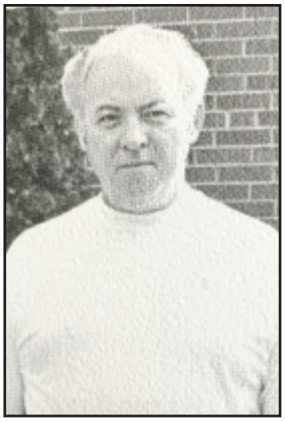
MARTINSFERRY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC WALL OF HONOR

2016
Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Jim Knellinger

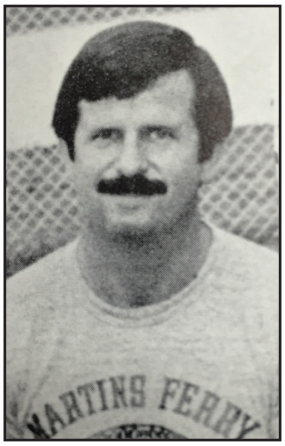
His contributions to Purple Rider athletics dates all the way back to his high school days when he served as a team manager for the football squad. Although he graduated in 1940, Knellinger has remained loyal to his alma mater including many years as the timekeeper at basketball games.



Bill Meyers

A life-long Ferrian and a 1944 graduate of MFHS, Meyers made perhaps his biggest, but certainly not only, contribution to the athletic program as the school's videographer for an incredible 57 years from 1955-2012. During that time, he provided game films for nine Ferry football coaches and was on hand for nearly 600 Rider games. He shared his talents elsewhere as he also did video work for Bridgeport and St. John Central, West Liberty State College and the semi-professional football team, the Wheeling/Ohio Valley Ironmen.

Meyers spent seven years as the Riders' head golf coach (1962-69) and was the school's ticket manager for a decade.



Bill Pratt

A 1961 graduate of Warwood High School, he has served many roles well since becoming a Purple Rider, including coach, teacher, administrator and equipment manager. Pratt's coaching came at the elementary, junior high and junior varsity levels in both basketball and football, and it's estimated that he amassed more than 500 victories. He also served as the football team's equipment manager for many years, with countless youngsters who couldn't wait to become one of "Pratt's Rats". He also served as principal at South School for a decade.

Dr. Divakar Bangera

A General Practitioner for more than half a century, he became a true friend to Purple Rider athletics by serving as the team physician for the MFHS football team for more than 35 years. He continues to provide medical care at Adena Harrisville Clinic and is affiliated with East Ohio Regional Hospital in Martins Ferry.

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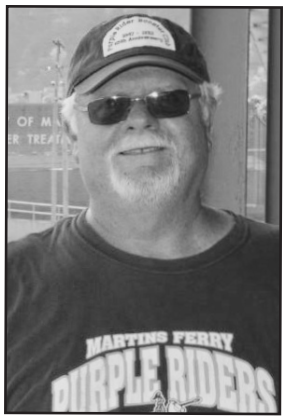
2017
Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

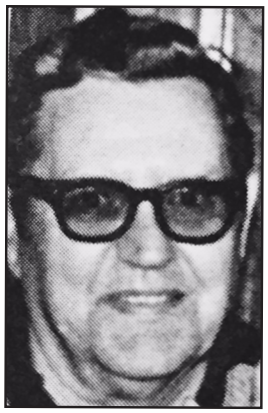
John Applegarth

When you think of the all-time devoted Purple Rider supporters, his name quickly comes to mind. Applegarth has been an active member of the Purple Rider Booster Club for 50-plus years, and was heavily involved in the "300 Club" that was a major fundraiser for that group. He has also been the boys' and girls' basketball cameraman for more than a quarter of a century. A 1966 graduate of MFHS and a long-time teacher in the Martins Ferry City School District, he also spent 16 years coaching grade school basketball, summer baseball and youth football. He's a member of the city's Hall of Honor Selection Committee and a member of the Board of Directors of the Martins Ferry Area Historical Society's Sedgwick House Museum.



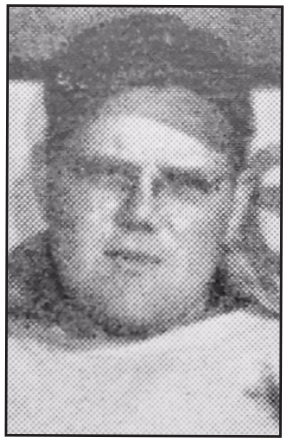
Fred Beck

This 1972 Martins Ferry High School graduate has stayed true to the Purple & White for all of these years, not only as a fan, but in assisting the athletic program. He began working on the "chain gang" at football games in 1979 and then, after a few years, transitioned to the press box as a clock operator alongside his fellow honoree, Henry McCue. He has also been the clock operator at boys/girls basketball games for many years. A member of the Purple Rider Booster Club for four-and-a-half decades, you could say this postman has really "delivered" as a Rider.



