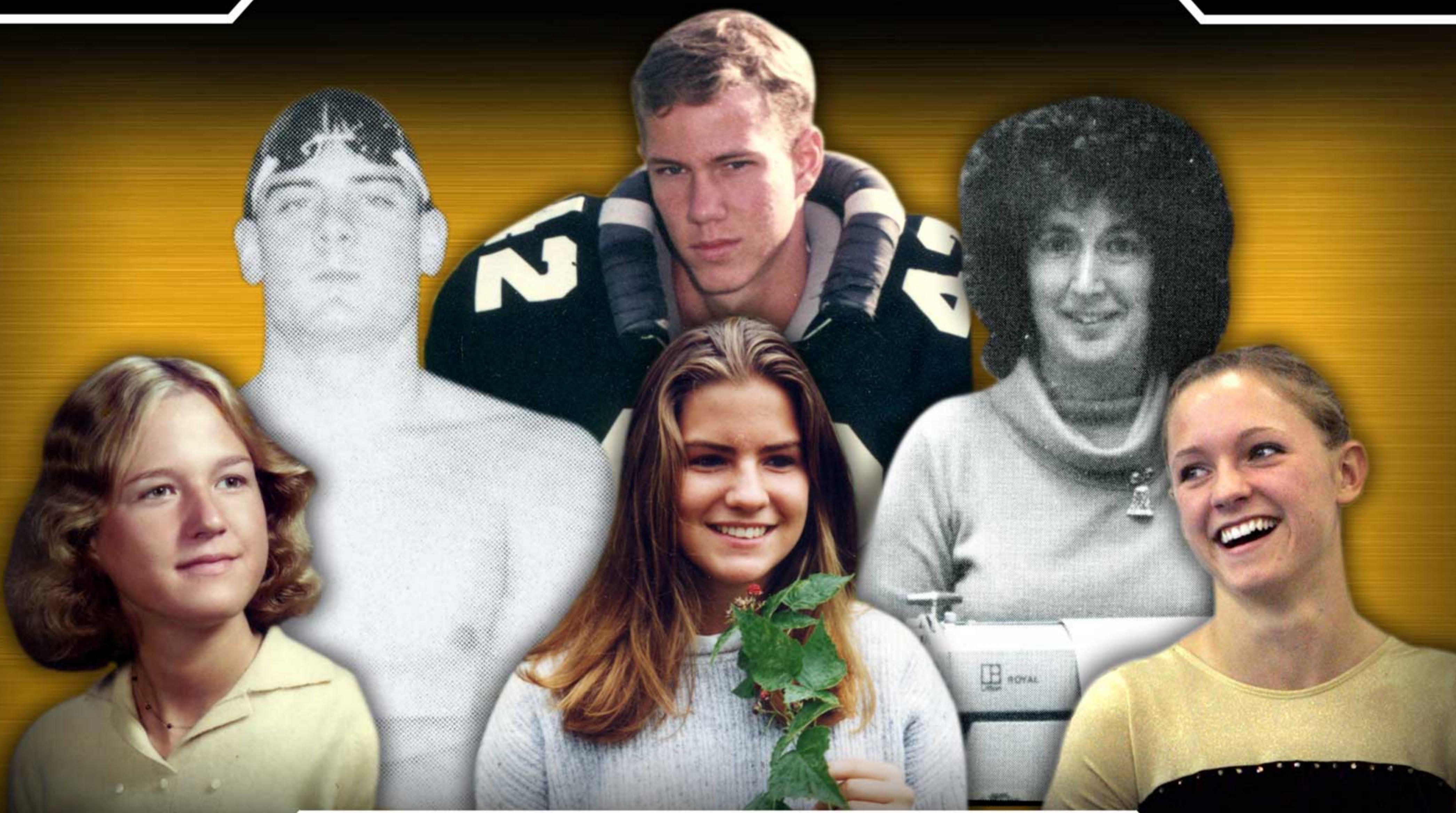


FRIDAY- SEPTEMBER 25, 2015

MANKATO EAST

HALL OF FAME



CLASS OF 2015

MARY CONLEY

MARILYN NOREN

AMY KNUDSON

SAM WIGERSMA

KATIE KORTUEM

BRAD WILLETT

MARY CONLEY - ATHLETE/COMMUNITY MEMBER



In January of 1973 the Minnesota State High School League Board of Directors passed a directive that allowed girls to compete on boys athletic teams. In the winter of 1974 Mary Conley became the first Mankato East High School female athlete to participate in a male sport. Mary swam varsity that season and lettered, becoming the first female to letter at Mankato East High School. After her freshman year, Mary continued to stay with the boys' team as manager through her senior year.

