



# MASTER-OF-WRESTLING

## RUSSELL K. RIEGEL

Richmond, Kentucky

**R**ussell K. Riegel is known for numerous athletic leadership achievements and positive influences on his student athletes, the student body, faculty and his community. He was the school's first Athletic Director, a position he held for 35 years. Under his Athletic Director leadership, Hunterdon Central developed into one of the premier New Jersey high school athletic programs in the state, bringing the school and community recognition, respect and pride. Coach Riegel was wrestling coach, cheerleading coach and cross-country coach during his 35 years at Hunterdon Central (1956-1991). Coach Riegel is the 2nd winningest wrestling coach in the nation with 821 wins and still counting. He currently coaches wrestling at Harrison County High School in Kentucky. In 2002 he was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame. In 1984 he was inducted into the Gettysburg College Hall of Athletic Honor with a college wrestling record of 63-1. In 1984 he was *Wrestling USA Magazine* Hall of Fame Wrestling Man of the Year. While at Hunterdon Central, his teams won numerous Tournament, District, Sectional and State titles. He coached 11 State Wrestling Champions, had 5 undefeated seasons and was continually ranked in the top 10 wrestling teams in New Jersey.

Coach Riegel was instrumental in putting Hunterdon Central on the map with his excellence in coaching and teaching. He was years ahead of his time in promoting any sport he coached. He created the Hunterdon Central Invitational Wrestling Tournament, which is the longest running Holiday Tournament in the Nation. When he started coaching cheerleading, he elevated it to a sport by starting the DRC Cheerleading Competition. The sport never looked back, and the cheerleaders still compete today on a national level.

You didn't have to be one of his athletes for him to bring out the best in you. Coach Riegel also recognized the importance of fostering school spirit by involving students with talents in art, music and beyond in order to instill school pride across the entire student body. He saw that having the different curriculum depart-



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ments work together brought out the best in the school. The Pep Band that was formed with his guidance in the early 70s helped to draw over 2000 fans to the wrestling matches and basketball games on a regular basis. He has been a role model for countless wrestling coaches throughout the U.S. When interviewed recently, Coach Buxton of Blair Academy (the #1 high school wrestling team in the nation) credits Coach Riegel with promoting and elevating the sport. Many of his wrestlers went on to become head wrestling coaches at other high schools and developed successful programs in their respective schools. They attribute much of their success to Coach Riegel. His teaching, coaching and mentorship helped those who knew him develop and strengthen their self esteem, leadership and team building; life skills that go beyond sports into creating outstanding adult lives.

On March 27, 2010 Coach Riegel was one of four new inductees into the Hunterdon Central High School Hall of Fame. Coach Riegel, his wife Fran and family members traveled from their home in Kentucky to attend the event in Flemington, New Jersey.

### ACHIEVEMENTS

#### As a student athlete at Washington HS

- Played football, baseball, and wrestled
- 4-time NJ State Wrestling Finalist
- 2-time NJ State Champion

#### As a student athlete at Gettysburg College

- Played baseball and wrestled
- 4-time Middle Atlantic Wrestling Champion
- Record 63-1
- 1984 Inducted into Gettysburg Hall of Fame

#### Career at Hunterdon Central High School

- Athletic Director 35 Years
- Coached Freshman Football 8 Years
- Coached Cross Country 4 Years
- Coached Varsity Cheerleading 20 Years
- Coached Wrestling 35 Years

#### Wrestling Coach Honors

- Coached 10 State Champions
- Coached 70 NJSIAA State Place Winners
- 6 HCHS Wrestlers had 100 Wins
- Had 49 straight wins (longest winning streak)
- Started HCIWT (longest running Holiday Tournament in the nation)
- Hunterdon Central High School Wrestling Record 533-89-6
- Inducted into National Wrestling Hall of Fame
- 1964-65 100 Career Wins
- 1971-72 200 Career Wins
- 1976-77 300 Career Wins
- 1982-83 400 Career Wins
- 1988-89 500 Career Wins

#### Career at Harrison County High School, Kentucky

- 15 Years and still coaching
- Harrison County High School Wrestling Record 305-129-3
- Coached 2 KY State Champions
- Coached 4 All-Americans