



The Florida Chapter of The National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum

NEWSLETTER

Volume 1 Issue 3

July 1, 2017

Board Members

The Florida Chapter for the National Wrestling Hall of Fame was established in 2000.

Our mailing address is:

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The President's Corner

In early June, Don Smith, Jane Townsend, and I travelled to Stillwater, Oklahoma, to attend the National Wrestling Hall of Fame State Chapters Conference and Induction Ceremony. Two special events occurred this year in Stillwater, and we were and are grateful to have been present for them.

First, Dominic Gorie, former wrestler at both Miami Palmetto High School and the U.S. Naval Academy, Captain, USN, Ret., former NASA astronaut, and a member of the 2012 class of our Florida Chapter, was inducted into the National Hall of Fame as the Outstanding American. This national award recognizes individuals who have used the disciplines of the sport to launch notable careers after concluding their wrestling career. Past recipients have included individuals who have excelled in science, technology, business, industry, government, military, and arts and humanities. Past honorees include [General H. Norman Schwarzkopf](#), author John Irving, and Pro Football Hall of Famer Dan Dierdorf, along with many others.

The second event occurred because of something our chapter organizes each year. Krista Graft, the National State Chapters Director, was so impressed with our Saturday morning Testimonial Brunch during Honors Weekend that National introduced it into their weekend ceremonies. Like ours, it was a great success and enjoyed by all attending.

We all feel that the State Chapters Conference was very impressive, especially with the new programs presented. The National Hall is moving in a direction of Technology, Education and Programs to expand Wrestling and Girls Wrestling. On the technical side, NWHOF will be offering updated websites, more use of social media, outreach initiatives, and development and funding. Staff members in Stillwater are working with Oklahoma State University on an Educational Curriculum Project, a 1-2 day wrestling program for the 4th-5th grade level, and adapted to integrate wrestling into the

curriculum. Finally, National had Sally Richards present her findings on the development of Girls Wrestling nationwide. Full coverage of Ms. Richard's report will be in the next newsletter.

I feel our Florida Chapter is already moving in the direction of some of the programs presented by National as we continue to upgrade our presence and improve our events. It is our goal with the introduction of this newsletter to keep our wrestling community up to date with our alumni, coaches, officials, contributors, and wrestlers. It is also our goal to honor our Florida Inductees with the respect they deserve for their lifetime commitment to the sport of wrestling. I am extremely proud of the Florida Chapter Board of Directors and their dedication to honoring our Inductees with an unforgettable weekend. As our organization continues to grow, so does the workload of our Board of Directors and Ambassadors. There are many areas where we could use your help: submitting articles for our newsletter, serving on the committees for our Florida Wrestling Museum, special events, nominations committee, and fundraising to name a few.

Being inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame is one of the highest honors a person can receive for their dedication to the sport of wrestling. This is the reason we put the extra effort into making our events special to our Inductees. Remember, when we do it, we do it with class, for we are honoring the best of the best.

Gary Townsend



The Florida Chapter Honors Weekend is less than 45 days away!

**Another great weekend is planned for
Inductees, Alumni, Family, and Friends.**

Friday, August 11th

- Golf tournament: **\$85 per person or \$340 per team**
 - Registration opens at 7:30 AM
 - Shotgun start at 9:00 AM
 - Remington Golf Club, 2995 Remington Blvd., Kissimmee
 - Registration includes green fees, cart fees, range balls, lunch, shirt, on-course contests and a ticket to the Meet and Greet Social!
- “Meet the Inductee” Social: **\$15**
 - 8:00-10:00 PM
 - at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort

Saturday, August 12th

- Testimonial Brunch: **\$25 before 7/23, \$30 after**
 - 9:00 AM
 - at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort
 - This event does sell out!
 - NO TICKETS SOLD AT THE DOOR
- Induction Banquet: **\$55 before 7/23, \$65 after**
 - at the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort.
 - 6:00 PM Social Hour with cash bar
 - 7:00 PM Banquet
 - Limited number of tickets at the door for **\$75**
Get your reservation in early, as these events sell out.
You don't want to miss this!