Honors' and distinctions were not given, but Mary does have special memories. Some of her fondest memories were from swim meets when boys from other schools would ask her not to beat them! (She did) Also, being on the boys team sometimes presented awkward situations such as where she was going to change her clothes at away meets. Typically the "away" teams changed in the girls' locker room and she couldn't change with her teammates-so Mary would end up changing into her swim wear in an office, a janitor's closet or a band room.

Mary graduated from Minnesota State University-Mankato with a B.S. in Marketing, Management, Industrial Relations and a minor in Economics.

Today Mary continues to encourage young women to be pioneers and step outside the box. Mary has been a financial advisor in the Mankato area since 1992. She believes the courage it took to go out for the boys' swim team in the early 70's gave her the strength, tenacity and confidence to enter a predominantly male oriented field and succeed.

Mary has served her community and Mankato East proudly over the years. She is a member of the YMCA campaign committee, past Chair and board member of the Mayo Health System Foundation Board, past chair and board member of the Mankato Symphony Orchestra, graduate of the Mankato Leadership Program, and MEHS Booster Club committee member and board member to just name a few. While Mary's children attended MEHS, the Booster Club helped support the building of the football concession stand. During her tenure she also helped build higher giving levels ranging all the way to \$5,000. She has volunteered with United Way, the American Heart Association, and various other community organizations.

Mary is a devoted wife (husband Rich Coyle), mother (Mitch Olinger, Amanda Olinger) and step-mother (Rich Coyle, Jennie Horvath, and Katie Ovikian). She loves yoga, long walks, reading, and having lunch with good friends, and she continues to be a strong supporter of Mankato East High School.

KATIE (KORTUEM) OLSON - ATHLETE



Katie (Kortuem) Olson, a 1996 graduate, had an illustrious career, embodying what a student-athlete is all about throughout her time at Mankato East and in college.

In the fall, she was a four- year participant and two-year letter winner in volleyball and a scholar athlete as well. In the winter, Katie dominated in her marquee sport...gymnastics, where she was a 4-year letter winner, 4-year All-State, 4-year All-Big 9, 4-year Scholar Athlete winner, and a 4-year State competitor. While competing at State in 1993 she earned 3rd in the vault, 5th in floor, 3rd in the All-Around and was State Champion on the bars. In 1994 Katie took 5th in the beam, in '95 she took 2nd on bars, 5th on beam, 4th in the All-Around, and her team ended up as the State Runner-up. In her final year she was 2nd on bars, 3rd on beam, 4th in the All-Around, and her team once again was the State Runner-up, making her one of the most accomplished gymnasts to ever perform at MEHS. In the spring, Katie finished each of her three sport school years as a 2-year letter winner in track and field.

Katie ventured north on Highway 169 to Gustavus and was a 3-year participant in volleyball including being named Captain her senior year in 1999. In gymnastics, she again flourished, becoming a seven-time All-American, the 1999 All-Around, Vault, and Beam National champion, the 1999 Honda Award Winner, and the 1999 Division III Gymnast of the Year. Her team was also Runner-Up and in 2000 she earned Academic All-American status.

Upon graduation from Gustavus in 2000 with her Elementary Ed. Degree, she went on to earn her masters of Education at St. Mary's in 2004 while teaching 6th grade at Chaska Middle School from 2001-2005. She has held various coaching positions since then. She was an assistant coach at Mankato East and Eastview in gymnastics and was the head gymnastics coach at Gustavus College as well. Katie currently is co-owner of K&G Gymnastics, located just south of Mankato, with Gabe Essay where they have over 685 participants in the upcoming winter season. Katie describes this opportunity as a "dream come true!"

She is married to Brent Olson and they have three lovely children: Emmett (9), Ella (8), and Weston (5).

AMY (KNUDSON) HENDRICKS - ATHLETE



Amy (Knudson) Hendricks, a 2005 graduate, was a two-sport standout athlete, excelling at the highest levels in both gymnastics and track and field, while maintaining academic excellence in the classroom as well.

