

The Father of New York State Wrestling - Sprig Gardner

By Joshua Casper

He didn't set out to create a legend, nor to become one. Sprig Gardner just wanted to start a high school wrestling program, and teach skills and sportsmanship to young athletes.”

- - Wrestling Hall of Fame on Sprig Gardner

He is ordained “The Father of New York State Wrestling.” A coach, educator, and pioneer, Frank “Sprig” Gardner founded a wrestling program at New York’s W.C. Mepham High School. Two decades later,

he had built an empire; almost fifty years since he coached his last match, Sprig Gardner’s influence is still manifest in the amateur wrestling community.

Sprig Gardner never wrestled himself.

He would elude to his days as a college boxer at Franklin and Marshall, but said that he hit the mat so much, Sprig decided to stay down and learn about wrestling. Despite never competing, no one figure has