

Santa Maria High School Celebrates 4th Annual Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Ten outstanding Saints athletes and coaches honored during a memorable evening of tradition, pride, and celebration

Santa Maria High School proudly celebrated its **4th Annual Athletic Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony** on Friday, September 11, 2026, honoring **10 remarkable former SMHS athletes and coaches** whose accomplishments and contributions have earned them a permanent place in Saints history.

The evening began with a special induction dinner in the **Santa Maria High School cafeteria**, where approximately **140 family members, friends, former teammates, coaches, school staff, and special guests** gathered to celebrate the 2026 Hall of Fame class. Each inductee was recognized for their athletic achievements, dedication, leadership, and contributions to the proud tradition of Santa Maria High School Athletics.

Honoring the 2026 Hall of Fame Class

This year's Hall of Fame class represents several generations of Saints and a wide variety of athletic programs. The **2026 SMHS Athletic Hall of Fame inductees** were:

- **Bob Biddle (1959–1983)** — Coach — *Posthumous*
- **Gabriel Cota (1989–1993)** — Baseball / Basketball
- **David Cumberland (1966–1970)** — Baseball / Basketball
- **Pat Kelly (1969–1973)** — Baseball / Football
- **Rick McCutcheon (1967–1971)** — Basketball
- **Jennifer Melena (1991–1995)** — Basketball / Softball / Volleyball
- **Steve Miller (1967–1971)** — Football / Wrestling / Golf
- **Tim Patterson (1968–1972)** — Basketball
- **Jerry Watson, Sr. (1948–1952)** — Football / Track & Field — *Posthumous*
- **John William Yanez (1967–2000)** — Coach — *Posthumous*

Together, these 10 inductees represent decades of Santa Maria High School athletic history. From the football field, basketball court, baseball diamond, wrestling mat, golf course, softball field, volleyball court, and track to years spent coaching and mentoring student-athletes, their accomplishments reflect the rich and diverse tradition of Saints Athletics.

The celebration continued following dinner as inductees and their guests were escorted to a special **VIP section along the football field sidelines**. Desserts, coffee, and hot chocolate were available as guests settled in for a front-row seat to watch the Saints take on Del Oro.

It proved to be an especially memorable evening, as **Santa Maria High School defeated Del Oro 40–0**, adding another exciting chapter to a night already filled with Saints pride.

During halftime, attention once again turned to the Hall of Fame as the **2026 inductees were formally recognized before the SMHS community**. Surrounded by family, friends, students, staff, alumni, and Saints fans, the inductees were celebrated for the accomplishments and contributions that earned them this special honor. The induction ceremony was especially meaningful for the families of **Bob Biddle, Jerry Watson, Sr., and John William Yanez**, who were honored posthumously.

Preserving the Legacy of Saints Athletics

The Santa Maria High School Athletic Hall of Fame was established to **recognize, honor, and celebrate individuals and teams who have distinguished themselves and SMHS through significant contributions to athletics**.

The Hall of Fame is also about preserving the history and traditions of Santa Maria High School for future generations. The **SMHS Athletic Hall of Fame Wall**, located at the entrance to Wilson Gym, proudly displays past inductees and gives students, staff, alumni, families, and community members an opportunity to learn about the athletes, coaches, teams, and supporters who helped shape Saints Athletics.

Any person may nominate an individual or team for consideration by the Santa Maria High School Hall of Fame Selection Committee. Nominees are considered based on their athletic achievements, contributions, character, distinction, and service to SMHS Athletics.

Student-athlete candidates must have been separated from SMHS for at least five years, with consideration given to accomplishments such as First Team All-Conference recognition or its equivalent and notable success after leaving Santa Maria High School. Coaches and administrators must also meet established eligibility requirements, while championship teams and individuals who have provided meritorious service to SMHS Athletics may also be considered.

The **Hall of Fame Nomination Portal is open annually from January 1 through March 31**. Hall of Fame inductees are announced each year in May and honored during the Saints' home football season in August or September.

The 4th Annual Athletic Hall of Fame celebration was much more than an induction ceremony. It was an evening that brought together **generations of Saints** to remember the accomplishments of the past, celebrate the present, and inspire the student-athletes who will carry the tradition forward.

For more than a century, Santa Maria High School has built a rich history of athletics, school spirit, and community. The Athletic Hall of Fame ensures that the individuals who helped build that legacy will continue to be recognized and remembered for generations to come.

[View photos and event details](#)

Once a Saint, Always a Saint!