Henry McCue

He was a fixture around Purple Rider athletics for more than 40 years, serving as the clock operator at football games from junior high through varsity levels and nearly as long as the scorekeeper for boys' basketball games. McCue, a 1932 MFHS graduate, was also a long-time summer baseball umpire for the Martins Ferry Civics Athletic Association and worked as a football and basketball official at the junior high and grade school levels for many years..



Robert 'Shorty' Wilson

Old school Purple Rider fans will recall "Shorty" as a mainstay when it came to Purple Rider athletics. A long-time member of the Purple Rider Booster Club, he spent many years as a member of the "chain gang" on the sideline at Ferry football games. He was also well-known for driving the "Purple Rider Express" – a van he used to transport countless athletes, particularly those who lived in the Colerain area, home after practice. He also will be fondly remembered for bringing bushels of apples to football practice for the players to enjoy.

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2018 Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Frank W. Bowen

He served the longest tenure as athletic director in school history, holding the position from 1918 to 1942.. During his time, the Purple Riders won all three of the school's state championships – baseball in 1930; basketball in 1941 and football in 1941.

Bowen also was one of the "founding fathers" of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference in 1943, with the aim of individuals from eight schools (Martins Ferry, Bellaire, Yorkville, Linsly, Union, Weir, Wellsburg and Wheeling) to promote a more lucrative program of competitive high school athletics in the upper Ohio Valley. From that first year in 1943 when the conference began with 20 schools, it has grown to more than 50 schools and an estimated 10,000 student-athletes as the OVAC celebrates its 75th anniversary in 2018.

Annie Tanks

Probably best known as the Martins Ferry High School librarian for close to half a century, Miss Tanks was a die-hard supporter of Purple Rider athletic teams. She was always a fixture at the basketball games in particular, seated in the auditorium in "her" spot, keeping score in a unique style only she understood, and she was among the first to congratulate the athletes for their successes or console those who didn't fare as well the next day at school.

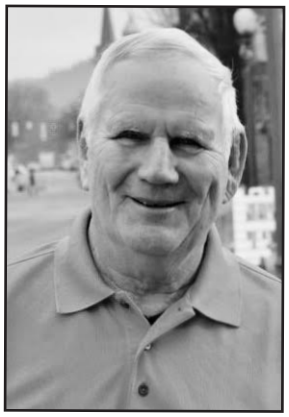
Born in Punxsutawney, Pa. in 1912, she graduated from Martins Ferry High School in 1930 and later from Syracuse University. Tanks was an archivist, historian and researcher of the town's history and its people, and she authored the book "A Town of Grandeur: Essays of the History of Martins Ferry, Ohio". She was also a long-time member of the Martins Ferry Area Historical Society.

Robert McNabb

He served as the Martins Ferry High School principal for an incredible 31 years from 1965-96. McNabb attended countless Purple Rider events, not only in his official capacity but in support of the many student-athletes representing MFHS and the entire community. He also served as an assistant boys' basketball coach for the Riders for a few years.

McNabb himself was a standout basketball player at West Liberty State College, scoring 1,454 points which still ranks 25th all-time in school history. He received all-WVIAC honors three times (second team in 1957 and '58 and first team as a senior in 1959). The 1957 squad captured the WVC championship and McNabb was named to the all-tournament team. He was inducted into the West Liberty Athletic Hall of Fame in 2001 and the Martins Ferry City Hall of Honor in 2018.

Larry Deaton



An accomplished wrestler and well-respected official of the mat sport both locally and state-wide, Deaton has gone above and beyond when it comes to supporting his alma mater and its athletic programs in a variety of ways.

Deaton is a long-time member of the Purple Rider Booster Club, serving as president of the primary fundraising group for MFHS athletics. He helped start the Ohio Valley Wrestling Club and was in charge of the Martins Ferry Flag Football program dating back to the 1970s; and is credited with helping to save the Martins Ferry Recreation Center, serving on its Board of Directors for many years.

