

**By Jan Rahn**

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The high school coaching profession was exalted for the 14th time at a recent induction of 37 coaches into a hall of fame.

Coach Larry Pritchett of Grant joined one other Nebraska coach to be inducted into the 2009 National High School Athletic Coaches Association Hall of Fame in Minneapolis on June 23.

Pritchett rubbed elbows with coaches nationwide who were recognized and honored for their remarkable gift of coaching America's young athletes. Inductees ranged from Arizona and Illinois to North Dakota and New York.

He said he was surprised at the number of coaches recognized from a wide cross section of sports, such as a high school ski instructor from Washington D.C. who had coached 75,000 kids during his career, and a water polo coach from California.

The 37 inductees represent 23 states.

Humbled by being selected as a part of this noble group, Pritchett said, "I kept waiting for someone to tap me on the shoulder and say, 'we made a mistake!'"

Pritchett retired in February of this year after a 45-year career in education and coaching. His most recent position was that of athletic director at Perkins County High School in Grant.

He is trying to get used to a new work phone number in downtown Grant after having the school's number emblazoned in his brain for so many years.

Pritchett is working at the HomeTown Agency, putting to use an insurance license he has had for 25 years.

He and his wife Marlene, who works at Sargent Irrigation, have two grown sons: Travis and Troy.

Though Pritchett won't miss the extra hours spent on preparation of school events that went with his former job, come time for school to start this fall, he will feel the tug of his past career.

The many trophies and awards tied to his legacy will remain as a reminder to the school that they had one of the best of the best.

Other honors/achievements

- July 2008: Grand Marshal, Perkins County Fair parade.
- June 2008: One of eight finalists in the National High School Athletic Coaches Association's selection of the National Coach of the Year in boys basketball.
- March 2006: Athletic Director of the Year, District 4.

Teaching/coaching 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 Haenfeler 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 winning record includes 55 wins at the state level where the Plainsmen captured two other 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.