To **register** for any or all events, please visit

https://fl-nwhof.ticketleap.com/2017-honors-weekend/dates/Aug-11-2017_at_0900AM

For **room reservations:** **\$119 per night plus tax and fees**

Please call the Wyndham at 800-624-4109 and request the Florida Chapter National Wrestling Hall of Fame group rate for the Wyndham Lake Buena Vista Resort **or** register online at

www.wyndhamhotels.com/groups/national-wrestling-hall-of-fame

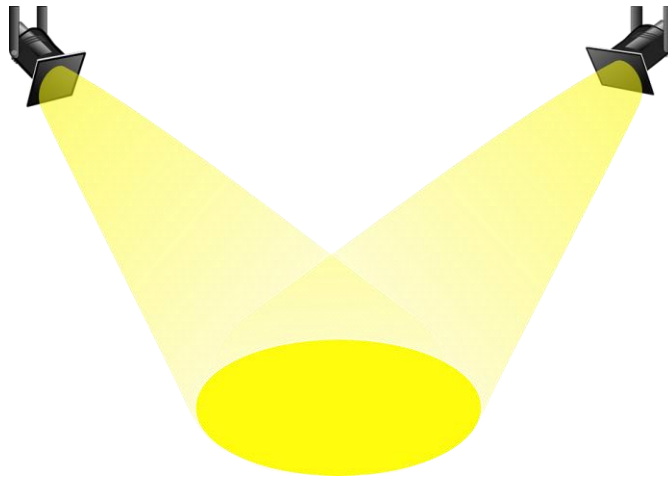


Randy Jessee -Class of 2005

Randy Jessee has been a teacher and wrestling coach for 42 years. His overall record is 621 wins, 75 losses, and one tie. He has coached at three high schools. Bishop Moore High School (1975 – 1990), University High School (1990 – 2009), and East River High school (2009 – 2017). He has coached his teams to top ten finishes at the State Tournament 20 times and has coached 20 individual State Champions. His coaching duties have also included Bowling, Track and Field, Flag Football, Water Polo and Girls Wrestling Teams.

Randy's coaching accomplishments include being an Orange Belt Conference Coach of the Year ten times, Metro Conference coach of the year nine times, and the FACA Coach of the Year in 1981. In 1983, Coach Jessee was a nominee for National Coach of the Year. He been inducted into the Bishop Moore, Metro Conference and Central Florida Referee Halls of Fame.

In addition to his busy coaching career, Randy has also provided leadership with running or assisting wrestling programs sponsored by the Orange County Police Athletic League, the Florida Amateur Wrestling Association, the FHSAA wrestling committee and University of Central Florida. Randy and Vicki have been married for 42 years and have four children, two girls and two boys (that were both state champs!) and nine – soon to be ten! - grandchildren.

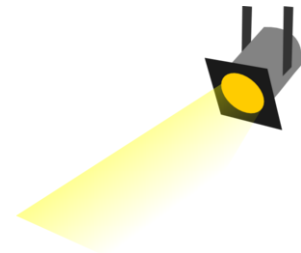
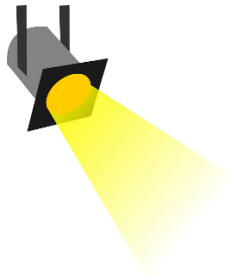


Dave Soderholm - Class of 2009

David graduated from Appalachian State University located in Boone, North Carolina in 1982. He comes from a wrestling family. His father, Jack, was a top national and international official and his mother, Phyllis, a national and international Pairing Master.

After serving as an assistant coach at Appalachian State University where the team achieved the Southern Conference Championship in 1985, he moved to Florida and began his coaching career at Land O Lakes High School from 1986-88 with a record of 35-8-1. He returned to Palmetto HS in 1989 where his record is 391-82-3. In 1996, Palmetto HS won the FHSAA State Championship. In 1997 and 1998, Palmetto was the State Runner-up. The team was Regional Champs in '91, '92, '96 and '97 and District Champs in '91, '92, '93, '95 and '96. Dave has coached 11 individual state champions and 58 state place winners. Two of his wrestlers went on to gain NCAA All-American honors, Rohan Gardner at Northwestern University and brother Orville Gardner at Ohio University, who also was the NCAA Division I Champion in 1997.

His awards include Gulf Coast Coach of the Year in 1987 and 1988, the 1996 Florida 3A Coach of the Year, and the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Coach of the Year for Region 3 in 1997.



Charlotte Owen -Class of 2012

Charlotte Owen has been a USWOA Pairing Official before there was a USWOA. Charlotte serves on the National Board of the USWOA and has served the Florida Amateur Wrestling Association in the past as Secretary, Treasurer, and Pairings Official Chairperson. She is a FILA P-1, and has worked numerous State, Regional, National and International Wrestling Events.

In 2007, Charlotte received the Ivan Olsen Memorial Award from USA Wrestling for dedicated years of service at local, state, and national events in the field of pairings. In 2011, she received the Bernie Norris Memorial Award for volunteer pairer of the year, and in 2013, the USWOA Lifetime Achievement Award.

