

October 29, 2023

Mark Evans
4119 Old Routt Rd
Louisville, KY 40299
(502) 592-8849

Dear KHSAA Selection Committee:

As a long time high school basketball coach, high school athletic director and a two term KHSAA Board of Control member, I am writing this letter of recommendation supporting Coach Gary Forrest's induction into the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame.

I had the pleasure of meeting Gary Forrest in the summer of 1992. I had just been named the new coach of the Oldham County girls' program and Gary was the first to welcome me to the community. Gary was Oldham County's Head Boy's coach. For the next five years I had the pleasure and opportunity to learn from one of the best. He took me under his wing. Our teams supported each other, and I learned from Gary through his games, his practices, my games, and my practices along with a lot of late-night phone conversations. It was obvious he was a very gifted coach that checked all the boxes.

Gary Forrest had a stellar coaching career as I have listed in his attached resume. His years are filled with years of team and individual accomplishments and awards. Gary was a dominant figure in the eighth region for over twenty years while the head coach of Oldham County High School.

Sixteen out of twenty years his team advanced to the 8th Region Tournament. Nine of the twenty years his team made it to the finals while winning five 8th Region Championships. Gary's peers voted him 8th Region Coach of the Year seven times. Gary has been inducted into several Hall of Fames. He earned the opportunity to be the first coach from Kentucky to be the head coach of The McDonalds High School All America Team. Gary was also selected in 2005 as head coach in the Kentucky/Indiana All Star Series.

Throughout Gary's career he was always about giving back to the game and helping others. When I left Oldham County in 1997 to return to Mercy as the Athletic Director and Head Coach, our friendship never wavered. Gary continued to mentor and to this day I know he has had a lot to do with our Mercy State Championship in 2010.

Coach Gary Forrest's exemplary career and his willingness to help others better themselves makes Gary an excellent candidate for induction into the Dawahares/KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Evans". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Mark Evans

KHSAA Hall of Fame Committee
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

Dear KHSAA Committee,

I am writing this letter of recommendation in full support of Coach Gary Forrest's induction into the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Coach Forrest's remarkable basketball coaching career is a testament to his dedication, leadership, and exceptional contributions to high school athletics. Everyone that has followed Gary's journey from being an assistant at Barren County and Somerset, to his long tenure at Oldham County understands what a tremendous job he has done.

Coach Forrest has devoted nearly 35 years of his life to coaching high school basketball in the Commonwealth where he consistently demonstrated a strong commitment to his players and his school. His extensive coaching career, filled with numerous team accolades and individual player honors, speaks volumes about his coaching ability and level of professionalism. Being named region "Coach of the Year" by his peers 7 times is a great example of his ability to inspire and lead his teams to success consistently. He also has the distinction of working over 40 consecutive years of our basketball camps at Transylvania.

Coach Forrest's impact extends beyond the basketball court, as he has also been inducted into several local Halls of Fame, including the 8th Region Hall of Fame, the Oldham County Hall of Fame, and the Metro Louisville Coaches Hall of Fame. These honors highlight the impact he has had on his community, where his influence extends far beyond his role as a coach. Even in retirement, he has stayed connected to high school basketball and serves in many roles that go unnoticed.

While his success as a high school coach is well documented, he also has been recognized for his involvement in big time events such as the Kentucky-Indiana All-Star Game and the McDonald's High School All-America games. These high-level national events are a testament to his ability to coach and develop the most talented young athletes in the nation. They also show how others in the coaching profession appreciate his insight and leadership.

Coach Gary Forrest's unparalleled record of achievement in high school basketball coaching, as well as his contributions to the community, make him an ideal candidate for induction into the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of athletes and coaches.

Thank you for the opportunity to recommend Coach Forrest for this prestigious awards, and I appreciate your consideration of him.