In gymnastics, Amy became arguably the most decorated gymnast in the history of Mankato East. Amy was both a 4-time letter winner and 4-time All-Big Nine Conference award winner. She was an instrumental part of the 2002 State Championship Team, earning an individual state championship on the vault. The following year she repeated as state champion in the vault competition and captured her second of four straight "All-State Elite Gymnast" awards, an award given to the top five All-Around gymnasts in the state. As a senior, Amy earned her third individual state championship on the vault in four years, setting the state scoring record at the time with a score of 9.85. She was captain during her junior and senior years and was also named Team MVP in her final campaign.

In the spring time while participating in track and field, Amy was equally as dominant in her athletic endeavors. She was a 5-time letter winner and a 5-time All-Conference award winner. Amy was a key contributor to each of her teams' three True Team State Championships ('02, '03 & '04) on her way to earning team MVP for four straight seasons and setting seven school records, most notably the 100 meter dash with a time of 12.14 seconds. She was also a team captain her junior and senior years and academic All-State for four years.

While competing in the MSHSL section meet, Amy set three section 2AA records, two as a part of some very talented relay teams in the 4X200 and 4X400 meter races and the third in the 100-meter dash. Amy ended her fantastic high school career having competed in four straight state meets, earning All-State status each time, culminating with a State Runner-up performance in the 100 meter dash and a State Championship as part of the 4X400 meter relay team in 2005.

Following College, Amy married her high school sweetheart, Sam Hendricks, also a Mankato East graduate; they have a three year old son named Brody and a 9 month old son named Charlie. Sam and Amy both work full time as health coaches with Herbalife, a global nutrition company. Some of the perks of this position are the great opportunities to travel and visit beautiful places around the world. Some of her favorite parts of the job are running community-wide weight loss challenges and fit camps from their newest Mad Ave Nutrition site.

MARILYN NOREN - COMMUNITY MEMBER



Marilyn Noren was a staple around Mankato East for over 29 years. She worked as the first resource math teacher, a humanities resource aid, and as a secretary: typing tests, copying assignments, and making life much easier for the staff at Mankato East.

When funds were limited, Marilyn made 15 sets (jackets and pants) of boys' basketball warm-ups, sewed the uniforms for the entire Pom Pom team of 36 girls, and created some of the costumes for the Dance Company. For several years, she made cheerleader uniforms, (skirts and tops) for East and West; there were so many that it was hard to keep track of the amount she made. Furthermore, Marilyn cut the nametag from the football and basketball jerseys, took them to Brandt's to be monogrammed, and sewed them on each of the uniforms. She mended all uniforms for numerous sports, fixed the auditorium drapes, and made short curtains that surrounded the orchestra pit. Her hours and skill in mending and creating around MEHS would have earned her a significant income today but was done as part of "her job" during her time here at East. In addition to all of this before the days of organized concession stands were the craze, she ran a hot dog/pop stand with Mrs. Haldorson to fundraise for athletics.

Marilyn was an assistant coach with Donna Oakey during the first years (1970's) of The Marlins girls synchronized swim team, The Marlins put on a show each year with 3 performances. She helped Activities Director, Ora Buchanan, chaperone teams at various state tournaments, supervised games at East while Ora was at West during Invitational Tournaments where both schools were used to allow for more gym space, and helped sell tickets for years at East girls' and boys' sporting events.

She annually helped with Homecoming Day by making and printing programs, sending letters to former Homecoming Queens, setting up the gym the night before Homecoming, sewing the skirting for the homecoming platform, and making some of the dresses for the Homecoming Queen candidates.

Marilyn helped raise four children (Julie, Vicki, Gary, and David) who all graduated from Mankato East. She has numerous grandchildren including two that have attended or are currently attending Mankato East (Emma 2015 graduate, and Travis a current 9th grader.)

One current staff member was quoted as saying, "Marilyn has exhibited one of the strongest Mankato East school spirits of any student or adult I have met. The copy room was always decorated with East items whether it was the large stuffed animal cougar, or the football hankies, etc. Marilyn's email has 'cougar' in it. Who would do this except a person who is totally dedicated to Mankato East and has for many years, contributed to the school with such commitment, enthusiasm and perseverance?"

Marilyn...we thank you!

