National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum Florida Chapter



NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 2 Fall 2022



The President's Podium

In late August, the Florida Chapter of the NWHOF held our annual Honors Weekend. I have to say it was one of the most successful inductions we've held in the last 23 years. In attendance was Lee Roy Smith, Director of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, Rich Bender, Director of USA Wrestling, and 415 men, women and children to honor seven deserving individuals and the recipient of the John Vaughn Award. As we proceeded through the weekend of events, beginning with the Friday Night Social, I watched as these individuals being honored were reunited with old friends and family from the past 40 plus years. Then, Saturday morning we enjoyed a testimonial breakfast to praise a wonderful young lady and seven gentlemen. There was laughter and tears as sixteen speakers reminisced on the effect and impact those being honored had on their lives.

During the afternoon break, I observed many attendees relaxing in the lobby visiting and catching up. Others were at the pool with friends and family having a drink and swim. While the honorees were enjoying their free time, it was time for our Board of Directors to prepare for the evening events. We had twelve board members and many of their wives and volunteers preparing the Banquet Hall – placing programs on tables, arranging awards, testing the sound and videos, handling last minute reservations, assigning table seating, and Dan Ward conducting interviews of alumni and inductees,

At 4:15 PM, it was time for the inductees to meet with the board members, all dressed in their tuxedos for a photo session. Then it was off to another short social to mingle with over 400 guests. At 5:45 PM, the doors opened to the banquet hall for all attending. The inductees and their escorts moved to a private room to stage their introduction. A brief but impressive ceremony launched the evening, with a delicious dinner prepared by the hotel staff following the ceremony.

The award presentations began with a short video of those being honored. For the first award, each inductee selected someone special in their life - a coach, friend, or family member - and, along with Lee Roy Smith, bestowed the Hall of Fame plaque. Then, the time had arrived for each inductee to share the impact wrestling has had on his or her life. Again, there was laughter and tears as they shared. Finally, to conclude the evening, the Green Jacket presentation, which is exclusively worn by Hall of Fame Members. You can travel anywhere in this country and, if you are in that jacket, you will be recognized by the wrestling community for your lifetime service to wrestling.

I hear this over and over again from the inductees, "the weekend was unbelievable and a life changing experience."

My wife and I have been asked many times, "why do you commit so much of your time to do this?" It's not just the two of us. We have 14 board members plus volunteers who dedicate a large part of their lives working in this organization to make this event an unforgettable weekend. The Florida Chapter also presents scholarships, sponsors high profile speakers at the State Championships and supports a Mobile Florida Wrestling Museum.

I know I speak for all of our board members as to why do we do this year after year. It is easy: when you see the joy in the hearts of all the people we've impacted and the memories created, I believe these individuals and their families will hold these moments for an eternity. The question "why do we do it?" is simple. Why would you not want to be a part of this?

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

Gary Townsend



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The Florida Chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame Honors Weekend for the Class of 2023 is August 25-26, 2023.

Mark your calendars now!



2024 NOMINATIONS

Bob Burns. Class of 2007, Alumni and Nominations Director for the Florida Chapter Dear Wrestling Community,

Nomination have closed for the 2023 Induction Class. The Inductees will be notified in February.

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

When the nominations window opens for the Class of 2024. applications can once be downloaded from our website at https://nwhof.org/state-chapters/florida.

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.

"The attributes you learn and develop through wrestling will take you far in life, and the friends you make will last a lifetime."

--George Diugolonski, Advice from Champions, page 53



ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Juan Camarotte Class of 2007

Juan spoke with Alan Solomon (Class of 2016) a short time ago and had some thoughts to share:

- Juan and Lynn have been married 30 years.
- The main focus in retirement has been his family
- He coached for 35 years
- Juan credits Mort Geller, Jim Husk, Rich Tucci, and Chuck Almeida with his success
- He said he became a "student of the game" and also went to clinics
- Juan is trying to live a healthy lifestyle. His daily routine includes seven hours of sleep, at the gym by 5 AM, and eating clean.
- He volunteers to clean pools and cut grass
- One of Juan's hobbies is dancing, another is watching sports on TV.
- Juan feels the key to life is "Love yourself, which makes it easy to love others".

"THE WILLS"

We WILL put the team first.

We WIL not make excuses.

We WILL not blame others.

We WILL never quit.

We WILL lift each other up, not tear each other down.

We WILL display proper sportsmanship at all times.

