

National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum Florida Chapter

NEWSLETTER

Volume 9, Issue 2

Fall 2025



The President's Podium

Gary Townsend, Class of 2015

President, NWHOF Florida Chapter



A Busy Time for Our Wrestling Community

Wrestling season is now in full swing, making this one of the busiest times of the year for our coaches, officials, and parents. With our athletes competing in regular tournaments as well as special Christmas events, the energy and excitement are palpable throughout our community.

In addition to supporting our wrestlers on the mat, many of us are also preparing for the holiday season. Christmas and New Years are just around the corner, which means balancing practices, travel, and family gatherings can be a challenge. We appreciate everyone's dedication to the sport and their commitment to making this season memorable for our kids.

Let's continue to support one another, show spirit at every meet, and make time to celebrate the holidays together. Thank you to all the coaches, officials, parents, and volunteers who make it possible for our wrestlers to compete and grow during this festive and competitive time of year!

From the Board of Directors of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, Florida Chapter we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Gary Townsend

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

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2027 NOMINATIONS

Bob Burns.

Class of 2007, Alumni and Nominations Director for the Florida Chapter,
hofwrestle07@yahoo.com

Dear Wrestling Community,

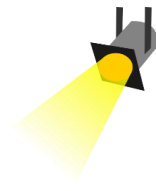
Thank you for your continued support of our voting process. It is the wrestling community and the Florida Chapter alumni that are responsible for helping us find and recognize those men and women that have dedicated their lifetime to the sport of wrestling.

We are now accepting nomination applications for the 2027 Induction Class until August 30th, 2026. Applications can be downloaded at

<https://nwhof.org/state-chapw1>



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Bob Hartley **Class of 2010**

Bob has three sons, Brett, Brian, and Robby, from his first marriage, and Dak, his stepson. Brian was a three-time State placer. Bob lost Dak's mom, JoAnn, after 29 years of marriage, and recently has been lucky enough to find a new love. Bob and Cindy were married in June of this year.

Bob attended Auburndale High School and graduated in 1972. During his senior year he joined Auburndale's first wrestling team, one of the first six teams in Polk County. This is where his love of wrestling began. He would then attend Polk Junior College in Winter Haven and got his first taste of coaching while assisting at his old high school. He would then attend Florida State in Tallahassee and wrestled in their intermural program. While there, he helped Godby High School begin its first wrestling team.

Bob then entered the teaching profession where he remained active with wrestling programs. He would eventually work his way up to become an Assistant Principal, work out of the County Administration Office, become the Principal at Lake Highland, and then Stanbaugh Middle School, and finally would work at Southeastern University as a professor. He also helped that school begin its first wrestling program. He left the teaching profession to take care of his wife when she became ill.

Besides his coaching, Bob became an official in 1973 and would serve for 51 years before retiring in 2024.

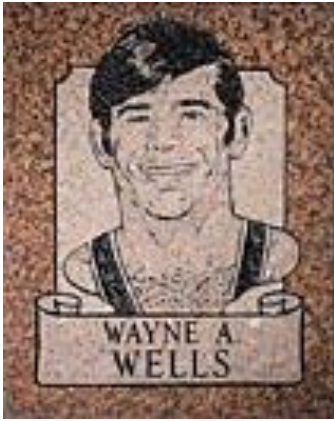
As for Bob's hobbies, he likes to play golf and pickleball as often as possible during the week. During the wrestling season he still enjoys going to watch matches at the local high school.

Today he will tell you that "wrestling has been very good to him." We can say "Thanks Bob, for helping the sport of wrestling grow in Florida."

"The foundation for success is based on gratitude.
Everything...springs off of the word 'gratitude'".

--Cael Sanderson

WRESTLING HISTORY



Wayne Wells



He stood atop the Olympic awards stand, gold medal draped across his chest, and sang the Star-Spangled Banner. In the proudest moment of his wrestling career, Wayne Wells thanked his country for the opportunity to excel.

Given that opportunity, he spent a dozen years of hard work, building upon the cornerstones of skill, conditioning and desire. Among many rewards, were a few setbacks, but each was a spur to higher achievement.

At the University of Oklahoma, Wayne was a three-time Big Eight champion and a two-time All-American. NCAA runner-up as a junior, he won the championship the following year and went on to earn fourth place in the Olympic Games of 1968. While turning his attention to law school and the foundation of his professional career, Wayne intensified his wrestling efforts. He captured the silver medal in the 1969 World Championships, then returned a year later to win the gold.

