

National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum Florida Chapter



NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 1

Summer 2022



The President's Podium

Legends of the wrestling world. The question is, how do you become a legend? First, you need to decide what is your definition of a legend? The dictionary states "extremely famous in a particular field or well known".

I never wrestled. I graduated from Stranahan High School in 1963 before wrestling existed in our school system. I got involved with the boosters club in 1988 when my son wrestled. In my 34 years of involvement in the sport of wrestling, my wife and I served the wrestling community in many areas. As an outsider, I had a different outlook on the sport and the people involved. I personally feel there are many different categories of a legend in our sport.

First there is the athlete who has had a phenomenal high school or college career, or even made the Olympics.

Then there are coaches that have created early development clubs. They work 365 days a year both mentally and physically, they work in promoting their kid, producing the best athletes and teams in the state year after year.

I have seen many officials work as many as 14-16 hours on the mat officiating tournaments, spending their own money for travel and housing to work tournaments. Many travel out of state and internationally working tournaments.

Contributors are volunteers who have dedicated their lives to support the sport of wrestling.

These are what most people think of as legends. They have made their mark in history and into the record books.

I have also seen in my experience a different type of legend, the unsung heroes in our sport. They may not have the best winning record or produce the most state champions. These are the coaches, officials, and volunteers who work on developing athletes and developing their life skills. They take in troubled kids, promote academics, and work on getting their wrestlers in to college and helping secure scholarships. I have watched officials stop a match in a tournament to show young inexperienced wrestlers wrestling moves and do a short clinic on the rules. I've witnessed officials donate their time doing tournaments for fund raisers. Then there is the volunteer who works tournaments, transports kid week after week to events, and commit themselves year after year.

Most of these individuals do not have the exposure as some of the greats, but they have a commitment to making these young men and women have a better chance to survive in life; and to me, these individuals are also legends in this sport.

*Remember, when we do it, we do it with class,
for we are honoring the best of the best.*

Thank you,

Gary Townsend

In Memoriam

Mr. Ken Sucher, Class of 2009

Our deepest sympathies to his family.



2023 NOMINATIONS

Bob Burns, Class of 2007, Alumni and Nominations Director for the Florida Chapter

Dear Wrestling Community,

Thank you for your continued support of the Florida Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. It is the wrestling community that is responsible for helping us find and recognize those men and women that have dedicated their lifetime to the sport of wrestling. We once again ask for your assistance to help us find deserving individuals to honor.

Now is the time for making a nomination for the 2023 Induction Class, as submissions are due by **August 30, 2022**. Applications can be downloaded from our website at <https://nwhof.org/state-chapters/florida>. All applications need to include one letter of nomination and at least two letters of recommendation. Completed applications are to be sent to Robert Burns, 328 S.E. 2nd Court, Deerfield Beach, Florida, 33441.

If you have any other questions, please contact me at 954- 426-6457.

Thank you in advance, and for your continued support of the greatest sport in the world.

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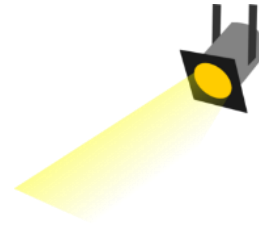
**The Florida Chapter of the
National Wrestling Hall of Fame
Honors Weekend
for the
Class of 2022
Is August 26-27, 2022.**

More information on pages 6, 7, 11, 12, and 20.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Frank Lasagna

Class of 2009

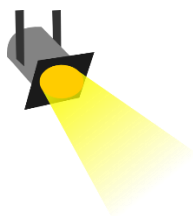


After 45 years devoted to teaching and coaching, Frank Lasagna retired in 2019. He and his wife enjoy being able to spend time with their children and grandchildren who live and work in Florida. Son, Kevin, a state wrestling champion and college All American Wrestler, is a Lt. Colonel in the US Army Reserves and works as a beach environmental/marine specialist, following in his father's footsteps who spent 20 years in the US Army Reserves. They taught science classes together and coached wrestling together for several years.