-Josh Nolan, Advice from Champions, page 173

HONORS WEEKEND 2022

The weekend kicked off - or began in full swing! - with a round of golf Friday morning, August 26, on the Disney Lake Buena Vista course. Don Smith, Class of 2011, and the Florida Chapter resident go-to-guy on all things golf, submitted this report.



This year's **golf outing** was, to say the least, a very soggy event. We had 20 golfers sign up, and we had 20 golfers start the round. The course was very water-logged, causing us to play "cart path only" golf. This proved to be a challenge for every one and several groups did not finish the round. Mother Nature won again and created a very challenging day. Thanks to everyone who played.









Friday evening at 8:00 PM, people gathered for a **Meet the Inductees Social**. The social time quickly turned into a reunion of family and friends of all the Inductees.













Midway through the Social time, two special events occurred. Miriam Jenkins was receiveing the John Vaughan Award, created to acknowledge a deserving individual who otherwise may not receive recognition for their profound contribution to the sport of amateur wrestling in the state. As Paul Harvey used to say, "and now, the rest of the story", from her coach, Ryland Wagner:

"Miriam had lost her letter jacket throughout her many moves with the military. And she wished she could have it back. When I found out that she would be receiving the John Vaughan Award, I ordered a new letter jacket, swung by the school and picked up the pins and letter and ordered a State Qualifier Patch. My intention was to surprise her with the Jacket at the Social on Friday evening. The Hall of Fame did a great job of making that happen. Miriam was truly astounded, I had never made another mention of that conversation we had, so it was truly out of the blue."

Ryland arrived at the Social with a big box. There were tears, there were hugs, there were smiles – and they were from Miriam and the people in the crowd!







After the presentation to Miriam, the inductees were individually introduced to all gathered at the Social. The inductees took seats at a table to sign t-shirts and programs for one another, two unique momentos of the weekend.







Also during the Social, and before the Testimonial Breakfast and Induction Dinner, the Florida Chapter's Mobile Wrestling Museum was open and available for all attendees. (See article on page 20 for more details.)





It is almost impossible for all who are present at the **Testimonial Breakfast** on Saturday morning not to feel the love and respect that the speakers have for the Inductees. Individuals selected by each member of the new class had the opportunity to share their story on how the inductee impacted their life through the sport of wrestling. The speakers gave words to the deep feeling of accomplishment and life-changing passion. Laughter and tears were both evident during the testimonies, helping all in the room appreciate even more why these individuals were being inducted.

Quotes from the Saturday Morning Testimonial Breakfast

Speaking on behalf of John Lawton

Mr. Jeremy Walton: "From phone calls to mat-side talks to rule book discussions to match breakdown, he spent many hours with me helping me understand what it took to become truly great at this craft.

Like many of you, his greatest and enduring legacy will be the legacy that he had a hand in developing in others. Thank you, John, for your friendship and mentorship.

Mr. Ira Fleckman,

Class of 2006:

"Dedication as a volunteer official and willingness to take on leadership positions may be the half everyone sees of John Lawton's contribution to Florida's amateur wrestling, but it would be a huge oversight to not cite his friendship and contributions to individuals in our wrestling community."

Speaking on behalf of Jeff Levitetz

Mr. Rich Bender: "Jeff is the quintessential figure in USA Wrestling. He is inspirational, a role model, and a mentor."

Mr. Derek Sikora: "Lessons from the sport of wrestling have shaped Jeff into one of the most humble and caring people that I know."

Speaking on behalf of Kevin Pedersen

Major Michael Pedersen,

U.S.M.C., Ret.: "Kevin, you took all the things that Mom and Dad taught us ... and that wrestling taught us ... and you applied it all to a life OFF the mat that is truly deserving of the title, 'Outstanding American.'"

Captain Daniel Pedersen,

U.S. Army, Ret.: "When I think of the West Point motto, Duty – Honor – Country, the first thing that comes into my mind is my father. It perfectly encapsulates my father's character and who he is for me. He is a rallying point. He builds courage for me when mine is uncertain. He reaffirms my faith when I lose sight of it. He creates hope for me when I don't see it."

Speaking on behalf of David Phillips

Mrs. Ellen Phillips: "The final words come from the heart of Dave's wrestlers to show the depth and sincerity of love they have felt for him over the years."

."

"You taught me lessons so that on the mat of life my children may be touched by your hand, your life. You are the one who grew with me, fought for me, prayed for me, and loved me. Now you live on in me. I am your wrestler. You are my coach. Forever grateful."