He won two national freestyle titles and placed second in the Pan American Games. In the months leading up to the 1972 Olympics he completed his final year of law school, passed the state bar exam, assisted the OU coaching staff and trained five hours a day.

As evidence of his preparation for the Olympic effort, his scores in the strength-endurance tests exceeded those of all other members of the United States wrestling team. And in a final victory over adversity, he dominated his opposition despite a separated and displaced rib, an enlarged spleen and a badly damaged knee.

Throughout his athletic career, and then as a respected member of the legal profession, Wells was a positive force for every organization or team with which he was involved.

Sources:

<https://www.oklahoman.com/story/sports/college/sooners/2012/06/30/collected-wisdom-wayne-wells-former-ou-wrestler-and-olympic-gold-medalist/61061948007/>

<https://www.oklahoman.com/story/sports/columns/2020/06/22/why-i-love-sports-wayne-wells-is-a-true-oklahoma-sports-hero/60395050007/>

<https://nwhof.org/national-wrestling-hall-of-fame/bio/55>

HONORS WEEKEND 2025

ARRIVAL – SOCIAL – BREAKFAST – BANQUET

ARRIVAL

Inductees and their families were greeted in the lobby on Thursday and Friday with balloons and signs to get the celebration started.



Terry Brockland and Family



Frank Fuder



Kim and Brian Jones



Michael Madry



Elizabeth and Jonathn Vogt



Erin and Jeremy Walton



Debbi and Corey Hixon

FRIDAY EVENING SOCIAL



TESTIMONIAL BREAKFAST

This event is an opportunity for the guests to hear inspiring words from those who were impacted by their coaches. In many cases, life changing impact.

Quotes from the Saturday Morning Testimonial Breakfast

Speaking on behalf of Terry Brockland

Mr. Kris Carmichael: “Terry always gives credit to all that help him.

He needs credit for all he has helped. Wrestling didn’t need me. I needed wrestling and I needed Terry.”

Mr. Matthew Logan: “Terry goes above and beyond for his students and wrestlers, school, family, and life. His lessons will continue to make an impact

Speaking on behalf of Frank Fuder

Mr. Zach Deaton: “From the time I could walk, I was attending Bay High School wrestling matches, and back then, and even today, I think of the big man with the red suspenders as BHS wrestling. He is a champion coach, husband, and father, and has an uncanny ability to get the best out of everyone.”

Mr. Daniel “Monte” Ghant: “Thank you, Mr. and Mrs. Fuder, for welcoming me into your home and showing me how a family works but what kind of man I wanted to be.”

Speaking on behalf of Brian K. Jones

Mr. Luis Cioffi: “He is always constant, calculated, and calm. We always respected him for all he did.”

Mr. Chase Zahalka: “Anyone he has ever coached will tell you that through humor, tough-love, and sage-like wisdom, Coach Jones displayed an incredible amount of care for each and every wrestler he ever coached. He prepared all of his athletes not just for the tournaments on Saturdays, but for life after.”

Quotes from the Saturday Morning Testimonial Breakfast

Speaking on behalf of Michael Madry

Mr. Michael Ingrao: “Mike has 33 successful years of coaching and
Class of 2011(VA) officiating. He has mentored many younger
officials.”

Speaking on behalf of Jonathan Vogt

Mr. Rick Tucci: “John is a great friend and an excellent official.”
Class of 2000

Mr. Dan Jacobs: “As a young coach, he treated me like every other
coach. He never barked at me, although I may
have barked at him.”

Speaking on behalf of Jeremy Walton

Mr. Paul Benvenuti: “He handles the wrestlers and coaches like a
captain with a large ship through rough seas.
His faith and family are second to none.”

Mr. Michael Ingrao: “As head of all the officials, Jeremy shows
Class of 2011(VA) determination and fairness and, if
necessary, a soft hand when needed. He does
it all with class”

Speaking on behalf of Christopher Hixon

Mr. Jason Wolk: “Chris taught us that a team stays together. He
made us better people.”

Mr. Allen Held: “ ‘If not you, then who?’ was his favorite saying,
Class of 2017 and he did what he believed in. He stepped up.
He saved lives. This is what courage looks like.”


*Speaking on behalf of Ricky Marcus,
the John Vaugh Award honoree*

Mr. Ken DeStefanis: "If you want to know about Florida Wrestling,
call Ricky Marcus. His vast knowledge and
passion for the sport is impressive."