Deaton, who graduated from MFHS in 1964, was an OVAC and district champion wrestler who was also a member of the football and track teams. As an official for more than 40 years, he's received countless honors including the OVAC "Mr. Mat" award in 1993; the Ohio Wrestling Officials Hall of Fame in 1994; the Martins Ferry Wrestling Hall of Fame in 1998 and the National Wrestling Hall of Fame/Ohio Chapter in 2016. The OVAC's "Official of the Year" award is named in his honor.

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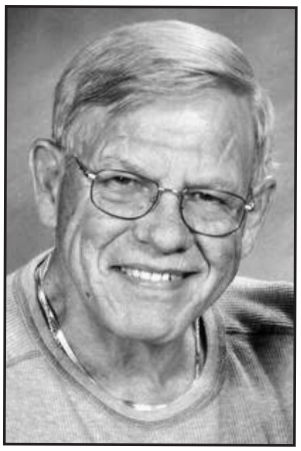
2019
Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Russell Armstrong



Affectionately known as "Mr. A", he brought the sound of music to Ferry High athletics as the band director/music coordinator from 1961-91.

The band provided support not only at the games, but also at pep rallies and community parades. He was responsible for creating the popular "Script MF" formation and adopted Henry Mancini's "Swing March" as the informal fight song of the school.

Armstrong also served as the director of the OVAC All-Star Band in 1985 and after retiring, he served as assistant band director at neighboring Buckeye Local High School from 1995-2014.

A life-long trombone player who graduated from MFHS in 1957, he attended Capital University and received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Music Education from Ashland University along with a Master of Arts in School Administration from the University of Dayton.

A five-term city councilman, he passed away in 2015.

Tony Collette

He spent 35 years in the Martins Ferry City School District, starting with a 10 years as a social studies teacher at Elm School. He was then in administration for the next 25 years, serving as principal at Steeple Valley and Hilltop elementary schools and at the junior high before retiring in 2001.

He began coaching football under Larry Coyer as a freshman coach, and then served as a varsity assistant under Regis Woods. After several years off, he returned as freshman coach under Dave Bruney from 1995-2007.

Collette also coached grade school basketball for a couple of years and was an assistant wrestling coach under Steve Kish for two years.

He is a 1964 graduate of Bridgeport High School and a 1969 graduate of Ohio University who obtained his master's degree from the University of Dayton in 1975.

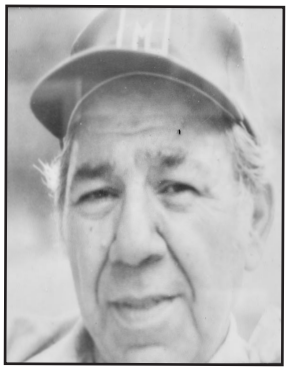
Warren Hood

He wore many hats both as a Purple Rider and as a Hall of Fame official.

Hood was a teacher and assistant football coach for 35 years; was the "Voice of the Riders" for many years and was a long-time member of the Purple Rider Booster Club. He also served as the school's athletic director for 10 years.

As an official, he umpired baseball for 27 years and was a basketball referee for 25 years. He worked OHSAA post-season games at all levels, including 24 regional and 12 state tournaments in baseball and had 16 regional assignments in basketball. Hood was inducted into the OHSAA Officials Hall of Fame in 2012.

An avid baseball fans who ventured to every Major League stadium, he graduated from MFHS in 1970 and from Ohio University in 1974, receiving his master's degree in 1975. Hood passed away in 2015.



Tony Suriano

A true Purple Rider, Suriano was an athlete, booster and fan for the greater part of his life.

He graduated from MFHS in 1942, and was a member of the 1941 football team which finished as mythical state co-champions after tying Toledo Libby in the famed Glass Bowl.

Suriano entered the military in 1942 and served in the Army Air Corps for the duration of World War II.

When he returned, he began what would be more than four decades of membership in the Purple Rider Booster Club. He served as treasurer of that group for many years and was instrumental in starting the 300 Club which helped raise money for the athletic programs.

For several years, the Tony Suriano Award was presented in his honor to student-athletes for overall academics, athletics, commitment and effort voted on by the coaches.

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2020

Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Larry Green

A 1962 graduate of MFHS, Green stepped up in a big way to assist the Purple Rider athletic program, making a major donation of $68,000 toward the construction of the athletic facility located inside the Dave Bruney Athletic Complex which was named in his parents' honor – the George and Edna Green Purple Rider Fieldhouse. The 9,000-square foot building – which opened in the fall of 1997 - houses the Purple Riders' locker rooms, coaches room, weight room, shower room, trainers' room, equipment room and an officials room.

