

Meet MAC's HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES FOR 2016



• KENNETH BEESLEY •

KENNETH BEESLEY

Coach Kenneth Beesley was an outstanding championship football and baseball coach for 36 years at Natchez Cathedral High. A native of Natchez and a two-year baseball letterman at Natchez Adams County High, he was a three-year letterman, outstanding senior player and an All-SEC Western Division baseball star for Mississippi State. He launched his successful coaching career in 1970 and served his first eight seasons at Cathedral as an assistant coach. He worked 29 years as head football and baseball coach and led the Green Wave football team to 7 district titles, 1 Capital Athletic Conference crown in 1980 and 1 South State championship in 1993. Coach Beesley guided the baseball squad to 18 district titles, including a 12-year run from 1988 to 1999. His Green Wave diamond team won South State titles in 1984, 1988 and 1997 and state championships in 1982 and 1995. Overall, his football teams had a record of 203–112–1, while his baseball teams racked up 401 wins, 184 losses, and 1 tie. An eight-time Star teacher, Coach Beesley was named MAC Coach of the Year for baseball in 1982. Coach Beesley served in the Bernard Blackwell Classic All-Star Football Game as an assistant coach in 1994 and as head coach in the 1998 game. He was an assistant coach in the 1996 Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Football Classic. A MAC member since he joined the profession, he received the Amateur football award from the MS/LOU Chapter of the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame in 2002. He was also inducted into the Crossroads Diamond Club Hall of Fame in 2002 for his outstanding service to the high school all-star baseball contest.



• HERMAN SANDERS •

HERMAN SANDERS

Coach Herman Sanders, who hails from Shaw, was a multi-sport athlete and an All-American All-SWAC track star at Mississippi Valley State University where he helped lead the school to NAIA national track and field championships in 1980 and 1981. He began his 36-year coaching career at Leflore County High where he led the track team to a district title and North State championship. At Grenada High, he served as head boys' track coach and an assistant for girls' track, football, baseball and boys' basketball and paced the Chargers' track team to four district titles and a 1986 North State championship. Coach Sanders arrived at Wingfield High in Jackson in 1993 and turned the Falcons into a basketball and track powerhouse. During his career, he coached the Grenada Chargers and Wingfield Falcons boys' hoops teams to 7 district titles, 2 South State crowns, 2 South State runner-up finishes and a state championship. Coach Sanders has paced the Falcons boys' track squad to district titles, a South State runner-up finish and a state runner-up. In his 18 years as head coach of Wingfield's boys' basketball, his Falcons have a record of 370–193. During his career, his boys' track teams have won eight district crowns, four North State titles, two South State runner-up finishes and a state runner-up, while his girls' track teams have captured six district titles, four North State crowns and three state championships. He coached the South boys in the 2007 Mississippi All-Star Basketball Game and served as assistant coach, then head coach, in the 2011 and 2012 Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Basketball Games. Coach Sanders has won numerous Coach of the Year honors during his career and has served the MAC in many capacities, including in 2007–08 term as president. His community involvement has been extensive, and he has given back to his profession by speaking at clinics across the South. Herman was inducted into the MVSU Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998 and into the SWAC Athletic Hall of Fame in 2012 in track and field.



GINA SKELTON

• GINA SKELTON •

Gina Skelton has been a championship basketball coach for 35 years, guiding successful programs at Quitman, Forest, Wayne County and Carthage. Born in Meridian, Gina was a four-year letterman who was all-division and all-conference in track and basketball at Waynesboro Central High and played for the South in the 1977 Mississippi High School All-Star game. She continued playing basketball at Mississippi University for Women in Columbus. After completing her college education at MUW and Mississippi State, she started her coaching career at Pickens High in Alabama before arriving at Carthage, Forest, her alma mater at Wayne County and Quitman. Coach Skelton has coached basketball, track and cross country during her illustrious career, and her girls' basketball teams have earned 826 wins and 274 losses. She is the first female coach in Mississippi prep history to lead a boys' team to the state

tournament, as she guided the Forest Bearcats boys' team to a record of 19–10 and an appearance in the Final Four of the state hoops tournament. During her tenure at Forest, she originated the girls' slow pitch and cross country programs, and in one season, she coached nine different athletic teams at the school. Her legendary girls' hoops teams have won 19 district titles and 11 North/South crowns, made 28 playoff appearances with 16 state tournament finishes, captured 4 state runner-up trophies, appeared 8 times in the state semi-finals and claimed 4 state championships with 2 at Wayne County, 1 at Forest, and 1 at Quitman. Her teams have been ranked in the top 10 teams in the state on 14 occasions, and one of her teams was ranked as high as 12th in the nation. Gina's cross country teams won 12 division titles, 2 state runner-up finishes, 2 state championships and 3 individual state champions. Her girls' track teams won five division crowns, one South State title and one state runner-up trophy, with five individual state champions. Coach Skelton has been named Coach of the Year an amazing 19 times by various groups, including the Jackson *Clarion Ledger*, the *Meridian Star*, the MAC, MHSAA and the NFHS. She also has the unique distinction of being named Scott County Boys' Coach of the Year for her efforts with the Forest boys' team. She has been selected four times as an All-Star coach for the Mississippi/Alabama All-Star Basketball Classic and the Mississippi High School All-Star game. Gina has served as administrative coach for the MS/AL games on three occasions. Each one of Coach Skelton's teams earned Scholar Athlete designation, and all of her players have graduated from high school, with 95% of her players continuing their college educations. In 2011, Gina received the Southern Miss Lifetime Achievement Award of Excellence in Women's Sports. As a member of the MAC board of directors, she has served on the Basketball and Executive Committees and is the incoming president for 2016–2017.