Sincerely,

Brian Lane
Head Men's Basketball Coach
Transylvania University

October 30, 2023

Selection Committee, c/o Commissioner Julian Tackett
Kentucky High School Athletic Association
2280 Executive Drive

Lexington, KY 40505

Re: KHSAA Hall of Fame Nomination

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Please accept this letter as an endorsement of the nomination of Gary Forrest for election to the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA) Hall of Fame. I have known Gary for over thirty years and feel well qualified to write in support of his candidacy. After a long and notable career, Gary retired as a teacher and basketball coach (for twenty years) at Oldham County High School. His teams won over 400 games along with numerous district and regional titles. He also served as head coach in the Kentucky-Indiana and Kentucky-Ohio basketball series. Gary served admirably as a teacher, mentor, friend and supporter to a lot of students, teachers and players over his career and remains an important influence in their lives today.

I am the former principal (7 years) at Oldham County High School when it was recognized as a "National School of Excellence", a retired superintendent (13 years) when Oldham County was the highest achieving county school district (1/120) in Kentucky, Executive Director of the 175 member Kentucky Association of School Superintendents (3 years), Interim Dean of the College of Education at UofL (6 years) and recently retired Emeritus Superintendent in Residence and Associate Professor in the Education Leadership program at the University of Louisville (7 years). I also served as Director for the Kentucky Superintendent training and testing program (15 years) and was a member of the Kentucky School Boards Association faculty cadre for professional development, facilitating sessions on Superintendent Evaluation, Ethics and Superintendent-School Board Relationships (5 years). I mention my extensive background only so you know my frame of reference to the position and community, and that I worked with

Gary Forrest in my capacity as Principal of OCHS and as Superintendent, during his tenure as Head Basketball Coach at OCHS.

I have observed Gary's progress and success over that time, including developing young people on and off the court, mentoring exceptional children (and including them as part of his team) and helping transition one large high school (OCHS) into three (South Oldham High and North Oldham High). While there has always been a rivalry between the schools, Gary was the leader in establishing and maintaining outstanding relationships between the coaches, players and students, in our community and statewide.

I have dedicated my comments to my professional observations and experiences with Gary Forrest over a thirty plus year period. I believe he is an exceptional coach and leader. I don't think I've been acquainted with another individual who has a better temperament. He is an excellent listener, works well as a member of a team, is focused in his work and does so with little or no supervision or need for personal recognition.

For all the reasons stated above, I believe Gary Forrest is deserving of selection to the KHSAA Hall of Fame and trust that in the event I can be of further assistance in your consideration of his candidacy, you will provide me that opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "W. Blake Haselton". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

W. Blake Haselton, Ph.D.

This letter is in support of Gary Forest for the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Gary has devoted his entire life to Coaching High School Basketball. He has had a fantastic career that has brought many championships and hundreds of wins. He worked for me at my summer camps for over 20 years and worked not only hard with his players but with many other players from other schools as well. Others will give specific won-loss records and championships which alone should put him in the Hall of Fame, but I want to iterate that Gary Forest is a Hall of Fame person. He is most deserving and I highly recommend that Coach Forest become a member of the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Thank you for this opportunity.
Coach Don Lane
Transylvania University -retired

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October 30, 2023

KHSAA Hall of Fame
2280 Executive Drive
Lexington, KY 40505

Dear KHSAA Athletic Hall of Fame Committee,

I am writing to enthusiastically endorse the nomination of Gary Forrest for induction into the KHSAA Athletic Hall of Fame. Gary's remarkable career as a high school basketball coach spans over three decades and is a testament to his unwavering dedication, exceptional coaching insight, and undeniable impact on the sport.

Gary Forrest's coaching career, primarily at Oldham County High School, is nothing short of remarkable. With a cumulative record of 421-168 as a head coach, his teams consistently demonstrated an exceptional level of skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship. These remarkable achievements on the court reflect his deep commitment to nurturing the potential of student-athletes.

What truly sets Gary apart is his ability to lead and inspire young athletes. He has been named 8th region coach of the year seven times, a recognition that attests to his exceptional coaching prowess and the respect he commands in the Kentucky basketball community. Gary has coached in high school all-star games multiple times, including the prestigious McDonald's All American game and the Kentucky/Indiana All Stars game, further solidifying his place among the coaching elite.