Major Michael Pedersen,

U.S.M.C., Ret.: "Dave always had the right answers, the right strategies, and the right solutions. Dave the COACH trained his wrestlers on how to win on the mat, with classy sportsmanship. Dave, the MENTOR, showed them how to win in LIFE."

Speaking on behalf of Mark Prince

Mr. Dustin DeNunzio: "Coach, you have impacted my life in more ways that I can ever remember."

Connor Prince, 1st Lt.,

USMC: "There's never a time when I am on the phone with him that he doesn't say 'I love you and I am proud of you', so today, Dad, I get to say I love you and I am proud of you."

Speaking on behalf of Humberto Reyna, Jr.

Mrs. Jennifer Rojas: "Coach Duck isn't the type of person that likes to be in the spotlight at all. But he deserves all of it!"

Mr. Patricio Lugo III: "Coach Duck has played a big role in my life, someone I've looked up to you, someone I can count on, someone I want to be more like each and every day. He's definitely one of my role models. He's changed my life for the better."

Speaking on behalf of Bryan Wilkes

Mr. Travis Cochran, Bryan's former assistant coach and a fellow

Marine as is Bryan: "Coach Wilkes' famous line 'If it don't hurt, it don't work'."

Mr. Bob Thomas,

Class of 2017:

"Bryan made sure Hooters was a big part of our coaching experience and even designed our 1992 T shirt using Hooter's colors."

Speaking on behalf of Miriam Jenkins

Mr. Ryland Wagner: "She paved the way for all the excellent female wrestlers that were to come. And she did it all with an infectious smile on her face. She was constantly having to prove she belonged in this sport.... until she didn't have too anymore."



Rich Bender Director USA Wrestling

Daniel Pedersen, Capt. U.S. Army, Ret.

Mrs. Ellen Phillips

Connor Prince 1st Lt., USMC

Mrs. Jennifer Rojas

At the completion of Saturday morning's event, Inductees, Team Leaders, Board Members, and others involved in the evening ceremony attended a Staging Meeting. When practice was over, the inductees then set up their memorabilia tables, which was available for view during the Social Hour before the Induction Banquet. The tables displayed each inductee's history through newspaper articles, awards, and artifacts from their wrestling careers









The **Hall of Fame Induction Banquet** began with a pre-banquet social, where more stories were shared, exhibits in the Wrestling Museum were examined, and the inductees' memorabilia tables were admired.

When the doors to the banquet hall opened at 5:50 PM, guests were seated near the inductee. The opening ceremony included each inductee and their escort being introduced to all attendees.



Humberto Reyna, Jr. with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Humberto Reyna, Sr.



Bryan Wilkes and his daughter, Logan



Mr. and Mrs. Jeff Levitetz



Mr. and Mrs. David Phillips

The celebration continued with a delicious dinner. At the conclusion of the meal, guests watched an informative video on the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. Two special presentations, the President's Award and the John Vaughn Award, followed the video.



Bill Combs receiving the President's Award from Gary Townsend



Miriam Jenkins receiving the John Vaughan Award from Jane Townsend

Finally, it was time to hear from the inductees just how the sport of wrestling had impacted their lives. We then observed, applauded, and cheered as the inductees received their plaques, medals, and their new National Wrestling Hall of Fame Green Jackets.



L to R: Bryan Wilkes, John Lawton, Jeff Levitetz, Kevin Pedersen, David Phillips, Humberto Reyna, Jr., and Mark Prince.

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!

If you were to ask John Lawton, Jeff Levitetz, Kevin Pedersen, Dave Phillips, Mark Prince, Humberto Reyna, Jr., and Bryan Wilkes what they remember from the weekend, each one will have a very different memory. So much happens that there is no way to recall every conversation and every detail. A month later, some of the Class of 2022 did share their overall reactions:

"The Hall of Fame Honors Weekend was one of the highlights of my life!"

– John Lawton

"A humbling and extremely honoring weekend that will be cherished by my family and myself for the rest of our lives." – Kevin Pedersen

"The weekend was extremely well organized and first class in every aspect leaving the inductees, their families, and friends free to revel in the honor of being selected to join such a prestigious group!" – Dave Phillips

"The HOF weekend was overwhelming, and I was humbled to have so many people to come back to say 'thank you coach'." - Mark Prince

"I am forever grateful for all the memories that I gained in those PRICELESS days!" – Humberto Reyna, Jr.