Mr. Chris Rappa: "The Florida Wrestling Room is a one-stop shop
for wrestlers, coaches, parents, and fans."

~ HONOR ~ PRESERVE ~ RECOGNIZE ~ INSPIRE ~

The National Wrestling Hall of Fame - Florida Chapter
Honors Weekend
for the Class of 2026
is August 28-29, 2026.
Mark your calendars now!



"Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They're made of sweat,
determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts."

-- Dan Gable

INDUCTION BANQUETT

Saturday evening inductees Terry Brockland, Frank Fuder, Brian K. Jones, Michael Madry, Jonathan Vogt, Jeremy Walton, and Christopher Hixon were elevated into the Hall of Fame with the support of alumni, family and friends. It was a fabulous turnout that highlighted Florida Wrestling and those who have made the sport their life.

Inductees and Escorts



Terry Brockland and son



Mr. and Mrs. Frank Fuder



Mr. and Mrs. Brian. K. Jones



Mr. Michael Madry and Niece



Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Vogt
and daughter

Mr. and Mrs. Jeremy
and daughter



The Hixon family

Mr. and Mrs. Ricky Marcus,
John Vaughn Award honoree



THE CLASS OF 2025

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Museum Memo

Bob Thomas, Class of 2017

From the Museum: A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words



Website Wonders

Bob Thomas, Class of 2017

If Not You, Then Who?

The Hall of Fame stands on the forefront of commemorating, promoting and honoring hard work and dedication. We are celebrators of you and our sport. The Florida Board creates unique observances that we hope resonate with our intended audience. In cooperation with the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, our platform is the premier authority for identifying persons with lifetime service, the courage to face life's challenges and individuals whose accomplishments exemplify the lessons of wrestling.

If not you, then who? You identify; we authenticate, assemble, and present the best candidates for a membership vote. 26 years ago your submissions began a tradition that has grown and shaped the Florida Chapter. This process ensures that every day is a meaningful and impactful celebration of your accomplishments.

Celebrate! If you're retired, attend a tournament and wear your 'Green Jacket'. Work a table and be recognized. Support Florida by showing up for Honors Weekend, and the FHSAA State tournament. Apply to become a Florida Board Member. A successful retirement requires service to charity, and we are one.

Honorees are our life's blood. Your acceptance into this place of honor comes with a pledge to support wrestling. Make a large financial donation. The all-volunteer board has not discovered the fountain of youth. We are held together by our mission, fondness for one another and gray hair.



~HONOR~PRESERVE~RECOGNIZE~INSPIRE~

Official Position

Alan Solomon, Class of 2016, and Don Weekley, Class of 2023,
Officials Representatives on the NWHOF Florida Chapter Board

Greetings, fellow officials.

Ten Tips for the New Season

1. Review the *NFHS Rules Book* and the *Case Book*. Many problems can be solved by reviewing the situations provided in the *Case Book*. Also review the illustrations in the *Rules Book*.
2. Review and practice all approved signals in front of a mirror. Use only these signals during a match.
3. Watch other officials and review videos of matches. Don't be afraid to have other officials critique your performance on the mat. We can help each other improve our skills.
4. Work preseason tournaments and possibly some local school wrestle-offs.
5. If you are new, don't be afraid to work sub-varsity matches to develop your skills.
6. When making close calls, don't look to the coaches for approval. This only opens the door for coaches to question any call.
7. If you make a wrong "correctable" call, it is okay to wipe it off. Remember it is our job to be fair to both wrestlers. Coaches will respect you for your fairness.
8. If you "miss" a call that you cannot fix, do not become defensive with the coach. There is no shame in admitting to a mistake. Coaches will respect your honesty.
9. Be consistent with your calls from one match to the next. Consistency is important on all calls whether it is for stalling, takedowns, line calls, nearfalls, etc.
10. Practice the three "BFs"- Be Friendly, Be Fair, and Be Firm.

(Editor's note: Yes, the season has started, but these are still valuable tips!)

FAWA Forecast

David Mason, FAWA Representative

Fargo Recap

Team Florida continued its record setting momentum in the Summer of 2025, showcasing outstanding performances on the grandest stage, Fargo. We are proud to celebrate 25 All-Americans, highlighted by two National Champions, Jovani Solis (16U Freestyle) and Peter Mocco (16U Greco). Their achievements reflect the hard work, dedication, and competitive spirit that we believe is our mission as the FAWA Board of Directors.

