

I was honored to give an introduction speech and welcome my good friend Wayne Miller (WCHS class of 1973) to the Triton Athletic Hall of Fame on January 22nd, 2022. Wayne and I have been good friends since our grade school days. We were



teammates in high school in basketball and baseball. Football may have been his best sport though in high school. He was an All Wasioja Conference player twice and set numerous records. As I gave the speech that evening, I detailed some of his high school athletic accomplishments as many in the crowd were not familiar with Wayne. At West Concord High School, Wayne broke the season football scoring record with 104 points. He beat the previous record held by two Triton Hall of Famers; Mike Doty and Dave Vrieze, who both held the record at 96 points. Mike was class of 1970 and Dave was class of 1956.



Wayne also broke Dave Vrieze's rushing record for a season with 1211 yards. Dave's record was 857 yards. The career rushing yardage record also belongs to Wayne with 2,673 yards, breaking Roger Vrieze's career yardage mark of 1,628. Wayne also holds West Concord's record for most rushing yards in one game with 238 yards, breaking Mike Doty's record of 216 yards. Total career offensive yards, which is the combination of rushing and passing belongs to Wayne as well as he bested Doty's record which was 2,345 yards. Wayne total offensive yardage is 2,841.

Wayne went to Hamline University and was the starting running back for 3 years at the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) school. As a sidebar, something I didn't know until just a few months ago, Wayne was offered a free agent contract with the NFL's Minnesota Vikings. But he turned down the offer as he figured those bigger, faster, stronger defensive players would only give him a worse beating than he had in the MIAC.

In high school basketball, Wayne had some notable feats. He is third on the list of all time West Concord scorers trailing only two Triton Hall of Famers; Barry Hargens (WCHS class of 1984) and Dick Raddatz (WCHS class of 1954). Barry had 1242 career points and Raddatz had 1136. Wayne is third on the list at 1084 points. 41 of those points were scored in one game against Dodge Center, which is the single game record for West Concord. That happened in his sophomore year and my senior year. One play I remember in particular was right before halftime I threw the ball in from the other end of the court to Wayne who was near the half court line. He caught the ball and sort of threw up a very long hook shot that went in. That propelled us to a 91-77 win over the Dodgers.

One other note about Wayne's high school basketball career, in Wasioja conference games only, he scored the second most career points with 753. Only Triton Hall of Famer Craig Busch of Claremont had more with 767 conference points. Wayne was also the starting catcher on the high school baseball team from 8th grade to 10th grade. West Concord ended the baseball program after his sophomore season so he went to track and field and set a record in the 440 yard run.

Today, Wayne's best sport is golf. He has had 6 holes in one. Number 7 may come next summer as he spends a lot of time on the golf course. Congratulations Wayne.

Mr. Miller was not the only West Concord grad to be inducted to the Triton HOF this year. Ken Organ (WCHS class of 1988) was a multi-sport athlete but his best sport may have been track. He was fast as he ran the 100, 220 and 440. He went on to Gustavus Adolphus College where he was all-conference in the MIAC for indoor and outdoor track. He once ran at the Drake relays the same year that Olympians Michael Johnson and Danny Harris were competing. Congratulations Ken.

Team inductions this year to the Triton Athletic Hall of Fame included the 1981 and 1982 Claremont Softball teams, and the 2006 State Champion Triton football team. Other individual inductees include Greg Rathbun. Greg was a long time football and baseball coach for Dodge Center. He was also a MSHSL varsity basketball official for 35 years. He is currently in his 17th year as MSHSL baseball umpire. Another inductee this year was Chad Lenz, a 1990 graduate of Claremont HS, an outstanding 3 sport athlete for the Parrots.

Josh Spitzack, Triton Class of 2002, was inducted for his achievements in basketball and baseball. He attended Gustavus Adolphus and was a starting pitcher all 4 years in St Peter.

The final individual inductee was Alex Andrews Shepp, Triton class of 2005. In high school, Alex excelled in basketball, volleyball and track. She was a 1000 point scorer in basketball and had over 1000 kills in volleyball. Alex attended Minnesota State University-Mankato and in her senior year, she finished with All-NCAA central region honors in basketball and academics and the basketball team won the NCAA Division 2 National Championship that year.

Congratulations to all of the newest members of the Triton Athletic Hall of Fame.

Pictured below left to right is Wayne Miller, Mike Berg and Emery Kleven. Two cardinals and one parrot. Wayne and Emery played for the West Concord Cardinals while Mike was a 1969 graduate of Claremont HS and played for the Parrots. He played collegiate football at Northern Iowa University. After the Hall of Fame induction ceremony, we stopped out at the Dodge Country Club to celebrate. Somehow we were photobombed by Aaron Rodgers.

