

Gary Gray

Basketball, Coach

Class of 1969

Gary Gray was one of the most successful coaches in Nyack history. He led the Boys Basketball team from 1981 through 2006, accumulating 432 wins and 14 league titles. Gary also coached Girls Soccer and Boys Track, and taught Physical Education in Nyack for 35 years. Before all that, he attended NHS, and played Varsity Basketball for 3 years. As Gary puts it, "Nyack has been my whole life."

As a high school player, Gary was called a "super sub" by the Journal News, for his ability to score proficient off the bench. On January 6, 1969, they described a game against the Rams: "Gray, the Indian's sensational 6th Man, had that rare ability to come in and pick up a club instantly. Against Clark stown, he pumped in 9 quick 2nd Quarter points when the fast-starting Rams had threatened a rout."

Gary became a coach at NHS in 1976, leading the Girls Varsity Soccer Team for 6 seasons. During that time, they won a Section 9 championship. He returned to Girls Soccer 23 years later, and coached them for another 3 seasons. Most remarkably, he was named Coach of the Year during each stint, once in 1981, and again in 2006!

It was with Boys Basketball that Gray really made his mark. His teams averaged 17 wins per year, and they had eleven 20-win seasons. Under Gary, Nyack's program racked up 14 League titles and 4 Section titles. The Boys reached the Final Four in New York State in 1991, culminating with an overtime loss in the State Final. 10 years later, Nyack lost in the State Semi-Final to powerhouse Amityville, who went on to win 4 state championships in a row.

The 1991 team was designated "Team of the Year" by the Basketball Coaches Association of New York. They also recognized the 1991-2001 teams as the "Team of the Decade," based on the astonishing record of 170-16! Gary was chosen as Rockland Coach of the Year twice, and League Coach of the year 8 times. 7 of his players won Division I scholarships, and 3 went on to play professionally. Among the legendary players he coached were Ernie Watkins, Larry Abney and Nigel Morris (NH SAHOF Class of 2015). Gray was inducted into the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame in 2013.

While Gary was leading his high school players to greatness, he was also working with the youngest Nyack students as an elementary teacher. Gary taught Physical Education at both Valley Cottage and Liberty Elementary. He instituted the Morning Program at VCE, and pushed for the purchase of phys ed equipment throughout the district. Gray was also instrumental in the construction of playgrounds, and fundraising for the PTA. His positive influence on Nyack students ranged from Kindergarten through high school, and is still being felt today.