Charlotte is a registered nurse, graduating from the University of South Florida, and currently working for Soyring Consulting as a Senior Consultant. She has one son, Jeffrey (Sue) and two granddaughters, Quinlan and Ainsley.

Wrestling Hall of Fame, Florida Chapter Annual Clay Shoot

Saturday, May 6, 2017

Relive this enjoyable event with Gary Townsend



Saturday

7:00 AM - Buffet Breakfast at the Lodge: Participants, volunteers and spectators gather for a Southern style buffet breakfast

8 :30 -9:30 AM - Over 100 participants and volunteers gather for registration, selling tickets for prizes and receiving their Hall of Fame t- shirts.

9:30 AM - 18 teams including women and men set out to outscore their opponents.



- Many first timers, apprehensive about shooting a gun, quickly find it is not as bad as anticipated
- For the newbies, it was great seeing the joy in hitting their first clay
- Laughing, jumping up and down and the station monitor screaming “point your gun to the range” and then, of course, there is that one guy who shoots a perfect score!
- 14 stations and a hundred shoots later we head back to the lodge.



- Great lunch of pulled pork, chicken, baked beans, and drinks.
- After lunch was awards time: best score, best team, best women's team, best men and women's team.
- The last award was the worst score presented to Irma Doerfler for 12 clays. She said she will be back to defend her title!
- Almost everyone left with a prize

Later that evening, those staying over meet at the lodge for drinks, appetizers, and to watch the Kentucky Derby. We followed all this fun with steak dinners.

After dinner, Bobby Burns brought out his guitar and sang everyone's favorites.



Many sat outside by a huge campfire, or played pool, air hockey, or just sat and enjoyed the atmosphere of the inside fireplace and lodge.





It was a great time by all!

Sunday AM - back to the lodge for breakfast, stories and “do I have to leave?” from all of us!

**PLAN TO JOIN US FOR OUR NEXT EVENT, THE
GOLF TOURNAMENT ON AUGUST 11th!**

My Memories of Great Matches Involving Florida Wrestlers

by Ira Fleckman, Contributing Writer

Mandy Blanco, Countryside VS Andy Anderson, Miami-Norland FHSA State Championship 1987

This match was between two really great Florida lightweights. In many ways these two were similar and would have been great friends if they had attended the same school.

I guess I knew Mandy Blanco longer as I had seen him wrestle freestyle at various tournaments over the years. I got to know Mandy after the match as he made the Florida Junior National team and I got to hang out with Mandy and his buddy, Frank Matthews, another Countryside product. Mandy was built solidly, he had plenty of muscle power but he was also technically well-schooled. His coach, David Frayer, had certainly provided Mandy the technical skills to wrestle. Mandy was smart on the mat and usually in good shape. He could be explosive but he didn't take too many risks in the big matches. He had a great sense of humor and could do an entire comedy talk based on the words "residue" and "chemicals".

I was the new coach at Miami-Norland High School, a school that was pretty evenly racially divided with a good number of the blacks from the Islands of the Caribbean. The wrestling team had only four upper classmen and two left the team leaving me with Andy at 112 and the other wrestler, who also made it to state was at 220. The rest of the team was made up of underclassmen and was very inexperienced. With this fact in mind, I held Saturday practices and encouraged the wrestlers to participate in every wrestling tournament held prior to the start of the regular high school season. Andy very quickly established himself as the team leader.

Andy Anderson was an excellent wrestler when I arrived at Norland as wrestling coach. When I found out that Andy's dad was in the merchant marine, Andy became Admiral. As head coach, I have always exercised the authority over nicknames and promotions.

Andy was a leader by example. He worked hard and did all that was asked. He was built for speed and quickness but he didn't lack anything in the muscle department either. If I had to compare him to another Florida lightweight, I would have to say he was as close to George Citron of Wellington as any other Florida wrestler. Andy had a great sense of humor, too.

It is my considered opinion that one of the problems that Miami area wrestlers face is that they don't travel too much. I have always believed that was a disadvantage. At the FHSA State Tournament, Miami wrestlers always have to be far away from home, so I made it my business to travel with my Norland team.

Driving up from Miami with my station wagon loaded with a crew of young wrestlers, many who had never been north of the Broward County line, was more than a long trip. I am sure that my mostly young and black team wasn't sure of the

reception that awaited them once out of the friendly urban confines and into rural Florida.

