

Dick Wooding

LIFETIME SERVICE TO WRESTLING

Highline Community College 1966-1079

Sumner High School 1980-1989

Dick Wooding started wrestling in 1958 at Anacortes High School and was coached by Hall of Famer Art Larsson. He continued his wrestling as a "Walk-On" at the University of Washington where he graduated in 1964 and along with Paul Jackson was one of 3 co-captains. He then served as a graduate assistant wrestling coach for the Huskies in 1965. As the growth of wrestling increased Wooding was recruited to be the first wrestling coach at Highline Community College in 1966. Dick grew the Highline wrestling program into one of the best in the state over the next 14 years until he left in 1979 as Highline College dropped their wrestling program due to limited competition. He then served as a volunteer assistant wrestling coach for 10 years under Sumner's wrestling coach, Hall of Famer Ed Arima.

During his collegiate coaching career, Highline College and the other community colleges in Washington did not attend the National Championships, but his teams were always very competitive including a dual meet win over the 1971 National Champions, Clackamas CC. During the 1970's the number of community colleges with wrestling programs reached a high of 14 schools then wrestling programs were dropped until there were only 2 left, Highline and Big Bend in 1979.

In 1981, Don McConnaughey, Highline's Athletic Director, received a message from Dr. Shirley Gordon, President of Highline College, stating that she missed not having a wrestling team and requested he call Dick about resurrecting their wrestling program. Wooding contacted two former wrestlers and developed an agreement where the school would fund 50% of the expenses of a wrestling program and the remaining 50% would come from private sources. They came up with the funding to restart the program. 36 years later the program continues and on several occasions has been recognized as the number one Academic JC wrestling team in the nation. With the promotion of tournaments, clinics, individual donations, some very special coaches and the continued support from Highline's administration, specifically John Dunn, Athletic Director, the program is approaching 50 years of age and is the longest lasting wrestling program in state history.

Dick Wooding has been honored for his timeless promotion of the sport of wrestling when he was inducted in 2002 as a contributor into the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame. The Washington State Wrestling Coaches Association Inducted Wooding into their Hall of Fame in 2007.

Dick and his wife Lorna, who from 1961 to 2015 has been in the stands as a vocal supporter of Dick, their sons and grandsons, and the entire family reside on or near Lake Tapps where Dick recently retired from the family commercial fishing business in Alaska. They have 3 adult sons, Tom ((52), Tim (50) and Mike (45) that wrestled and served as voluntary coaches in the Sumner School District. They have 4 granddaughters, Tanner, Lauren, Morgan and Kate. Dick's grandsons Tyler, Zack and Tucker also wrestled and from 1958 to 2015 completed 3 generations of Wrestling in the Wooding family.

Dick was not the only Wooding that started a wrestling team. In 2010, as a 7th grader Tucker, while attending Lake Tapps Middle School wrote a letter to the principle pointing out the positive reasons they should have a wrestling team and subsequently made a presentation to the school board. The results, a new team, 2 new mats and hiring his brother to be head coach and his dad, Tim, as assistant, positions they currently hold.

596 words