

Gary Eagen

Gary Eagen embarked on his post-secondary education at Northeast Missouri State University, now known as Truman State, and graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Education. Gary then pursued and earned his Master's Degree in Education from the University of Missouri at St. Louis in 1996. A true lifelong learner, Gary didn't stop there. He went on to study an additional 45+ hours beyond his Master's Degree from Truman State University.

Mr. Eagen began his teaching and coaching career in his hometown of Kirksville, MO. He spent five years in Kirksville from 1983 to 1988 teaching math at the junior high school level and began coaching football, wrestling, girls track, and baseball. Some notable accomplishments from his time at Kirksville include:

- induction into Kirksville's Football Hall of Fame with the coaching staff from the 1984 team and the 1987 team, where Gary served as the defensive coordinator for both teams;
- coaching the girls' track team for four years, two as an assistant coach and two as a head coach, during which time six athletes competed at the state level and became state medalists;
- coaching the Kirksville wrestling team for five years, serving as the head wrestling coach for the last three of those five years. The 1988 squad earned a 2nd place State Trophy. Coach Eagen was named "Coach of the Year" for the 1987-88 wrestling season for Class 3 by the Missouri Wrestling Coaches Association. During his tenure, he coached 52 medalists and 4 State Champions; and finally,
- Coach Eagen pioneered the way for Kirksville's inaugural baseball season in 1988, serving as their very first head coach in that sport.

Gary and his family moved to the St. Peters area in 1988. He taught and coached at Francis Howell North High School for 13 years, from 1988-2001. He taught 9th grade Algebra for seven years, then taught PE, Health, and Strength Training for his last six years. During his tenure with Francis Howell, Coach Eagen continued his remarkable coaching career and added the following accomplishments to his impressive resumé:

- assistant baseball coach for 6 years;
- assistant football coach for 7 years, as well as the head coach for 6 years. Coach Eagen's overall coaching record during his time as head coach was an impressive (35-25), with his best season records being a (9-1) season in 1997 and an (8-2) season in 1998; and
- assistant wrestling coach for thirteen seasons. The 1991 team earned a 1st place state trophy and was inducted into the Francis Howell North Hall of Fame along with their coaching staff.

During his years of service to Francis Howell athletics, he helped coach 37 State Medalists and 7 State Champions. Mr. Eagen's two oldest children, Jessica and Joe, attended Francis Howell North High School.

Gary Eagen was hired as the Athletics and Activities Director for the Northwest R-1 School District in 2001. He held that position for ten years until his retirement at the end of the 2010-2011 school year. NHS was truly blessed to have had the opportunity to secure Coach Eagen for this position. He was the first person to arrive each morning and the last to leave each evening. He served as

a mentor to countless coaches and was dependable and dedicated beyond measure. Coach Eagan continued to find success in his work as a Northwest Lion and earned further accomplishments, including:

- serving a 2-year term as the President of the St. Louis Suburban Conference Athletic Directors;
- serving five years as the Executive Director of the host committee for the MSHSAA State Football Championships when they were held in St. Louis at the Dome; as well as
- serving for five years as a member of the host committee for the MSHSAA State Wrestling Championships.

Coach Eagen realized his true passion was helping student athletes reach the pinnacle of their athletic careers, and so in the 2003-2004 wrestling season, he started helping with the Northwest wrestling program. Coach initiated the morning workouts as a way of preparing the wrestlers for the postseason. From what he has heard, and by all accounts, the wrestlers have been eternally grateful for the extra workouts.

Since his retirement in 2011 from Northwest, Coach Eagen has continued to work with the Northwest Wrestling Program as an assistant coach, with the exception of the two brief years when he thought he was finished coaching. We highly doubt that time will ever actually come, as it is clear to see that this is what Coach Eagen was born to do: help fulfill the mission of student athletes. During his tenure, which is still ongoing, Gary has helped coach 42 state medalists and three state champions.

Gary and Marilyn Eagen's two youngest daughters, Heather and Alissa, proudly graduated from Northwest R-1 High School. During the time since his retirement in 2011, Gary was a consultant for the Northwest District for a year, during their transition to a newly hired Activities Director. He was a manager of Fit Gym for 6.5 years. He was a fitness equipment sales representative for one year, and currently, for the last 4.5 years, Gary has served as a staff accountant for The Triton Group CPA firm that is owned by his nephew.

In Gary's words, "I am most thankful for my bride of 43 years, Marilyn. I truly believe she is the special bond that holds our family together. I enjoy the moments we get to spend with our four children, their spouses and our seven grandchildren. Secondly, I have been blessed over the years to have worked with great teachers, coaches, sponsors, administrators, support staff, custodians, maintenance staff, and security personnel. All of these people made going to work a true joy, an honor, and a privilege. Thirdly, I can't thank all of the students and student-athletes enough for allowing me to teach and/or coach you. You have made this career absolutely tremendous because you were all a part of it. Lastly, I thank God for his blessings, every day."

I'd like to conclude by sharing some words that Gary chooses to live by, words that have obviously helped to shape his success and contribute to the ongoing blessings and accomplishments in his life: "What you give, you have; what you don't give, is lost forever...".

Congratulations Coach Gary Eagen on your induction into the 2024 Distinguished Educator Hall of Fame.