Beyond these honors, Gary's induction into the Oldham County High School Hall of Fame, Louisville Metro Hall of Fame, Doss High School Hall of Fame, and the 8th Region Hall of Fame is a testament to the lasting impact he has made on the communities he has served. He is not only an exemplary coach but also a dedicated and loyal member of the Oldham County community.

One of Gary's most remarkable qualities is preparing his teams and making them competitive against more talented opponents. His coaching transcends the scoreboard and instills lifelong values in his players. This unique talent is why he is respected not

only by his peers in the Kentucky coaching community but also by countless players whose lives he has touched.

Gary Forrest's loyalty to his players and school is commendable. He has been a mentor, a leader, and a friend to countless young athletes and coaches, helping them develop not only as basketball players and coaches but as responsible, confident, and upstanding individuals.

It is with great enthusiasm that I wholeheartedly recommend Gary Forest for induction into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. His remarkable career, numerous accolades, and profound impact on high school basketball in Kentucky make him an ideal candidate for this prestigious honor. Gary's legacy is a testament to the enduring influence of passionate and dedicated coaches in our communities, and his induction would be a fitting recognition of his contributions to the sport.

Thank you for considering this recommendation, and I am confident that Gary Forest's induction will enrich the legacy of the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

David L. Weedman

David L Weedman
Retired Principal of Oldham County High School



Tackett, Julian <jtackett@khsaa.org>

Gary Forrest HOF

1 message

Robby Speer <robby@sportsreach.org>
To: "jtackett@khsaa.org" <jtackett@khsaa.org>

Wed, Oct 25, 2023 at 12:20 PM

Julian,

I hope you are ready for another year of KHSAA basketball. I wanted to share with you why I believe Gary Forrest should be included in the KHSAA Basketball Hall of the Fame.

I have known him since 1987. As the Executive Director of Sports Reach, I've been privileged to work with him in a variety of ways. I enjoyed several years of just doing stats and helping practice. I quickly understood that Gary cared about his guys. He wanted them to be the best they could be. He was so consistent in what he wanted and expected.

I was so impressed with how he worked with players, that I invited him to help coach a college level of players to China. I think he did eight trips with us and was a great blessing.

Gary is an individual that should be in the HOF. He cares for his players, loves his school and community and willing to take these values around the world. Kentucky high school basketball is better off because of things "Coach Gary Forrest" brought to the table.

I whole heartily recommend Gary Forrest to be included in the KHSAA Basketball HOF.

God's Glory,
Robby Speer Sports Reach
#godsglory23

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Appreciate your time to read my submission.

One of my favorite thought experiments is to ask:

‘What do you think when you hear the word Acorn?’

Coach was a legend to me and to countless others whom were blessed to have him as their mentor.

When I was asked by Coach Mark Evans to write a few words, I was honored.

His resume speaks for itself, for which I’m sure your team has evaluated.

Couple mentions being the only Coach ever, up until then at least, to Coach in 2 separate McDonald’s games - one as an assistant, other as head.

Along w/ another in the Jordan Brand Classic.

Personally, Coach was my anchor. His instillment of process allowed my moral compass to take view of the sunset while understanding it was the team work in which provided us all to eventually set sail.

Graduating in 1996, and still holding Oldham County High School assist record, Coach provided me the platform to share with my teammates.

We had upwards of 25 half court plays / multiple inbounds / several presses and 3 defensive zone installments.

He was and is to this day - A Coach's Coach

Not sure of every single player, but to my knowledge, every young child whom stayed with his program is a successful member / family man / proactive person in their respective community and our collective society.

There are stats, wins/losses, districts regionals/state, acolytes and accomplishments.

But when you ask me about Coach Gary Forrest, his legacy as a professional High School Basketball Coach and why I wholeheartedly believe he belongs in the KHSAA Hall of Fame:

He turned acorns into Forests.

Respectfully,

Jimmy Cunningham

Class of 1996 - Oldham County High School