He also sponsored academic scholarships for Ferry students for several years in memory of his high school drafting teacher, Charles 'Bud' Keyser and he also made a contribution to the MFHS marching band at one point to help purchase uniforms.

Green was a two-sport athlete at Ferry High, known for a nasty curveball as a pitcher on the baseball team and he also played basketball.

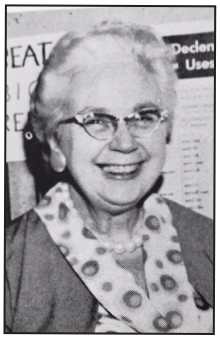
Currently, he is co-owner of SCA Construction, Inc. in Independence, Kansas.

Gail Horner

Some say that there might have been as many people making their way to Ferry Stadium during Horner's four years performing as the featured twirler of the MFHS Marching Band as there were fans going to watch the football games, and that probably isn't far from the truth. After all, from 1967-70, the team won just seven of 40 games, including two winless seasons.

Horner dazzled the crowd in pregame, at halftime and in countless parade appearances with her ability to twirl, sometimes using multiple batons and even lighted ones.

Before that, however, she burst onto the scene as a child prodigy of sorts, becoming a five-time national champion baton twirler between the ages of 5 and 13. She became even more renown by making not one, but two appearances on the popular Ed Sullivan Show to display her talent – July 9, 1961 at the age of 7 and a return trip on March 18, 1962 at the age of 8.



Horner obtained her bachelor's degree from West Liberty State College in 1975 and, of course, was the Hilltoppers' featured twirler for four years; and she earned her master's degree in Education from the University of Dayton in 1991. A certified music teacher (grades K-12), she taught music at Jefferson Union High School (now part of the Edison Local consolidation) for two years and then spent the next 35 in the same position in the Tipp City School District. She has been the director of the all-volunteer Tippecanoe Community Band for 40 years and she also teaches music at Edison State Community College in Piqua.

Heloise Knapp

A teacher in Martins Ferry School District for more than four decades, Miss Knapp is regarded among the all-time "super fans" of Purple Rider athletics. At one point, during a 30-year span, she had attended all but five of the approximately 150 home football games.

Knapp also was the cheerleader coach/advisor for nearly two decades and she organized the "Purple Pepper", the school's pep club. She was well-known saying that her favorite sport was "Whatever is in season, but football is always first in the heart of a Ferry old-timer".

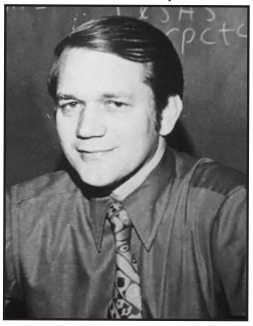
She was also among those responsible for organized the bonfire-style burning of LIFE magazine's Feb. 10, 1962 edition that gave a less-than-flattering view of not only the city but the entire Ohio Valley and she sent a less-than-flattering letter to that publication's editor with a few choice words – no doubt a few in Latin - included.

Bob Zilai

Athletics have been a big part of Zilai's life, dating back to his playing days as a Purple Rider and continuing for many years in coaching.

A 1959 MFHS graduate, he was a three-year letterman in football and baseball and a two-yeawr letterman in basketball. Zilai then graduated from Ohio University in 1963 and obtwained his master's degree from West Virginia University in 1967.

Zilai's first foray into coaching came at River View High in Warsaw where he spent five years as a junior high football and basketball coach.



An opportunity to return to his alma mater arose in 1968 and "Z" joined the Ferry staff, serving one year under Pete Barren followed by two years with Larry Coyer, four years with Regis Woods, five years with Bob Bruney and then until the late 1980s under Dave Bruney. He also was an assistant wrestling coach for two years for Steve Kish.

Zilai's resume also includes more than 50 years in the Purple Rider Booster Club; 40 years in the Martins Ferry Chamber of Commerce; 20 years on the Martins Ferry Board of Education and 16 years as Ferry's representative on the Belmont-Harrison Career Center Board of Education. He was also active in the Boy Scouts of America, spending time as scoutmaster of Troop 62 at the First United Methodist Church and also several years on Ohio River Valley Council of Boy Scouts. He retired from teaching in 1991.

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2021
Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Jack Boston

Always willing to lend a hand in any way needed to support the Purple Riders, Boston served more than 30 years as the "Voice of the Purple Riders" for home games at Ferry Stadium.

