



Wrestling USA

1999 State Editor of the Year Don W. Vest, Ph.D. - Kansas

Don Vest grew up in the small town of Braman, Oklahoma. This school did not have wrestling but Vest attended duals and tournaments at the nearby Blackwell High School. Between his sophomore and junior years of high school, his family moved to Stillwater. There he wrestled at 130 and 136 lbs. for Charles Hetrick, a former coach at Blackwell and the mentor for several NCAA champions and All-Americans. Myron Roderick was the coach at Oklahoma State during Vest's enrollment at the school. These were some of the glory days of Oklahoma State wrestling in the early 60s. During this time, wrestling was the favorite sport on campus with Gallagher Hall packing them in for many exciting matches.

Graduate school at the University of Kansas took Vest away from exposure to high profile wrestling. To keep in the sport, he tried his hand at refereeing and learned a valuable lesson in humility! It wasn't until his sons started wrestling in the local kids' program in Topeka that he was introduced to a new role - coaching with the Topeka Tornado Club in 1983. Involvement with this club has continued, in some form, to the present. All three of Vest's sons, Sean, Beau and Justin, wrestled at Topeka High with Beau, making it to the state finals four times and winning twice. Justin was a two-time place-winner. Both of these sons continued their



wrestling at Missouri Valley College with Beau making the NAIA finals three-times at 118, winning once. Vest has also helped coach the Sunflower Wrestling Club, a spring and summer freestyle club. Further involvement with high school wrestling occurred with keeping the stats for the area wrestlers in an honor roll for the local newspaper.

In 1983 and 1984, Vest was co-editor of a wrestling magazine called *The Mid-American Wrestler*. This magazine covered the sport in the midwest and

had articles on training, sport psychology and interviews with several successful competitors and coaches.

In 1992 Vest was asked by the late Bob Cairns to help with his editorship for Kansas for *Wrestling USA Magazine*. This was followed by the publication of several articles on the sport of wrestling along with annual state reports. Working with the sport of wrestling in Kansas has been quite satisfying to Vest, primarily because of all the fine people in the state like Chuck Elvin and Bill Stanhope. Vest was recently involved in being a color commentator with coach, Richard Fergola, for the telecast of a league tournament in Topeka. He sees such telecasts as sparking more interest in the sport for this area of the state. He also reports that he hopes to work with a local radio station to cover some local duals next season.

Vest has worked at Washburn University in Topeka for the past 29 years. He is currently Coordinator for Counseling and Testing Services for the University. He looks forward to many more years of working with the great sport of wrestling.

Thanks Don for your outstanding articles written specifically for the wrestling community and for taking the time to help *Wrestling USA Magazine* do a better job of covering wrestling in Kansas.