SAM WIGERSMA - ATHLETE



Sam Wigersma, a 1999 graduate, had a fantastic high school career as a three sport athlete for the Cougars. In the fall, he spent his time on the gridiron, lettering twice while playing long snapper and tight end as a member of the Gary Dierks led 1998 Section Championship team and state participant.

In the winter, Sam dominated in the pool as a member of the swim and dive team. He was a 4-year letter winner, who was elected as co-captain his senior year. In his five years on the varsity squad, Sam was simply amazing while winning five Big Nine Conference Championships in either the 100 Butterfly or 200 IM, as well as notching five section runner-up or championship finishes in the same events, earning a spot at the state meet his sophomore, junior and senior seasons. Sam became a 6-time state entrant in either the 100 Butterfly, 200 IM or as a member of the Medley Relay team, earning All-State and All-American honors both his junior and senior campaigns, culminating with a State Runner-up finish his senior year in the 100 fly.

Sam found himself behind the plate in the Spring as a two year starting catcher for the Cougar baseball team. He earned two varsity letters and was an All-Big Nine Conference selection his junior year and All-City his senior season. Tim Johnson states that "Sam was the embodiment of a three sport athlete. He did it right, focusing on each sport one at a time and giving everything he had to each team and season in which he was a part of."

While attending college, Sam continued his prowess in the pool as a member of the MSU-Mankato and Gustavus Adolphus swim teams, earning All-American and All-Conference status multiple times in his college career. Currently Sam is a senior sales manager for Lifetime Fitness. He is living in Eden Prairie and is engaged to be married next September to Megan Norton.

BRAD WILLETT - ATHLETE



Brad Willett certainly left a memorable mark at Mankato East on the football field, in the gym, and on the track. He was not only an accomplished player by Mankato East standards but in the conference as well.

In football, Brad was a 2-year starter and letter winner who earned All-City honors his senior year. He was Co-Captain of the 1993 Section Championship football team that made their mark as the first East football team to play in the Metrodome. He was a two way starter and a kick returner. When Brad graduated he ranked in the top five all time for interceptions in both a season and a career. Brad also ranked in the top ten in total kick return yards in a season and career and was a seven time "big/hit-big/play" recipient during his gridiron days at Wolverton field.

In basketball, Brad was a 3-year letter winner and starting point guard. He held the single season record for assists in a game, season, and career when he graduated. In track, Brad was a 4-year letter winner and a Big 9 conference champion in the 300 meter hurdles, and as a member of the 4x100 meter relay team and 4x400 meter relay team. He earned all-conference honors three times and was the section 2AA 300 meter hurdles champion his senior year, earning a trip to the state meet in 1994.

Upon graduation from Mankato East in 1994, Brad went to the University of Wisconsin River-Falls and was a member of their football team from 1994-1998. His teams Played in two NCAA DIII playoff games. Brad also participated in track his freshman year of college.

A 1998 graduate of UWRF, Brad went on to work at Morris Area High School, Belgrade-Brooten-Elrosa, and Westonka High School before landing at Janesville-Waldorf-Pemberton High School as a Physical Education Teacher K-12 and Health Education 5-12. Brad has been busy and active at JWP as well. He has been the head track coach for the last ten years and a junior high football coach for the past four years. Brad started a Zero-Hour program, has instructed numerous staff and students with CPR certification, has been a PLC leadership committee coordinator, a member of the National Honor Society selection committee, and various other roles of leadership at JWP.

Brad and his wife Liz have two boys Brody (3) and Bryce (1). Brad loves fishing with his father in Canada and Alaska, as well as the local fishing holes. He is still active in Co-ed softball with his wife and enjoys life daily.

Mankato East High School Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

2002 Inductees (Charter Year)

Al Blanshan	Althete
Jack Brooks	Althete
Ora Buchanan	Community Member
Mark Daby	Community Member
Kari (Mitchell) Eckhert	Coach
Robert Gaarder	Athlete
Kendra (Carter) Hinz	Athlete
Amy (Swanson) Hoehn	Community Member
Jerry Maschka	Athlete
Kristin Maschka	Athlete
Sara Maschka	Community Member
Don Miller	Athlete
Denny Runck	Athlete
Marissa (Tieszen) Rustad	Athlete
Tammy Shain	Athlete
Steve Smith	Athlete
Mike Wolle	Athlete
Scott Wolner	Athlete
Merv Wolverton	Community Member
Barb (Meredith) Woodford	Athlete
Cliff Woodford	Coach