A teacher and then principal at both North and Elm elementary schools for a combined 32 years, he coached many years of grade school basketball and was the co-head baseball coach along with George Milby in 1964 when the Purple Riders reached the OHSAA Class A Regional Tournament. He was also a long-time member of the Purple Rider Booster Club.

Boston, a long-time Cleveland Indians' fan, graduated from Shadyside High School where he played basketball and baseball; served in the United States Navy; received his bachelor's degree from West Liberty State College where he also played baseball; and his master's from West Virginia University. He passed away in 2017.

Ron Holzopfel

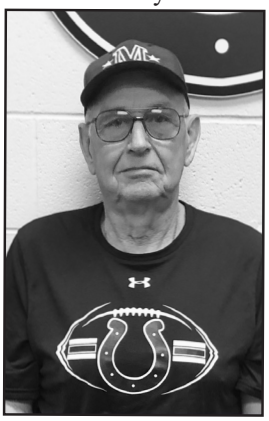
A 1976 graduate of MFHS, Holzopfel has been associated with athletics in Martins Ferry in a variety of ways for nearly 50 years.

He served on the "chain gang" at Purple Rider football games for three years and as the scoreboard/clock operator for football, basketball and volleyball for more than two decades.

Also a 36-year member of the Martins Ferry Volunteer Fire Department, he is baseball umpire who has worked games in high school, Pony League, Colt League and Ohio Valley Baseball League games as well as the Beast of the East Tournament.

During his high school years, he was a member of the Purple Riders' gymnastics team under Hall of Fame coach Dave McKim and served as a statistician for the boys' basketball team coached by Ed Bode.

Larry Riser



A life-long Ferrian and a 1964 graduate of MFHS, Riser has been around Purple Rider athletics for nearly 30 years.

He began assisting Bill Meyers, another Wall of Honor selection, as the school's videographer in 1989 until Meyers steppe d aside in 2012 and he continues in that capacity today. He has filmed countless football games as well as every home wrestling match from 1993-1998.

Riser served as the treasurer of the Martins Ferry Wrestling Parents from 1986-1998; has been an active member of the Purple Rider Booster Club since 1992 and also was a youth baseball coach for the Martins Ferry Civics Athletic Association for several years.

Dr. Harold Meyer

Meyer's work in Martins Ferry began in March 1949 when he became high school principal. In 1950, he became the Superintendent of Schools and continued to serve in that post until his appointment as assistant commissioner of the Ohio High School Athletic Association.

Before becoming assistant commissioner of the OHSAA, he served for 12 years on the Eastern District Board of Control, including work as president and secretary during his tenure. He was on the State Board of Control from 1958-60.

In 1960, Meyer became the first Ohio representative on the Federation Executive Committee of the National Federation of State High School Athletic Associations.

He served as the OHSAA Commissioner 1969-77 and the OHSAA Harold A. Meyer Sportsmanship, Ethics and Integrity Award has been presented since 1991.

Meyer graduated from East Erie (Pa.) High School; received his Bachelor's degree from Ohio University; obtained his Master's degree from The Ohio State University and his Doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh.

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2022
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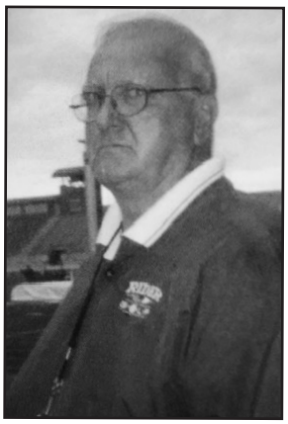
Evert Briggs

If you've been to a Martins Ferry sporting event, no doubt you've seen the guy with the camera capturing the action. Briggs has taken photos of practically every-time athlete who has passed through the hallowed halls of Ferry High School dating back a half century. Countless senior year pictures and weddings were also captured by Briggs' camera.

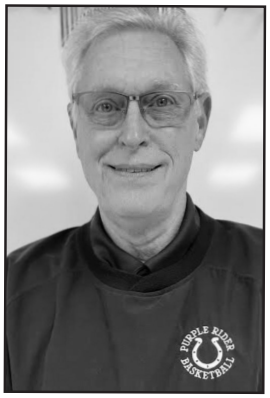
The owner of Briggs Photography since 1976, he is a Past President of the Professional Photographers of Ohio, Past President of the Triangle Photographers Association and for several years he served as a Photoshop instructor at Triangle Institute.