We were on the way to Auburndale for a FAWA tournament and Andy asked to use my CB radio. I don't believe we violated any federal communication laws but, if we did, it was worth it. Andy had several CB radio personas. He spoke with a very southern accent, knew all the codes and made the truckers crazy. His best joke was to make himself sound like a very young lady in need of a ride. I know it was probably not right but I had a hard time driving with tears and laughing so hard. Andy got propositioned several times and he could really string the truckers along.

Andy asked me about what weight class he should compete at and I suggested that he compete where he felt comfortable. I can't remember but one of the other Miami schools had a great 112 and Andy wasn't too sure he could beat the youngster. I wasn't sure Andy could beat the better wrestlers at 220 but I doubted that anyone at 112 could beat him.

Andy didn't have the technical skills or the mat skills of a wrestler who had come up through a Kids program. I don't believe he began his wrestling career until Jr. HS or even HS but he was certainly gifted in the athletic ability department. As his coach, I attempted to limit his mat experiments and sort of limit him to traditional wrestling moves. However, during matches, Andy could do some really strange moves but he always seemed to come out points ahead. Andy managed to win the GMAC, which I always felt was the best tournament in the state next to the Sunshine Open. He was ready for prime time.

When it was determined that Admiral Andy Anderson and Mandy Blanco would meet in the finals, I wanted to keep the confidence of my wrestler high, but I knew that Mandy was better coached and better prepared to score points. I believed that in a brawl, a physical contest where technique was secondary, Andy would be able to muscle Mandy. However, my instructions over the year had been too good. Andy had been a super student. Andy wrestled with total poise. Mandy scored first. Andy and Mandy did mix it up but both wrestlers tried to out wrestle one another. The final score was 5-4. The match was close and at any time either wrestler looked like they could score on a big move. However, neither one could dominate the other. Mandy had the 5 and Andy had the 4.

Andy took the loss hard. As a coach, I was very pleased with Andy's efforts. He wrestled beautifully. I still believe that in a more wide-open contest he might have had an advantage, but then again, Mandy wasn't a pushover.

I haven't seen Admiral Andy Anderson since I left Norland but I expect he is doing well. He was intelligent, hard-working and disciplined.

I haven't seen or heard from or about Mandy since the Junior Nationals, however he is another fine young man who I have confidence can meet and beat life's problems.

I will never forget either young man nor the great match they had.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Steve Sentes wrote the following in the Spring 2017 issue:

“...being able to communicate via email is essential. The Florida Chapter’s correspondence including voting information on potential inductees is generally through email. It saves time and money. This newsletter is a good example. It is written to be viewed via computer to save paper and printing costs. It is important that Alumni keep their contact information up to date so we can keep you well informed...to print and mail numerous copies would be cost prohibitive. I am building a data base of all our Florida Alumni which will help all of us stay in touch.”

The Alumni database is built, as is one for FACA, Florida AAU, and Florida USA Wrestling. We are missing email addresses for the following. If you know any of these people, please have them send their contact email to nwhof.fl@att.net

THANK YOU!

Bennett	Darren
Cook	Mike
Gushen	Duane
Henning	Mike
Howell	Pat
Hughes	Adam
Kenmerer	Mike
Korf	Scott
Lapaugh	Diane
Leight	George
Lipswitz	Elan
Malcolm	Tracy
Mcclymonds	Brendan
Nestor	Garrido

Parmenter	David
Pederson	Mike
Perkins	Tom
Regan	Walt
Rhoades	Dan
Richards	Harry
Robinson	Lewis
Rouse	John
Rozell	Tom
Sherman	Scott
Sitter	Arnie
Snook	Dave
Spirio	Carl
Sucher	Ken
Suman	Jack
Teets	Tom
Waugh	Ken
Whalen	Benita
Wright	Mike
Wright	Pat
Youngblood	Dave

Florida Chapter Golf Tournament

This year's golf tournament will be on August 11, 2017 at the Remington Golf Club located at 2995 Remington Blvd., Kissimmee, FL 34744 (Phone 407-344-4004). The tournament is a four man scramble, \$340.00 per team/\$85.00 per person includes: Greens free, cart fee, range balls, shirt, on course contests, lunch, and free admission to the "Meet and Greet Social" with Inductees on Friday night. Golf Schedule is: 7:30 a.m. Registration, 9:00 a.m., 1:30 a.m. Lunch, and 8:00 p.m. Meet and Greet with the 2017 Florida Chapter Hall of Fame Inductees. For more information please contact Don Smith, Board member at 561-629-2399 or email at greaatmind@aol.com