

NOV 06 2024

Dear Hall of Fame Selection Committee,

I am thrilled to recommend Marla Gearhart for induction into the Kentucky High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. As a long-time volunteer at West Carter for 34 years and someone who has known Marla and her family my entire life, I have had the distinct pleasure of watching her extraordinary journey through every level of the game.

Marla's prowess on the court is unmatched; she is truly one of the smoothest floor leaders I have ever seen. During her time as a Lady Comet, she, along with her teammates, forged the foundation for what would become the Lady Comet Dynasty in the 16th Region. Their hard work and dedication laid the groundwork for a historic state championship in 2000. She was named the 16th Region Tournament MVP, recognized as a 1st Team All-State player her senior year, and proudly became a member of West Carter's 2,000-point club. Enclosed, you will find high stat sheets detailing her remarkable achievements from 8th grade through her senior year.

After a stellar high school career, Marla continued to shine at Eastern Kentucky University. As a Lady Colonel, she joined the prestigious 1,000-point club, demonstrating her consistency and scoring ability. Her senior year was particularly impressive; she earned 1st Team All-OVC honors, averaging 19.6 points and 3.75 assists per game. Marla was instrumental in leading the Lady Colonels to the NCAA tournament for the first time in the program's history in 1997 and played a key role in ECU's back-to-back regular season OVC Championship teams in 1996-1997 and 1997-1998. In recognition of her outstanding contributions, she was named ECU's Female Athlete of the Year in 2000.

Marla's love for the game didn't stop at the collegiate level. She transitioned into officiating, where her influence continued to grow. Notably, she officiated the Girls State Tournament Championship Game in 2007 and made history as the first female to officiate the Boys State Tournament Championship Game in 2010. Her dedication to officiating earned her the title of KHSAA Basketball Official of the Year from 2006 to 2008. Furthermore, her college officiating career is impressive, having officiated in NAIA Division II National Championship games for four consecutive years, and serving as an official in various prestigious conferences, including SEC, Sunbelt, Conference USA, MAC, Missouri Valley, Horizon, OVC, and ASUN.

Marla Gearhart's impact on basketball and officiating is profound and far-reaching. She has not only excelled as an athlete but has also paved the way for future generations of female officials in the sport. Her commitment to excellence and her ability to inspire others make her a deserving candidate for the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Thank you for considering Marla for this honor. I wholeheartedly believe she will be a tremendous addition to the Hall of Fame, and I look forward to seeing her legacy celebrated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Perry". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "C" and a long, sweeping "P" that extends to the right.

Chris Perry