In addition to covering Purple Rider athletics, he spent many years as the photographer for the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference, taking photos at various post-season and all-star events, banquets and other functions.



Ken Campanizzi

"Coach Camp" has worn many hats in the athletic world over a half century.
t Martins Ferry, he was at various times the head varsity baseball, , golf and bowling coach and also spent many years as a varsity assistant/junior high coach in football, baseball, basketball, tennis and softball.
Campanizzi - who coached the 1991 Purple Riders' golf team to the OVAC Class 3A championship - was also active many years with the Eastern District Golf Coaches Association, serving as president from 2004-08. Also involved as a rules interpreter for countless OHSAA tournament-level events, he was inducted into the Ohio High School Golf Coaches Association Hall of Fame in 2004.
He turned his attention to the growing high school sport of bowling and serves as OVAC Bowling Championship Director and East Ohio Bowling League Commissioner.
A graduate of Flushing High School (Class of 1962) and West Liberty State College (1970), he was a standout athlete at both levels in baseball. He earned first team all-West Virginia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (WVIAC) honors as a pitcher in 1970 after posting five complete-game victories and a sharp 1.92 E.R.A.



Bob Hill

Hill began his coaching career in 1976 with the Purple Riders' basketball program while also serving nearly a decade as the head golf coach. He served as junior high, freshman and junior varsity basketball coach for many years under several different head coaches (Larry Duck, Joe Gala, Gene Joseph, Jeff Sabatino) until 2010 and continued to assist the program through scouting of opponents, both at games and in the film room.

His contributions to MFHS didn't end with coaching, however, as he also sold tickets, parked cars near Ferry Stadium and more recently served as host to the officials at home football games.

A graduate of Shadyside High School, he received his bachelor's degree from Ohio University and his master's degree from the University of Dayton.
Hill received the District 12 Basketball Coaches Association's Distinguished Service Award in 2021.

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Joe Kosar

A graduate of Warwood High School (Class of 1970) and West Liberty State College (Class of 1974), Kosar spent nearly four decades in an variety of roles with the Purple Riders, including head/assistant girls' basketball coach, head golf coach, assistant football coach, assistant softball coach and assistant athletic director. He was head coach of the Purple Riders' 2011 OVAC Class 3A champion golf team.

Upon retirement, he worked as a ranger at the Oglebay Park Golf Course and eventually moved to Jacksonville, North Carolina where he worked for Dick's Sporting Goods. He passed away in 2021.

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2023
Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Dwayne 'Bubba' Coleman

"Coach Bubba" spent more than 20 years coaching three sports (football, wrestling and track) for the Purple Riders, primarily at the junior high level but also as a varsity assistant.

Ferry's junior high wrestling tournament was named in his honor – the Dwayne "Bubba" Coleman Junior High Invitational. He was inducted into the Martins Ferry Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2010.

A 1980 graduate of MFHS, he was a lineman on the football team and a thrower in track.

Coleman worked for the Martins Ferry School District for many years in various roles. He passed away in 2010 at age 47.

Joe Gala

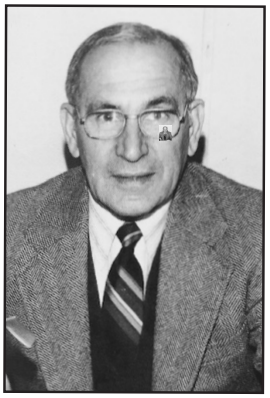
Gala served many roles at Martins Ferry in both coaching and other areas. He served as freshman boys' basketball coach for one year, four seasons as junior varsity coach (58-18 record) and two years as varsity assistant under Larry Duck. He then served as head coach for six seasons (53-74 record), winning the OHSAA Class AA Sectional title in 1988-89 while finishing with a 14-8 record.

Gala was also head tennis coach for six years, coaching the state-qualifying doubles team of Brad Rinderer and Barry Voytecek.

He was also the Purple Riders' public address announcer at football games for five years and served as yearbook advisor at MFHS for 18 years.

Gala - a graduate of Wheeling Central Catholic (1965) who received his bachelor's degree from West Liberty State College (1971) and master's degree from Marshall University (1976) - later served as an administrator for 13 years at Marysville High School alongside his wife, Becky.

Edmund 'Half Pint' Joseph



A member of one of the most recognizable names in Purple Rider athletic history, "Half Pint" spent time as an assistant basketball and football coach; was head golf coach (1963-67) and the school's athletic director for 17 years (1968-69 through 1984-85) .