"A wonderful couple of days that made me feel special and allowed me to celebrate this humbling moment with my mom, family, friends, and wonderful wrestling family." – Bryan Wilkes

Scenes from the Class of 2022 Induction Banquet













Let go of fear, let go of expectations, and go for it!"
--Zach Esposito, *Advice from Champions*, page 55

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Official Position

Jim Smoot, Class of 2019, Officials Representative on the NWHOF Florida Chapter Board

Fellow Officials, it's time once again for the start of high school wrestling season. Hopefully, everyone had an enjoyable summer and are healthy and ready for the new year. I congratulate those of you who were able to work the summer wrestling season which helped improve your skills and knowledge of wrestling and officiating.

This year's season sees only a few rule changes and clarifications. The facial hair rule has been modified to allow for a wrestler to have facial hair as long as the skin is visible enough to conduct a skin check. The only other rule that changed was about shoelaces that become untied or come off. Both situations are now only a technical violation for stalling. In the situation when the stalling call for the shoe coming untied or coming off would result in a 2-point stall call, the match would not be stopped until significant action or significant scoring situations have ended.

Many rules were clarified, such as what a female wrestler shall wear as an undergarment when wearing a one-piece singlet. Also clarified is the option of an additional undergarment when wearing a one piece or two-piece uniform. Another one is that recovery time should not constitute an HNC time out. There are a few other clarifications which relate to the stalling calls. Be sure to read your rule book and case book on the new modifications and clarifications.

I'm looking forward to another great boys and girls high school wrestling season. The most successful officials will be those who know the rule book, proper signals, and good positioning. A good official is never afraid to discuss a call at the table and to make sure the correct call was made even if they were initially wrong.

Good luck to all. Jim Smoot

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Museum Memo

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

In keeping with the goal of the National Wrestling Hall of Fane to preserve wrestling history, the Florida Chapter displays its Mobile Museum at the FHSAA State Tournament and Honor Induction Weekend. Through its museum project, the Chapter hopes to rekindle memories and stimulate conversations and stories of great former wrestlers, coaches, matches, teams, contributors and travels among others. At our recent displays several current high school coaches commented that they were pleasantly surprised to find their photos in displays of national teams they were members of as high school students.

One of the more popular displays in the museum is the banner of College Coaches of Florida, showing former great wrestlers from Florida who have gone on to coach at the college level. A display very popular with young wrestlers is the international wrestling pins collection donated by Charlie Zies. Another attention getting display is that of FHSAA State Programs from past years. Many visitors love to see a program that they are listed in. Former Gainesville High wrestling coach Ryland Wagner recently spent many, many hours at the FHSAA Office collecting and digitizing the results of every state wrestling tournament going back to 1964!!! We plan to print hard copies of these results for future museum visitors to view and also make available on our Chapter website.

Our museum includes photos of the 1972 USA Olympics Team. Speaking with high school wrestlers, it was very surprising to learn that most did not know about the wrestling legends on the team, presenting an opportunity to share some history and

how much they can learn at the website of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame, https://nwhof.org/national-wrestling-hall-of-fame

The museum is a work in progress, with new display items being added to the exhibits. Recent additions to the museum include a poster of the Inaugural FHSAA Girls State Tournament podium photos, a poster listing all the NCAA Division I All-Americans over the years from Florida, and a poster of Florida's 2012 Olympians. We will continue to add to and improve the museum collection. If anyone would like to donate to support our museum project contact Pete Collins at petecollins52@gmail.com



Front L-R: (manager?), Sergio Gonzales – 48 kg, James Carr – 52 kg, Richard Sanders – 57 kg (S), Gene Davis – 62 kg, Dan Gable – 68 kg (G) (NWHOF 1980), Wayne Wells – 74 kg (G) (NWHOF 1982), (last - coach)

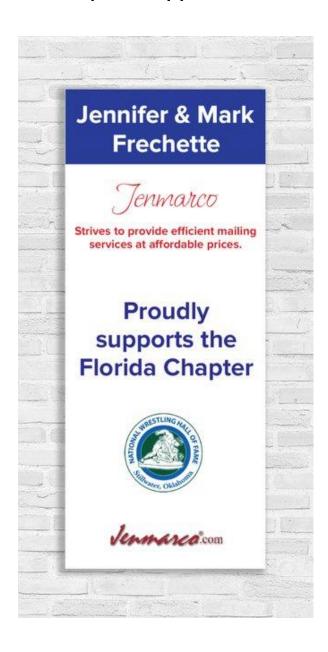
Back L-R: (two coaches) John Peterson – 82 kg (S) (NWHOF 1986), Ben Peterson – 90 kg

(G) (NWHOF 2002), Henk Schenk – 100 kg, Chris Taylor - +100 kg (B) (NWHOF 2012),

(two coaches)

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Website Wonder

Bob Thomas, Class of 2017, Media Services Director on the NWHOF Florida Chapter Board

Florida Chapter Next Level Scholarships Offered for 5th Year

Florida High School Wrestling has reached the Next Level. Florida scholarship athletes are wrestling for Iowa, Oklahoma State, Penn, Keiser, Southeastern, Liberty, Life, and more. College is expensive and we are helping.