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LARRY WEEMS

Coach Larry Weems has been an outstanding football coach at Meridian, Jackson Prep, Biloxi and Pearl. Born in Union, he was raised in Jackson and is a graduate of Forest Hill High. He was an All-State defensive back at Hinds CC in 1971 and received college degrees at Mississippi State and Southern Miss. He launched his 39-year career in 1975 as an assistant coach at Jackson Prep and Meridian. Coach Weems was on the staff of the 1977 Jackson Prep state title team and back-to-back Big Eight championship Meridian squads. After working as an assistant for one year at Ole Miss, he served as head coach at Biloxi and Pearl before returning to Meridian in 2006. Larry guided the Meridian Wildcats to South State titles in 2006 and 2010 and the 2008 Class 5A state championship. He coached his teams to eight region or division crowns, and he has been a part of six state championships teams. His football teams have a record of 164-74-0, for a 69% winning mark. A nine-time region Coach of the Year, Larry was named MAC Football Coach of the Year in 2008 and the NFHS Mississippi Coach of the Year in 2009. Coach Weems was an assistant coach in the 2004 Bernard Blackwell Classic All-Star Football Game and an assistant coach in the 2006 Mississippi/Alabama all-Star Football Classic, served as scout coach in the 2010 Mississippi/Alabama game and returned as head coach of the Mississippi squad in 2011. Coach Weems has given back to his profession and has spoken at numerous clinics throughout the state and the South. Larry was inducted into the Hinds CC Athletic Hall of Fame in 2011.



• LARRY WEEMS •

RICKY WOODS

One of the most accomplished championship football coaches in Mississippi history, Coach Ricky Woods guided gridiron programs at Ethel, Eupora, Ackerman, South Panola, Northwest CC, Bainbridge (GA), Peabody (Trenton, TN) and Starkville. Ricky hails from Choctaw County and received his college degree at Mississippi State in 1982. Coach Woods has been a member of the coaching profession for 34 years. After serving as head football coach at Ethel, he arrived at Eupora, where he coached from 1990 to 1994, leading his 1993 team to South State runner-up finish. He led the Ackerman program from 1995 to 2001, where his Indians had state runner-up finishes in 1996 and 2000 and won two Class 2A state championships in 1997 and 2001. In 2002, he was named head coach at South Panola and built a football dynasty that continues to dominate Mississippi high school football to this day. Coach Woods led his Tigers to an amazing 74-1 record, including an unprecedented 60-game winning streak from 2002 to 2006. His gridiron squads claimed Class 5A state championships with perfect 15-0 records in 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006, with *USA Today* national rankings each season. In 2007, Coach Woods moved to Bainbridge High in Georgia, where he guided his squad to the state quarterfinals one short season. He returned to Mississippi in 2008 where he coached the Northwest CC Rangers football teams to a 35-13 record in 5 seasons, including 2 North Division MACJC titles, an unbeaten regular season in 2010 with a #6 national ranking and the team's first bowl win in 20 years years. At Peabody High in Trenton, Tennessee, he led his team to the 2014 Class 2A state championship with a 14-1 mark. Coach Woods returned to Mississippi in 2015 and guided the Starkville Yellowjackets to the Class 5A state championship with a 14-1 ledger and a *USA Today* national ranking. Overall, Coach Woods has paced his gridiron squads to 284 wins and 63 losses, earning 13 regional or district titles, had 17 playoff appearances with 3 state runner-up finishes, 3 South State crowns and 7 North State titles and an incredible 8 state championships. Coach Woods has received numerous coaching awards during his career as he is a five-time MAC High School Football Coach of the Year and a two-time Jackson *Clarion Ledger* Coach of the Year. Other coaching honors include the MHSAA, the MACJC, the George Sekul CC Coach of the Year, the Gerald Ford All-American High School Coach of the Year, the Schutt Sports SW Region, the EA Sports National Coach of the Year and the NFHS Mississippi Coach of the Year. Ricky has the rare distinction of being named the *Clarion Ledger* Coach for the Decade for the span of 2000 to 2010. ♦



• RICKY WOODS •