2003 Inductees

Amy Cazett	Althete
John Coatta	Althete
Angie (Swanson) DeGraff	Althete
Chris Draheim	Althete
Andre Harnitz	Althete
Travis Helling	Althete
Amy Kapsner-Hodapp	Althete
Dan Kapsner	Community Member
Chrissa Landwehr	Althete
Bob Maes	Coach
Newton Moen	Community Member
Randy Schulz	Althete
Tim Stark	Althete
John Stoffel	Althete
Ron Swanson	Community Member
Ron Trongard	Community Member
Sarah Winslow	Althete
Kris Witrock	Althete

2004 Inductees

Jon Dierks	Althete
Andrew Graham	Althete
Nordeene Haldorson	Coach
Todd Hodapp	Althete
Doris Huepenbecker	Community Member
Mark Miller	Community Member
Jennifer Mitchell	Althete
Jordann Ojanpa	Althete
Chris Vokal	Althete
Kris Wolle	Althete
Leonard Zimmerman	Community Member

2005 Inductees

Dennis Blomquist	Community Member
Millie Daufenbach	Community Member
Gary Dierks	Coach
Connie (Fitzloff) Long	Athlete
John Huepenbecker	Athlete
Jody (Mitchell) Guillemette	Athlete
Eric Schmidt	Athlete

2006 Inductees

Doug Espenson	Athlete
Ben Kaus	Athlete
Kristin (Kachelmyer) Krusemark	Athlete
Brian Kvebak	Coach
Tim Johnson	Coach
Connie (Spangrud) Robinson	Athlete

2007 Inductees

Gordy Graham	Community Member
Chuck Helling	Coach
Bob Schweim	Athlete
Mark Spangrud	Athlete
Jeanne (Tostenson) Scarpello	Athlete

2008 Inductees

Corey Dahline	Athlete
Beth (Johnson) Benzkofer	Athlete
Barb Kaus	Community Member
Joe Madson	Athlete/Coach
Patti Maes	Athlete
Margaret Schoettler	Athlete
Cletus Zitzmann	Coach

2009 Inductees

Brad Fowler	Athlete
Bob Gospeter	Coach
Brad Kliegl	Athlete
Jim Malcolm	Coach
Cathy Matuska	Athlete
Briggs Rolfsrud	Athlete

2010 Inductees

Josh Dobell	Athlete
Steve Kibble	Athlete
Elizabeth (Landwehr) Mullikin	Athlete
Ty Ries	Athlete
Mark Schmit	Coach
Paul Sorensen	Coach

2011 Inductees

Jeff Anderson	Athlete
John Beeman	Athlete
Warren Mickelson	Coach
Paula (Uttech) Prybylla	Athlete
Kristin (Petersen) Stordahl	Athlete
Steve Wolle	Coach

Mankato East High School Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees

2012 Inductees

Bob Matuska.....	Athlete
Lisa (Runk) Newmann.....	Athlete
Carrie (Gospeter) O'Hearn.....	Athlete
Leroy Schweim	Community Member
Mark Sievers	Athlete

2013 Inductees

Jeff Brudwick.....	Athlete
Heather (Bassett) Dahl.....	Athlete
Brian Fowler	Community Member
Mike Haldorson.....	Athlete
Neil Paarmann.....	Coach
Holly Schlingmann	Athlete

2015 Inductees

Mary Conley.....	Athelete
Amy Knudson	Athelete
Katie Kortuem.....	Athelete
Marilyn Noren.....	Community Member
Sam Wigersma	Athelete
Brat Willett.....	Athelete

Criteria for Induction

Candidates for membership in the Mankato East School Athletic Hall of Fame must be former Mankato East High School students, coaches, or other individuals who made significant contributions to East High School Athletics or to their community. Candidates must be out of high school for at least 5 years. (Inductees in any category may be living or deceased.)

Candidates are eligible in three categories:

ATHLETIC- A former Mankato East athlete who competed with excellence and lettered in a varsity sport. Nominees must be or must have been a credit to East High School and the community. Candidates must be a graduate of Mankato East High School and have been out of high school for at least eight (8) years.

COACHES- A nominee must be a former or present coach who has distinguished himself/herself by demonstrating exceptional leadership, character and athletic achievement during his/her tenure at Mankato East.

COMMUNITY MEMBER- An individual who has shown outstanding support of Mankato East High School Athletics.

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