

Kathy Plank Archer, Conner High School Class of 1985

6 time State Champion in Track and Cross Country and a Basketball Star

Kathy Plank (Asher) grew up in the Northern Kentucky area. Being the only daughter with 3 brothers, she did what they did, played whatever sport was entertaining the neighborhood kids. Some favorites included basketball, tag football, tennis ball (baseball with a tennis ball), whiffle ball, ice-skating on frozen ponds, and any other games or events they chose to create.

Kathy formerly started playing sports in 5th grade on the girls basketball team for Goodridge elementary. She would go on to play until she graduated from Conner High school in 1985. She was quite talented on the basketball court with her name in the locker room for **the 1,000 steal club**. In **1985 she was named to the Kentucky All-Star Basketball Team**. She was not able to play in the all-star game as it was the same night as her graduation.

Kathy's real talent was running. Her brothers, Jeff (one year younger) and Tony (one year older) had joined the Conner High School cross country team so Kathy decided to join as well her sophomore year in 1982. **She started the women's cross team for Conner as she was the only female runner**. Kathy ran the same workouts with the guys. She was thankful they treated her like one of the team. Kathy will never forget her first race at Simon Kenton. She followed other women runners through the woods until there was a clear view of the finish line through a field. She took off and came in second in her first race behind Amy Pearce. Conner's coach Doward Williamson was jumping up and down with excitement as he said "You are going to state!" Coach Williamson was correct as **Kathy placed 4th at the Kentucky AA women's cross country meet her first year joining the team as a sophomore in 1982**. In her junior year, her dad, Eddie Plank, made a bet that if she won the state cross country race he would quit smoking. He had attempted many times and had been a smoker since the age of 13. To this day Eddie (age of 87), hasn't smoked another cigarette since his daughter won the state race in the fall of 1983. Kathy would also go on to **win the state cross country race her senior year as well. Her times were 1983 11:11 and 1984 11:19.**

One of Kathy's greatest cross-country highlights was being a member of the USA/TAC Junior Women's National team running for the Queen City Striders club in 1984. Conner High School coach Buddy Dittus encouraged her to be a member and was instrumental in getting her on the team.

This team was made up of the best women runners in Cincinnati, northern Kentucky, and Indiana. It was the first time Kathy had been a part of a competitive women's cross country team. Ohio women runners were competing at 3.1 miles (5000 meters) whereas KY women's runners were running 1.8 miles (3000 meters). Kathy worked hard and ended up becoming an All-American placing 6th at Nationals. Running on an ice covered, snowy course at Boys Town, in Omaha Nebraska, at the National Junior Olympic, Women's TAC cross country meet in 1984.

Kathy also excelled in track and field. She competed in 4 events in every team track meet for Conner High School until she went to the regionals. Her main events were the 1/2 mile, mile, 2 mile as well as high jump or long jump and sometimes the 4X440 relay to help her team score points.

She has state champion titles in the ½ mile, mile, and 2 mile races from 1982-1985

In her short 3 year running career at Conner High School she has 6 state titles and an All-American accolade. She set Kentucky records that were long lasting such as the 5:03 mile time. She laid the foundation for Conner High school's women's cross-country program.

During her induction speech at the KHSAA Hall of Fame, Pam Ragland of Bourbon Co. mentioned that Kathy Plank of Conner was the only runner to defeat her.

Kathy signed with Indiana State in 1985 on a 4 year, full scholarship where she graduated with a double major in Business Administration and Business management in 1989 making the Athletic Directors honor roll with a 3.79 g.p.a on a 4.0 point scale.

Kathy is indeed one of Kentucky's outstanding runners. and well deserving of this honor.