Frank spends his time now doing laps in their pool, playing competitive billiards, and watching western reruns on Cable TV. He is a member of both Masons and Scottish Rites. Having grown up in Pittsburgh, he is naturally a big Steeler, Pirates and Penguins fan. He follows closely Penn State football and wrestling on tv. Frank and his wife enjoy traveling and go back to Pittsburgh often to visit family there. They recently returned from South Dakota where they celebrated Kaye's mother's 97th birthday with family. Frank also had a chance to visit with some old college football teammates.

"When you walk onto a wrestling mat and shake hands before a bout, you are entering into a contest of strategy, skill, will, and conditioning that's been around for thousands of years."

--Lee Roy Smith, Advice from Champions, page 251



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ken Veronee

Class of 2009

Ken and high school sweetheart Patricia are enjoying year 43 of married life and loving life in retirement. He recently spoke with Alan Solomon (Class of 2016) and had these updates to share:

- The couple have two children.
- Daughter Kenna has a PhD. In Music from FSU and is teaching at the University of Louisiana – Monroe.
- Son Thomas has his DDS from Nova Southeast. He lives and works in Jupiter.
- Ken’s hobbies are relaxing on the lake, smoking meat in his two smokers, and restoring classic British cars. He’s had a 1969 MGB since 1979, and recently acquired a 1952 MG TD from his mom. That car needs a lot of love!
- 40 years ago, Patricia saw a newspaper article in the *Miami Herald* by Rick Tucci recruiting wrestling officials. Ken attended the recruitment meeting at Miami Spring HS and the rest is history!
- He is still officiating for both the Lake Regions and the SW associations.
- He may be retired from Florida Power and Light, but is still a consultant for the company.
- Ken and Patricia recently traveled to South Carolina to celebrate his mom’s 90th birthday.
- They also take BBQ tours in the Southeast. They have been on tours in North Carolina, Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, and Florida. Next time you see Ken, ask him about his favorite in each state. 😊

“Believe, Work, Accomplish, Repeat!”

--Anibal Nieves, *Advice from Champions*, page 219

HONORS WEEKEND 2022

Honors Weekend is wrestling's equivalent of the Academy Awards for John Lawton, Jeff Levitetz, Kevin Pedersen, Dave Phillips, Mark Prince, Humberto Reyna, Jr., and Bryan Wilkes. On Friday and Saturday, August 26th and 27th, the Florida Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame will celebrate the coaches, officials and contributors who have dedicated their life to this sport. If you are a former wrestler, family of a wrestler, a friend of a wrestler, or part of the wrestling community, come join the celebration!

Beginning Friday evening, August 26, at 8:00 PM, people will gather for a **Meet the Inductees Social**. This social time turns into a reunion of family and friends, or a reuniting of former wrestlers and coaches. It's a night of reminiscing, storytelling, and laughter, where the emotions of the past evolve. You can enjoy hot and cold hors d' oeuvres, and beverages from a cash bar.

The **Testimonial Breakfast** at 9:00 AM Saturday is not to be missed! Two individuals will have the opportunity to honor each inductee by sharing their feeling on how the inductee impacted their life through the sport of wrestling. It is impossible not to feel the emotion during these two days, and the emotions run strong during these testimonials. The speakers give words to the deep feeling of accomplishment and life-changing passion. You will hear laughter and see tears of joy, and truly comprehend and appreciate why these individuals are being inducted.

Following the Testimonial Breakfast, you will have free time until the evening Induction Banquet. There are multiple options on how to spend your afternoon. The hotel has a large pool as well as a relaxing hot tub, and a very good bar & grill poolside. Disney Springs is a very close walk from the hotel.

The final event, the **Hall of Fame Induction Banquet**, begins at 5:00 PM with a pre-banquet social, where shared stories of the past continue. Each inductee has an area for displaying their history through newspaper articles, awards and artifacts from their wrestling careers, and the Florida Chapter Wrestling Mobile Museum is open for all. Exhibits on the history of the Florida Chapter and Wrestling in Florida over the past 55 years will be located in the Solar Room. Guests are encouraged to visit both the museum and the Inductees' memorabilia tables.

When the doors to the banquet hall open at 5:50 PM, you will be seated near the inductee you have come to honor. The opening ceremony includes the inductees passing through a tunnel of well-wishing Florida Chapter Alumni and then being introduced to all attendees of the evening event.