To support our athletes, FAWA invested just shy of \$70,000 this year to help facilitate national team trips. This commitment helped make these trips possible while greatly reducing the financial burden on our wrestlers and their families.

We are also excited to share some major news for the future of Florida wrestling; FAWA has been selected by USAW to host the 2026–2029 14U Boys National Duals Championship in Wesley Chapel, Florida. This is a tremendous honor and a milestone for our state. Hosting this premier event will bring new opportunities, increase visibility for our athletes, and further strengthen wrestling across Florida.

FAWA remains committed to doing what's best for Florida wrestling - supporting cardholders, expanding opportunities, and elevating our presence on the national stage.

Thank you, Florida Wrestling!

David Mason
FAWA Co-Chairman

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Congratulations to the 2025 Fargo All-Americans

Men's

Jovani Tovar 3rd FS 120
Illia Kyryianenko 7th FS
132
Jovani Solis 1st FS 138
Bruce Li 8th FS 138
Kyle Gallo 6th FS 175
Kyle Gallo 8th GR 175
Peter Mocco 1st GR 190
Peter Mocco 3rd FS 190
Liam Davis 4th FS 113
Robert Kucharczk 5th FS
190
Alexander Smith 6th FS
215
Michael Mocco 3rd FS 285
Jacob Levy 6th FS 285
RJ Phelan 5th GR 106
Koa DeLoach 7th GR 113
Myron Mendez 3rd GR 215
Zeno Moore 4th FS 157
Lucas Boe 7th FS 165
Robert Kucharczk 5th FS
190

Women's

Abigail Gonzalez 3rd 120
Kendal Haynie 4th 115
Makayla Ocean 4th 207
Kendall Bibla 3rd 170
Ailee Briggs 3rd 4th 140
Torina Rushing 6th 170
Kiera Partello 7th 105
Mariah Mills 7th 110

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Please support the NWHOF Florida Chapter sponsors



The Florida Wrestling Room is the only website in the state covering all levels of wrestling from youth and high school and now even college wrestling, as we have three colleges in our state who compete in the NAIA.

Thank you to
Jim and Jan Cummings
for sponsoring the
Girls' Scholarship.

In Memoriam

Mr. Ira Fleckman, Class of 2006

Our deepest sympathies to his family.

Memories of Great Matches Involving Florida Wrestlers

Ira Fleckman,

Class of 2006, Contributing Writer

Editor's note: We will all miss Ira and his stories, but he left a few more for us in the archives.



TROY TURNER:

As hard-nosed a wrestler as ever competed in Florida.

Troy wrestled for Seminole HS in Sanford. He made it to the State Finals three years in a row. Troy was powerful but didn't have a great deal of technical skill. He certainly knew how to wrestle and he was tough as any wrestler who ever laced up his boots here in Florida.

In 1985, Troy made it to the finals and had to face Mark Surette of Seminole HS in St. Petersburg. That has to be confusing in the record books, both wrestlers from Seminole HS. Surette pounded Troy without let up and won 19-8. Troy never quit but kept battling the entire match. That was at 155.

The following year, 1986, also at 155, Troy broke his thumb in the first period of the match in the semi-finals. He continued to wrestle and won the bout. After going to the hospital, the doctor refused him permission to wrestle and he had to default in the finals to a wrestler he had beaten in a dual meet during the year.

However, the third time was the charm, as they say, in 1987 at 167 Troy defeated Dennis Nelson of Countryside to win his state championship 9-1. Troy was a respectful young man who had dreams of racing cars in the professional racecar world. His younger brother Tracey wrestled, too and was pretty good himself. Troy stuck it out and won and with that attitude,¹⁹ if he races cars, he will probably win in that venue, too.

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.

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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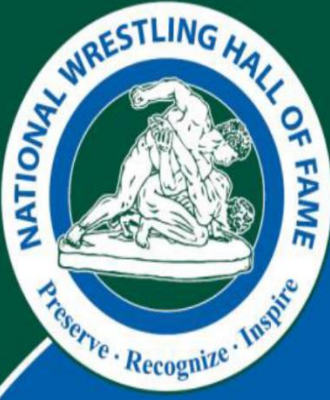
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TBA, Girls

WEBSITE: <http://nwhof.org/state-chapters/florida>

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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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