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2009 Distinguished Achievement Award - Education

Jim Richie '57

Like so many recent college graduates, Jim Richie "really didn't know what to expect" when he finished his St. Norbert College Bachelor of Science degree with a major in biology. As luck would have it, an opportunity to teach and coach at Coleman (WI) High School launched a career in education that would include 36 years as a teacher and 43 years as a high school wrestling coach.

That St. Norbert College adequately prepared him for what he "hadn't expected" is clear from his own remarks. About his four years at SNC, he says that the College gave him self-confidence, belief in himself, a foundation for accepting opportunities and challenges in life, a diversified academic background that helped him work with individual difference, and a sense of direction, to have a positive influence and impact on those individuals whose lives he had a chance to share. Very instrumental in his academic success, and especially as a biology major, were Father Keefe and Father Becker (both biology professors) whom Jim credits with having most greatly impacted his life and the choices he made.

So, how well did Jim do?

In 1967 (only ten years after graduation!), Jim was named Pulaski (WI) High School's "Teacher of the year" - AND, Pulaski "Man of the Year," as well as receiving the Green Bay Area Elks Leadership Award in 1974. Along the way, Jim received two National Science Foundation Grants.

Jim's long career as a wrestling coach would be hard to match by anyone, anywhere. His first head wrestling coach position was at Pulaski High School where, in 16 years, he compiled a 157-22-2 record that included 12 conference championships, six regional championships, and seven sectional crowns. Two of his teams finished as runners-up in the State Tournament. While coaching at Pulaski, Barron, Chetek, and Rice Lake high schools, Jim's teams' dual meet record was 324 wins, 127 losses, and five ties; 17 conference titles, 10 regional titles, and six sectional titles. Jim also helped many young wrestlers by holding numerous wrestling clinics and training sessions.

Little wonder that, in 1979, he was inducted into the Wisconsin Wrestling Hall of Fame. In 1999, he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Jim's involvement in wrestling

has not been limited to coaching, as he has served as President of the Wisconsin Wrestling Coaches Association, as a member of the Wisconsin WIAA Rules Committee, President of the State Chapter of the USWF, and as a member of the State AAU Board of Directors.

Jim's dedication to teaching and coaching extends into the area of community service. While at Barron High School, he was a County Restoration Justice Facilitator, a member of the County Habitat for Humanity Board, and of the County Habitat for Humanity Ecumenical Men's Club. At present, he is very active as President of and Presenter for the Rice Lake Brain Injury Support Group.

Besides his community service activities, Jim stays active in his trades of painting and woodcutting. Of all his activities, Jim remarked that he likes to "give back wherever I can. Sharing my time and talent is my way of showing appreciation for what has been done for me by so many people."

Jim and his wife of 48 years, Corinne, now live in Rice Lake, Wisconsin. They are the parents of six children: Gary, Michael, Barbara, James, Mary, and Thomas. Of great satisfaction and pride for Jim and Corinne, all six of their children are educators.

So what advice does Jim have for today's students? "Never stop learning...be willing to diversify...be good at what you do...create enthusiasm in your life, and bring it to your workplace."

St. Norbert College

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