The celebration continues with a delicious dinner. At the conclusion of the meal, guests will view an informative video about the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Two special presentations, the President's Award and the John Vaughn Award, follow the video.

Finally, it is time to hear from the inductees how the sport of wrestling impacted their lives. We watch as the inductees receive their plaques and medals, and we view the Class of 2022 pose for pictures in their new HOF Green Jackets.

The Florida Chapter has a saying “When we do it, we do it with class, for we are honoring the best of the best.” This is the weekend where that maxim comes to life, and one you should not pass up. We look forward to seeing you during Honors Weekend!

Class of 2020 and Class of 2021



L-R: Mike Turner, Nate Richardson, Dan Hartung, Bob Hendrickson, Danny Walker, Ernie Withers, Marc Allison, and Dominick Mandicott.

John Vaughan Award 2022

This year the John Vaughan Award will be presented to Miriam Jenkins. When she joined the Gainesville High School wrestling team in 1996, the women's wrestling movement was very limited in its growth. Miriam managed to start the 1998 season on the varsity team and compiled a record of 28-12 against all male competitors and qualifying for the Regional Tournament.

The following year she compiled a record of 32-11 and became the first female wrestler in Florida to win a District Tournament. She made Florida history the next weekend when, at the Regional Tournament hosted by NB Forest High School in Jacksonville, she placed 3rd, becoming the first female wrestler in Florida history to qualify for the State Tournament. The following weekend Miriam made national history when she defeated her first-round opponent, a wrestler from Okeechobee High School, by a score of 7-5, becoming the first female wrestler in the nation to win a match at a Male State Tournament.



*“No task is too tough if you have wrestled.”
--Jim Bird, *Advice from Champions*, page 146*

John Vaughan

Have you ever wondered about the story of the man behind the award? His story, and many, many other stories of wrestlers, coaches, and contributors, are available for all to read and admire on the National Wrestling Hall of Fame website. www.nwhof.org

JOHN VAUGHAN

September 25, 1914 - April 29, 2006

He changed the face of wrestling, and with that bold stroke John Vaughan gave the United States a chance to compete on even terms with the rest of the world. From his days of collegiate competition through the course of a spectacular business career, he has been one of the sport's most intense boosters, with an unbridled enthusiasm for wrestling.

John's biggest impact on the sport came in 1988, when he began underwriting cash awards for USA wrestlers winning medals in the Olympic Games, World Championships and other major events. With additional support from the Team USA program, the nation's top wrestlers now are able to remain active for many "extra" years. Many of their talented predecessors were forced into early retirement for purely economic reasons.

Vaughan has been a quiet supporter of programs at Indiana, Ohio State, Ohio U, Case Western Reserve, Michigan, Oklahoma State, the U. S. Association for Blind Athletes, and particularly USA Wrestling. He and his wife Helen are national sponsors of Greco-Roman Team USA.

He established the endowment fund of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, and has served as president and chairman of the Hall of Fame, as a director of USA Wrestling, and as a member of the marketing commission of the International Wrestling Federation (FILA).

Vaughan enjoyed three outstanding seasons in the mid-1930s at Case Tech. He was undefeated as a junior and senior, and continued to compete for a YMCA team in Cleveland until World War II.

He obtained his degree in electrical engineering and launched his business career by earning 10 U. S. patents in electric control systems and induction melting furnaces. He purchased his first company, an equipment manufacturer for restaurant kitchens, in 1952, and created the diversified Alco Standard Corporation in 1965.

In recognition of his enthusiastic support of wrestling, and the courage to turn the sport in a new direction, John Thomas Vaughan is honored as a Distinguished Member of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

Outstanding American Award

Outstanding American

Given to former wrestlers who are highly successful and use the disciplines learned in wrestling in their profession.