The Florida Chapter is pairing with the South and Central Florida, Law Offices of *Kleinman & Lessmann*, to sponsor a \$1000 'Boys Next Level Scholarship' to be awarded to one qualified Florida high school senior who will wrestle in college. 2023 will be the 5th year for this program. Our chapter is also proud to enter into a 3rd year of partnership with Jenmarco to offer the same opportunity for senior girls advancing to the next level. The application process has begun and is available on our website. Under the guidance of Development Director Jeff Malavsky sponsors have agreed to continue to support the program for five more years.

https://nwhof.org/state-chapters/florida/news/next-level-scholarships-2023-open-for-application

"Always have a positive attitude in everything you do, not just your wrestling. A smile on your face and an optimistic attitude go a very long way in being successfu"

--Chuck Yagla, $Advice\ from\ Champions$, page 138

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

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

MARVIN DAVIS, SOUTH DADE HS

I can't recall any one match but I can't forget Marvin Davis. Marvin was one of Coach Mike McCoy's favorite wrestlers. Marvin was over six feet tall maybe around six three or better. He was built for speed with long limbs and an easygoing disposition. Marvin was always very respectful around me and I can't recall him even raising his voice.

As a Coach McCoy wrestler, Marvin could throw as well as wrestle in any position. He won the Florida State HS Championship in 1992 and the previous summer he placed THIRD in both Greco-Roman and Freestyle. His All-American record was thirteen and three over the six days of national competition and he was a double All American. I can't say if he attended Nationals his senior year or what his record was.

Marvin Davis was undersized as a heavyweight. I recall that after one practice he weighed out at around 225. That would not have caused any concern if he was wrestling at 220 but Marvin wrestled at 275. He was lifting weights and trying to gain weight for his football career. I believe Marvin Davis took his wrestling very seriously and there isn't any question that he gave his best effort during wrestling season and the results speak for themselves. However, like with many Florida heavyweights, it would have been interesting to see just how great a wrestler Marvin could have been if he weren't also an exceptional football player.

Marvin Davis did go on to star at the University of Miami. He was small for his position but made up for it in speed and determination. I don't know if Marvin went on to the professional ranks or not or if he added weight to his frame but I can never forget Marvin Davis, Florida's little heavyweight.

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:

National Wrestling Hall of Fame - Florida Chapter 1505 Crowberry Lane, Sebastian, FL 32958

Our email address is nwhof.fl@att.net

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Gary Townsend, President gltownsend@bellsouth.net

Don Smith, Vice President djs4track@gmail.com

Jane Townsend, Secretary nwhof.fl@att.net

Emily Drews, Treasurer emilydrews@msn.com

Sam Agresti, slagresti@comcast.net

Robert Burns, Nominations hofwrestle07@yahoo.com

Pete Collins, Museum petecollins52@gmail.com

Bill Combs, <u>mcbmbc@aol.com</u>

Jeff Malavsky, Development jmalavsky@aol.com

Robert Matyskiel, rem@pbcwhof.com

Bob Thomas, Media Services rtownsendt@1791.com

Jim Smoot, Officials jim_smoot@hotmail.com

Cecelia Solomon, Administrative Assistant Buckysmom@tampabay.rr.com

BOARD MEMBERS (one year terms)

Sal Basile, Coaches basile554@aol.com

Corey Sobers, FHSAA csobers@fhsaa.org

Kirwyn Adderley, Girls kirwynadderley@gmai.com

WEBSITE: http://nwhof.org/statechapters/florida

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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

CONTACT INFORMATION

National Wrestling Hall of Fame & Museum 405 W. Hall of Fame Ave. Stillwater, OK 74075

P 405.377.5243

F 405.377.5244

E info@nwhof.org

W www.nwhof.org

Dan Gable Museum 303 Jefferson St. Waterloo, IA 50701

P 319.233.0745

F 319.233.3477

E dgmstaff@nwhof.org

W www.nwhof.org