

To Whom It May Concern:

I take great pride in writing this letter of recommendation for Coach Wendell Wilson to be inducted into the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Coach Wilson's numbers certainly speak for themselves. With a record of 564-340 which places him number 9 in all time wins in state history and 3-14th region championships to go along with his record his numbers are impressive but there are more things to consider than just numbers when talking about Coach Wilson.

Coach Wilson spent 31 years as head coach of the Leslie County Lady Eagles and during that time he earned a reputation as not only a fierce competitor but also earned a reputation as one of the classiest and most respected coaches in the state. Although he was my toughest district rival for more than 30 years he also became my best friend in the coaching ranks. He was someone I looked up to and learned so much from. He taught me the importance of winning and losing with dignity and he taught me that we could battle to the final horn every night against each other and still respect each other and have a professional and personal relationship that we could be proud of. It always impressed me how humble Coach Wilson was when he won but what was more impressive was the class and dignity he always showed when he lost.

In sports we sometimes use the term legendary a little too loosely but in speaking of Coach Wilson I am very confident in saying that Wendell Wilson was and is a true legend in Kentucky girls basketball history and is most deserving of induction into the KHSAA Hall of Fame.

Respectfully,

Randy Napier

Perry Central High School.

I write in support of the selection of Wendell Wilson to the KHSAA Hall of Fame. My name is Jim Wooton and I am a retired county official of Leslie County where Coach Wilson has been a fixture in the educational system and the coaching ranks for decades. His won-loss record especially as the highly successful coach of the Leslie County Lady Eagles speaks for itself thus I will address the multiple facets of his career.

My first experience with Coach Wilson was as a high school junior when he began coaching baseball. His work ethic and commitment to developing the person as well as the player was evident from the start. To this day (fifty five years later) his "priority list" 1) God 2) Family 3) Academics 4) Team remains in my memory. He later went on to coach basketball and in the second year of the revival of girls basketball, he accepted the head coaching position and began building a program that won a district championship in his very first year against such competition as Hazard and M C Napier (now Perry Central). The ensuing years brought more district championships and in 1979 a regional championship which marked the first trip to a state tournament in any sport for a Leslie County team. As his assistant coach for the first four years I witnessed first hand the respect and devotion he had for his players. This County has a very high poverty rate and ranks among the poorest NATIONWIDE. He constantly raised money to feed the players at away games, to buy clothes including blazers and also provided rides from practice at times as this is a very rural county and some players lived in remote areas.

During one of those years, the boys program was without a head coach and Coach Wilson assumed the full time position and directed both boys and girls teams devoting countless hours to practice and games. In later years while still girls head coach he became an elementary school principal and drove over thirty miles round trip to practice each day.

As an example of the regard in which he is held in this county, in 1978 the Leslie County Recreational Center was built and President Nixon visited to dedicate the Nixon Gymnasium; the swimming pool was named after Willie Sandlin who was a Leslie county resident and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor in

WW I and the community meeting building was named after long-time U S Rep Tim Lee Carter. The ONLY subsequent dedication was the Coach Wendell Wilson basketball court.

In over fifty years that I have known him, I have never heard him utter a single curse word nor exhibit disrespectful behavior to a player, parent, family or officials. His example has led many players into being coaches themselves. Although my daughter did not play high school basketball, I would have not hesitated to entrust her care to Coach Wilson. I cannot think of a higher compliment to make.

I wish there were time and space for more examples and details of what he has done but I will finish by saying that considering the entirety of what high school sports should be, I know of no person more deserving of being selected to the KHSAA Hall of Fame. Thank you for your consideration.

Jim Wooton