In the twenty-plus years of the Florida Chapter, only seven Floridians have ever received this award: John Vaughan (2000), Monsignor Michael Devine (2001), Captain Stephen Archer (2002), Frank Brogan (2002), Dominic Gorie (2012), Gerald Brisco (2018) and this year, Kevin Pedersen. Here is part of Kevin's nomination letter: "Former Special Agent Kevin Pedersen took all the lessons he learned from wrestling – Initiative, Determination, Teamwork, Discipline, Devotion, Aggressiveness, 'A Will to Win', Integrity, Honor, Goal-Setting, and Leadership - and applied them to his service as a U.S. Army officer for six years and then a DEA Special Agent for 21 years." The Florida Chapter is honored to be adding Kevin Pedersen, Class of 2022, to the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

"Wrestling is more than just a sport. Its practice bestows spiritual and intellectual gifts which are carried by us throughout our lives. Uniquely, wrestling unites with our international community as we learn its real lessons are to foster the values of diplomacy, communication, and success not only on the mat but as Champions in our Lives".

--Joey Krebs, *Advice from Champions*, page 117

Florida Chapter Hall of Fame Weekend

August 26-27, 2022

Honoring the Class of 2022

Tickets for the Friday evening Social, the Saturday morning Testimonial Breakfast, and the Saturday evening Induction Banquet must be postmarked by August 15th, or purchased online by August 25th.

<https://fl-nwhof.ticketleap.com/2022-honors-weekend/>

Friday evening **Social** - \$25.00

Saturday morning Testimonial **Breakfast** - \$30.00

Saturday evening Induction **Banquet** - \$80.00

Full page banquet program congratulatory ad - \$120.00

Half page banquet program congratulatory ad - \$75.00

Click this link for hotel reservations:

[NWHOF Florida Chapter Group Rate](#)

"Always remember that in the sport of wrestling, as well as in life, you are only Champion for a day, and then it's back to work the next."

--Christopher Doherty,
Advice from Champions, page 251

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Museum Memo

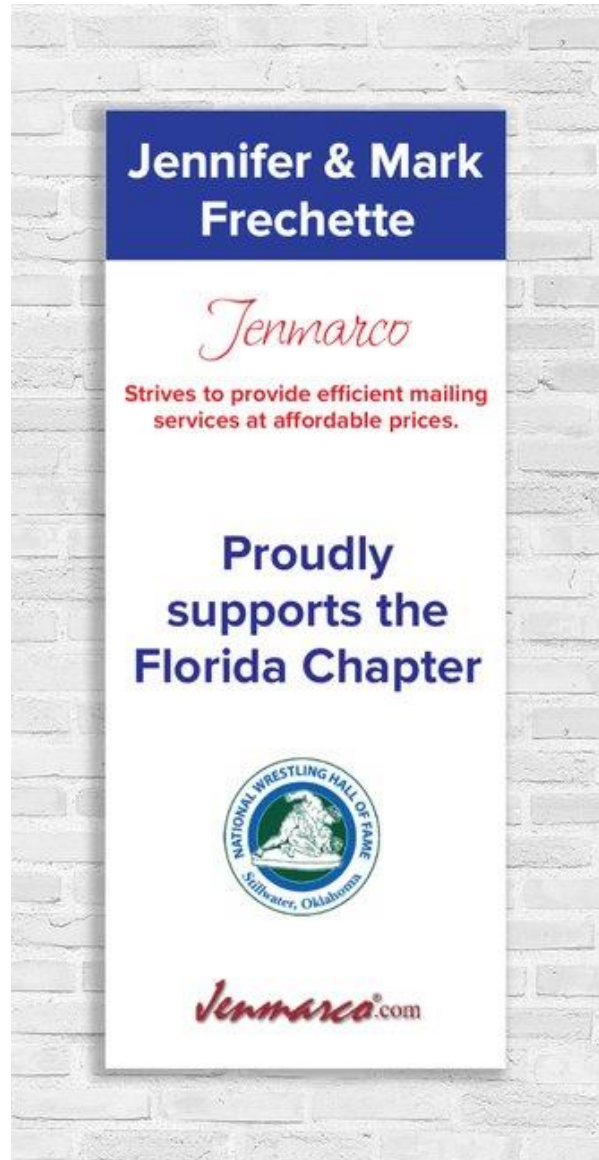
Pete Collins, Class of 2012, Mobile Museum Director for the Florida Chapter

The two photos below are of a donation from Florida Chapter Class of 2004 and World Veterans Champion Jeff Davis. It is the singlet that he wore at the 2019 championship.

We hope to see many of you during Honors Weekend. The Florida Chapter Mobile Museum will be in the Solar Room, open for one and all for browsing 55+ years of Florida wrestling.



