

By Jan Rahn

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Longtime Plainsmen basketball coach and activities director, Larry Pritchett, has been selected as recipient of a special award this summer.

The Nebraska Coaches Association Board of Directors has chosen Pritchett to receive the 2013 Ed Johnson Award during the annual banquet on Sunday, July 21, at the Lincoln Station Great Hall located in the historic Haymarket district in Lincoln.

The honor banquet is held in conjunction with the annual multi-sports clinic where coaches-of-the-year, milestone and service award winners and the 2012-13 state champion coaches will also be recognized.

Pritchett has been the recipient of several other prestigious honors throughout his years as a dedicated coach and athletic director at Perkins County Schools. This one is very special and meaningful, however. Pritchett said he met Coach Ed Johnson in 1968, having sat beside him at a banquet honoring state championships—Pritchett's team had won state his first year as head coach; Johnson's Lincoln Northeast team had taken state the same year.

In describing his friendship with Johnson, Pritchett said, "He always treated me like I was a peer and always remembered my name. He was special to me from the start."

Pritchett said receiving this award in Johnson's honor and memory is very humbling.

The Nebraska Coaches Association established the Ed Johnson Award in 1975 to honor an individual making lasting contributions to Nebraska high schools in boys basketball.

Pritchett's Career

Pritchett was honored in September 2010 when he was inducted into the Nebraska High School Sports Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the Lied Center in Lincoln.

Always humble in his acceptance of such awards, Pritchett attributes his success throughout the years to his basketball players.

Pritchett retired from a 45-year career in 2009 at the end of the school year. He joined Jeff Skeels at the HomeTown Agency to take full advantage of an insurance license he has had in place for 25 years.

Honors/Achievements:

In addition to the mentioned Hall of Fame recognition in 2010, Pritchett has a history of being selected for honors and awards.

- In December 2009, "Pritchett Court" was unveiled within the newly named Larry and Marlene Pritchett Gymnasium at Perkins County High School.

- In February 2009 Pritchett was an inductee into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame as one of two selected from Nebraska and one of approximately 25 chosen from across the U.S.

- Pritchett was selected as Grand Marshal of the Perkins County Fair Parade in July 2008.

- During the previous month of June 2008, Pritchett was one of eight finalists in the National High School Athletic Coaches Association's selection of the National Coach of the Year in boys basketball.

- During March 2006, Pritchett was selected as Athletic Director of the Year in District 4.

Here is a review of Pritchett's professional career:

2008-2009—athletic director, Perkins County High School.

2005-2008—Plainsmen coach, athletic director.

2000-2004—athletic director, media specialist, Grant High School.

1987-2000—Grant High School.

1980-1987—private business sector in Grant.

1975-1979—Chase County High School, Imperial.

1973-1974—Cozad High School.

1965-1973—Perkins County High School, Grant.

Pritchett has served in athletic administration for 19 years.

As a native of Byers, Kan., and a Fort Hays State graduate, Pritchett began his career in Grant in 1964 as assistant coach to Ed Haenfler in football and Bill Ramsay in basketball and track.

Pritchett has 463 wins as coach of the Plainsmen, beginning at the start of the 1967-68 season. That year, the Plainsmen won the Class C state championship.

His record includes 55 wins at the state level where the Plainsmen captured two championships under Pritchett's reign in back-to-back tournaments in 1989 and 1990.

In March 2008, the Plainsmen took a trip to Lincoln to compete in the Class C state tournament, losing in the first round to the Ravenna Blue Jays. Pritchett retired from his coaching position following the tournament that spring with an overall win/loss record of 476-147.

Pritchett and his wife, Marlene, who works at Sargent Irrigation in Grant, have two grown sons, Troy and Travis, and two grandsons, Kyler and Calen who are Travis' sons.