A 1941 MFHS graduate, he was a four-year member of the basketball team, playing on the 1941 Ohio Class A State Championship squad which posted a 27-2 record under Hall of Fame coach Floyd Baker.

Roxie Siburt

A 1966 graduate of Martins Ferry High School and a 1970 product of Ohio University, Siburt spent 42 years as a teacher in the Martins Ferry School District.

Her biggest contribution was as a scorekeeper in basketball. She started doing the girls' varsity book (1991-1995), then for the boys' eighth and ninth grade teams (1995-1997); and has done the boys' varsity book since 1999.

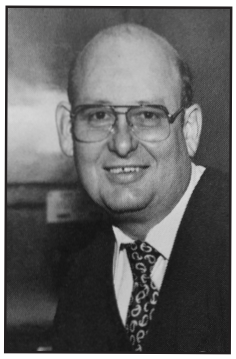
Siburt received the Thomas E. Rataiczak Scorekeeper/Timer Award at OVAC Samuel A. Mumley All-Star Basketball Classic in 2022.

The Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department appreciates the contributions to Purple Rider athletics over the years by these individuals and wishes to recognize them as a part of our athletic history.

2024

Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

Roger Best



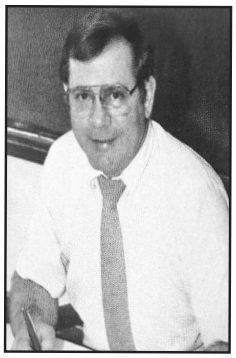
Best was a contributor to Purple Rider athletics in a variety of ways for more than four decades.

He served as head boys' basketball coach from 1964-70, posting a 65-51 record with two sectional titles. He was also the head baseball coach from 1987-1996, with the Riders finishing as OVAC runner-up on multiple occasions.

He was a long-time booster and supporter of MFHS sports and he coached summer baseball for the Martins Ferry Civics for several years.

Best – a graduate of Maysville High School - was a high school math teacher and guidance counselor who later served on the Martins Ferry Board of Education and was on the Belmont--Monroe Career Center Board of Education. He passed away in 2008 at the age of 69.

Vance Deihl



Deihl was involved in Purple Rider athletics for 30 years as an assistant coach and athletic trainer. He was one of those individuals who would lend a hand when anyone needed help.

He was a history teacher at MFHS and a member of the Martins Ferry Education Association. He graduated from Big Spring High School in Pennsylvania; got his bachelor's degree from West Liberty State College where he was a member of the Hilltoppers' football team and his master's degree from the University of Detroit.

He passed away in 2010 at the age of 69 and the "Vance Deihl Memorial Golf Scramble" named in his honor has taken place ever since, with proceeds going to a scholarship for a Martins Ferry senior.

Paul Matuska

Matuska has contributed to Purple Rider athletics in a variety of ways dating back to 1990 when he began his teaching/coaching career Martins Ferry.

His coaching involvement included assistant track coach for a quarter of a century; football assistant for more than two decades and many years as a boys' basketball and volleyball assistant. He was head girls' basketball coach for two seasons (2017-2018). He was also responsible for the formation of the Purple Riders' indoor track program.

In addition to his athletic contributions, Matuska has also served as National Honor Society advisor and Chy-Phy advisor; launched the Renaissance Program at MFHS, an incentive program designed to increase student academic achievement, decrease absenteeism and improve school climate by reducing discipline problems; served as a member of school's district leadership team; became president of the Martins Ferry Education Association in 2011; and was honored as a "Master Teacher" by the state of Ohio.

Matuska also helped prepare food for the annual Athletic Hall of Fame luncheon for the first nine years, among his many behind the scenes contributions to MFHS.

A native of Shadyside and a 1982 graduate of St. John Central, he was a three-sport athlete in high school who was first team All-Ohio, All-Eastern District and All-OVAC in football. He received his Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences and a Master's Degree in Educational Administration from Ohio University.

Nancy Shaffer

Shaffer was a 1965 graduate of Malone University in Canton with a Bachelor's degree in Music Education with an emphasis on Tuba. In 1980 she earned a Master's Degree in Education Administration from Dayton University.

While in high school, she became proficient in tuba performance and this resulted in an invitation to join the School Band of America. In 1963 she traveled through seven European countries performing with the band. She later performed with them again in 1968 at the World's Fair in Montreal, Canada.