Please support the NWHOF Florida Chapter supporters



TRIVIA TIME

Where was the first Honors Weekend held?

Answer is on the website!

<http://nwhof.org/statechapters/florida>



Class of 2019

"Win or Learn; you never lose! You may lose a situation or a match, but don't lose the lesson it taught you. If you learn from it, and it doesn't happen again, that's a win."

--Gene Mills, Advice from Champions, page 170

Please support the NWHOF Florida Chapter sponsors



WWW.SPARTANCOMBAT.COM



Thank you, Frank Pettineo (Class of 2006)
for your continued support!



Website Wonder

Bob Thomas, Class of 2017, Media Services Director for the Florida Chapter

Set Your GPS for Stillwater

For three days Stillwater, Oklahoma was at the center of the wrestling universe. On June 3, 4 and 5, the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum hosted the annual state chapters conference, the Class of 2022 Honors Weekend, and USA Wrestling brought the Final X, Senior World Team qualifier to the Gallagher-Iba Arena on the campus of Oklahoma State University.

Florida board members Jane Townsend and Robert Thomas attended the 2-day chapter meetings held on the OSU campus. Discussion focused on our expanding role of promoting scholastic women's wrestling. States shared best practices. Our voting protocols, museum and Honors Weekend festivities drew the most attention. We certainly had fun. OSU baseball was hosting a regional playoff tournament. We watched Arkansas defeat Grand Canyon University and the location for the USA event was just across the parking lot from the museum. A pool side party at the home of NWHOF board member Ed Gallegos was the perfect venue for breaking training.



The Honors Weekend brought wrestlers and enthusiasts from around the country. We met 2022 Outstanding American Mario Lopez (star of *Saved by the Bell*), Olympians Dan Gable, Bruce Baumgartner, and John Smith.



We watched Final X qualifiers work out in the Cowboy's wrestling room. World class work ethic was on display by the likes of Kyle Snyder, Seth Growth, Daton Fix, Zain Rutherford, J'den Cox, Malorie Velte, Forrest Mollinari. Oh ya, sitting in the corner was national champion coach Cael Sanderson.



Stillwater was never on my bucket list, but it is checked off now. Let me catch my breath!



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Honoring the Class of 2022

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<https://fl-nwhof.ticketleap.com/2022-honors-weekend/>

Click this link for hotel reservations:

[NWHOF Florida Chapter Group Rate](#)



Class of 2020



Class of 2021

QUALIFIED CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM IRAS

RETIREMENT PLANS

Certain IRA holders have the opportunity to make tax-free distributions from their IRAs to qualified charitable organizations. For tax-free eligibility, the qualified charitable distribution (QCD) must be sent directly from the IRA payable to the receiving qualified 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Eligibility and Donation Limit

IRA holders must be at least 70½ years of age before the distribution. In addition, beneficiaries of inherited IRAs who meet the age requirement can also take advantage of QCDs.

For those who qualify, the maximum IRA charitable distribution is limited to \$100,000 per tax year. Any distribution in excess of this limit will not qualify for the tax exclusion benefit and will be treated as ordinary income. The provision applies for Traditional, Roth, and inherited IRAs, but does not typically apply to distributions from “active” SEP or SIMPLE IRAs.

Benefits of a QCD

If a taxpayer makes the donation as prescribed by the IRS, then the distribution will be excluded from gross income and counts toward:

- The taxpayer’s \$100,000 exclusion limitation for the year the distribution occurs and
- The taxpayer’s required minimum distribution (RMD) for the current year

With the increase in the standard deduction for 2018 and future tax years to \$26,600 for married filing jointly age 65 or older and \$13,600 for single filers age 65 or older, more Americans will be using the standard deduction rather than itemizing deductions on their tax returns. QCDs are excluded from taxable income, but do not allow for an itemized deduction. If more individuals age 72 or older use the standard deduction, the QCD is a great way to keep taxable income lower when satisfying an RMD and still get the full benefit of the standard deduction. By using the standard deduction, a taxpayer will receive no benefit for their charitable contribution unless it is processed as a QCD from an IRA. In addition, by not including a charitable donation from an IRA as ordinary income, an individual’s adjusted gross income is not increased, which could affect the ability to:

- Qualify for Roth IRA contributions
- Avoid other potential tax ramifications, such as:
 1. The 3.8% health care surcharge. (Even though distributions from IRAs are exempt from the 3.8% health care surcharge, taxable distributions from IRAs could push income over the threshold amount, causing other investment income to be subject to the surtax.)
 2. Paying more for Medicare Premiums.
 3. Taxation on Social Security Benefits.

QCD Tax Reporting

Typically, the custodian of an IRA will report a QCD as a normal distribution on the 1099R tax form, while QCDs from inherited IRAs are reported as death distributions. This gives the IRS no notification that an IRA holder intended to make a tax-free distribution from the IRA to a charity. It is the responsibility of the IRA holder or his or her tax preparer to properly report the QCD on a 1040 tax return. It is also strongly suggested that the IRA holder obtains a receipt from the charitable organization.

Is a QCD the right strategy for you?

Please seek the aid of a competent tax advisor or tax attorney for guidance.

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32018-01 Stifel does not provide tax advice. You should consult with your professional tax advisor regarding your particular situation.



Memories of Great Matches Involving Florida Wrestlers
by Ira Fleckman, Class of 2006, Contributing Writer

LOUIS ARCHER, Miami Beach HS

Louis Archer was a solid wrestler from Miami Beach HS. He had a younger brother Jeff, but more about him later. Louis was a member of our 1987 National Team. He wrestled in the 165 classes where his record was 1-2 in Greco-Roman and 0-2 in freestyle. Yet, Louis was an important part of that great team.

Somewhere during the tournament, Louis became our cheerleader. He somehow organized the other guys and fired them all up. I can't say who had the idea for the Team Florida TOGA PARTY from bed sheets, or who designed the big AIR FLORIDA banner, but I know that Louis was the one waving that banner and in the middle of the loudest cheers from the Florida wrestlers.

The 1987 National Team finished 4th in Greco-Roman and 9th in Freestyle. There were three finalists in Greco-Roman and one in Freestyle. There were six Greco-Roman All Americans and three Freestyle All Americans. The Florida team members cheered every one of them.

The National Juniors is a marathon of a tournament and each wrestler finds it harder to get up for the next match as the days go by. Teammates find it tough to lose their own matches and still find the energy and spirit to cheer those still wrestling. Louis Archer was the core of the support for his fellow team members.

Louis had his share of excitement, too. It seems that Louis had a bout with a California wrestler; at least I believe he was from California, who did something Louis didn't much care for. Louis decked the youngster. The referees disqualified Louis. This act of unsportsmanlike behavior didn't sit too well with the coaching staff, but Louis felt justified. After an investigation of the incident, it was determined that Louis acted improperly but was provoked. That allowed Louis to stay.

Waving a banner and wearing bed sheets don't mean a thing if the wrestlers don't perform, but on the other hand, this team was inspired. Louis Archer was one that helped to inspire his teammates.

Louis's brother Jeff was a larger guy. Much more laid back than Louis and he wrestled about 191.5. He borrowed one of my kneepads at a different tournament some years later and I am still looking to get it back.

I would never say that a wrestler should pay for a trip to nationals, go through a tough camp and work and drill in order to be a cheerleader. However, when one has exhausted himself in his efforts to place, when one has been eliminated after giving it

his very best shot, it is a worthy sacrifice to do whatever one can to provide support for one's team mates. The unselfish act of Louis Archer and the rest of that team of 1987 was a big part of the reason that Florida had the great showing it did.

Please support the NWHOF Florida Chapter supporters



(866) 281-5199



www.stu.edu 800-367-9010

About the Florida Chapter

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

Our mailing address is:

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The mission of the Florida Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame
is to pay tribute to those coaches, officials, and contributors who
represent the best qualities of what the sport of wrestling has to
offer and who share those characteristics with young people
day in and day out.



MORE THAN A MUSEUM
it is an experience!

**America's shrine to the sport of wrestling, the
National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum has the largest
collection of wrestling artifacts and memorabilia in the world!**



Stillwater, Oklahoma



**State Chapter
Induction Banquets**



Waterloo, Iowa

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