In 1965, she was employed by the Martins Ferry School District as their first female instrumental music instructor and Junior High and Assistant High School Band Director.

For 35 years, she shared her love and knowledge of music with the children of the district and prepared them for participation in the high school marching and concert bands while working in concert with another Wall of Honor selection, long-time MFHS Band Director Russ Armstrong. She was also the Music Administrator for the school district and the first director of the MFHS Alumni Marching Band.

Shaffer's legacy is an example of what women can accomplish when given the opportunity, led to many young women joining her as band directors in school districts throughout the Ohio Valley.

Professionally, Shaffer performed in the Canton Symphony from 1966-1968 for 25 years (1967-1993), she performed in the Wheeling Symphony, and she was the first female principal tuba performer in both orchestras. Upon her retirement, she became a member and participant in both the Wheeling Park and Oglebay Park women's golf leagues and the St Clair Lanes bowling leagues. She continued her musical performances volunteering with the Cambridge City Band and later the Hernando Symphony in Florida. Shaffer passed away in 2023 at the age of 80.

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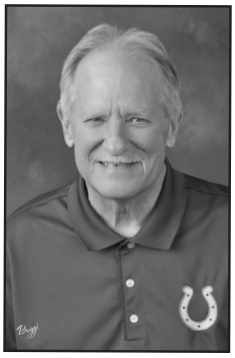
2025

Martins Ferry High School Athletic Department 'Wall of Honor'

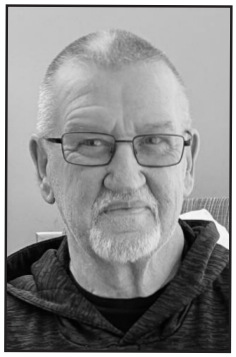
Ron Hill



A 1972 graduate of MFHS, Hill has spent four decades involved in the Purple Riders' boys' basketball program. Serving alongside head coaches Jeff Sabatino and Derek Edwards dating back to the 1980s, he has coached at every level including seventh grade, eighth grade, ninth grade, junior varsity and varsity assistant.

A selfless and loyal contributor who provides a valuable sounding board for the head coach, Hill was a three-year letterman and senior captain for the Riders' basketball team and a one-year letterman in track.

Bill 'Lon Boy' Leach



A 1972 MFHS graduate, "Lon Boy" was an avid Purple Rider supporter in a variety of ways throughout his life.

He served as the public address announcer and scorekeeper for boys and girls basketball games, was a long-time member of the Purple Rider Booster Club and was willing to help in any capacity when needed.

Leach was also a basketball official for 23 years, umpired slo-pitch softball and at one point coached youth baseball for the Martins Ferry Civics. A long-time employee of Wheeling Downs, he was a life-long fan of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Pittsburgh Pirates and Boston Celtics.

He passed away in 2024 at the age of 70.

2026

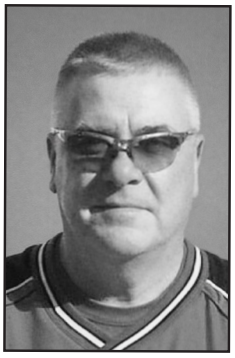
Carol Burda

In addition to her office duties dating back to the 1970s as an aide and secretary, Burda also doubled as the ticket manager for Purple Rider athletics.

She was also the EMIS (Education Management Information System) Coordinator at MFHS, providing student information to the state. Among her extensive duties over the years were record keeping, preparing graduation materials, phones and computers.

Burda was also a MFHS Student Council Advisor for 30 years which included overseeing such activities as the Homecoming Dance, Spirit Week and Parade, and Queen of Queens Pageant among others.

Jimmy Hood



A 1983 graduate of MFHS, Hood served Rider Nation in many roles including junior high football coach, assistant baseball coach and scorekeeper, girls' basketball scorekeeper and bus driver to athletic events.

Hood was an Ohio Valley basketball official for a whopping 41 years, working 11 OHSAA boys' state tournament games and seven OHSAA girls' state tournament games in addition to countless sectional, district and regional games along with OVAC playoff contests. He was selected as the District 12 Basketball Official of the Year in 1999.

He was a three-sport Purple Rider athlete (football, basketball, basketball). In football, he was the quarterback of the 1982 team that posted an 8-2 record; in basketball he was a member of the 1981-82 Class AA Regional runner-up team; and in baseball he was a left-handed pitcher-outfielder.

Hood worked at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel and as a driver for the Senior Services of Belmont County.

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