

CENTRAL MISSOURI STATE TO INDUCT ELEVENTH HALL OF FAME CLASS

WARRENSBURG, MO (January 4, 2002) -- Ten individuals and three teams make up the 11th class of inductees for Central Missouri State University's Athletic Hall of Fame. The induction ceremony is scheduled for Saturday, Feb. 23, at a 9:30 a.m. brunch in the University Union Ballroom.

Chosen by the Hall of Fame selection committee for induction in the student-athlete category are **Keith Browne** (track and field - 1963-66), **Chris Mihlfeld** (wrestling and baseball - 1988-91), **Stacy Piontek** (volleyball - 1986-87), **Darrell Sears** (track and field - 1993-96) and **Bart Woods** (football - 1990-93). Chosen in the coaches' category is former Mules' baseball coach **Bob Tompkins** (1965-80). Chosen in the special recognition category are **Larry Bates**, **Clarence Cassing** and **James and Irene Whiteman**. The teams selected for induction are the **1976 Mules' cross country team**, the **1995 Jennies' volleyball team** and the **1995 Mules' basketball team**.

Browne, a graduate of St. Joseph Central High School, was the first individual NCAA national champion in Central Missouri State history. In 1966 he was the NCAA college division champion in the javelin, winning the event with a mark of 222' 5 1/2". Not only did he excel in the javelin, but he also had the rare distinction of competing in four varsity sports during his Central Missouri State career. In addition to competing in track and field, he also played football, basketball and baseball for the Mules.

Mihlfeld, a graduate of Kansas City's Winnetonka High School, was a national champion in wrestling and a four-year starter in baseball for the Mules. He won his national wrestling title in 1991 in the 158-pound weight class, compiling a 26-5-1 record. He also had a sixth-place finish as a freshman and was a national qualifier as a sophomore. His three-year wrestling record was 76-27-3. He was a four-year starter at third base for the Mules and played on three MIAA championship teams. The 1990 team, of which he was a member, finished fifth at the Division II Championship and was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1997. A career .325 hitter, he still shares the Mules' career record for games played with 196.

Piontek, who transferred to CMSU from the Air Force Academy, where she played two seasons, became the first Jennies' volleyball player to receive first-team all-America honors from the American Volleyball Coaches Association two straight years (1986-87). As a junior, she led the team in kills and service aces, while helping lead the Jennies to a 33-7 record, the MIAA championship and a second-place regional finish. As a senior, she was a key performer for the Jennies' NCAA Division II-runner-up team that was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1993. She led the team in kills and was second in digs, as the Jennies went 42-4 en route to their best NCAA finish in history.

Sears, a native of Freeport, Bahamas, is one of the Mules' all-time greats in the triple jump and long jump. He earned all-America honors nine times (seven indoors, two outdoors) in those two events (five in the triple jump, four in the long jump), placing sixth or better at six NCAA Division II championship meets. His top performance was a pair of third-place finishes at the 1996 Division II Indoor Championships. His nine all-America awards tie him with inaugural Hall of Fame inductee Mark Curp for the second-most in CMSU track and field history. In MIAA competition, Sears won six MIAA titles (four triple jump, two long jump). At the 1994 MIAA Indoor Championships, he won both the triple jump and long jump and was the meet's high point scorer, as he helped lead the Mules to their first indoor team title since 1955. He still holds the Mules' indoor triple jump record of 51' 5".

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Woods, a graduate of McCluer High School in suburban St. Louis, was the first Mules' football player to earn first-team Kodak all-America honors two straight years (1992-1993). He made the team in 1989 as a walk-on and was redshirted that season, then had four solid seasons at defensive end. As a redshirt freshman, he led the team in sacks and was a third-team all-MIAA selection. As a sophomore, he was a first-team all-MIAA pick. As a junior, he earned first-team all-America honors and was the MIAA defensive player of the year with a team-leading 10 sacks and 63 tackles. As a senior, he earned his second first-team all-America award and was co-MVP in the MIAA. He finished his career with 26 sacks and 266 tackles.

Tompkins, who died of cancer in 1996 at the age of 55, coached the Mules from 1965 through 1980. He compiled a record of 248-164-1 (.602), won three MIAA championships and made two trips to the NCAA tournament, finishing fourth in 1974. That team was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1994. His 248 wins rank second in career coaching wins among Mules' baseball coaches. Before becoming the Mules' head coach, he was a three-year letterman as a pitcher for them. He received the Vernon Kennedy Award in 1962 as CMSU's outstanding senior athlete. He designed the current Mules' playing field, which bears his name and has been the Mules' home since 1976. After stepping down from his coaching position, he devoted his time to his academic position of professor in the department of physical education. He did return briefly to the coaching ranks in 1985 to coach the Mules' and Jennies' tennis teams for two seasons.

Bates, who died Dec. 4 at the age of 75, graduated from Central Missouri State in 1949 and had a distinguished record of service to the university. He served as president of the CMSU Alumni Association in 1953 and also served as alumni director from 1982-84. He was a member of the CMSU Mule Train and an avid supporter of CMSU athletics. A scholarship is awarded annually in his name to a Mules' basketball player. He was an original member of the Hall of Fame selection committee, representing the decade of the 1940s, until his death. In addition to his service to CMSU, Bates played on the Mules' basketball team in 1943-44 and 1946-48.

Cassing, who graduated from Central Missouri State in 1951, also has a distinguished record of service to the university. He has served as president of the CMSU Alumni Association twice (1978 and 1993). He has been a longtime member of the CMSU Mule Train and President's Society. An original member of the Hall of Fame selection committee, he has represented the decade of the 1950s. As a student-athlete for the Mules, Cassing was a member of the Mules' basketball team in 1945-46 and from 1947-51. He was a member of the 1951 Mules' team that was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1998. Currently residing in Raytown, Cassing has been in the sporting goods business for 48 years and continues to serve as a goodwill ambassador for Central Missouri State in his many contacts with schools throughout the area.

Mr. and Mrs. Whiteman have been longtime supporters of the Mules and Jennies. They are members of the CMSU Mule Train, as well as season ticket holders. They have donated their time to numerous CMSU athletics functions. Back in the 1970s, when women's athletics was in its early stages of development, they initiated the creation of The Jennies Sports Club as a support group for the women's team. That group, along with some other separate support groups that had been created, later evolved into the CMSU Mule Train, which is now the athletics booster group. Mr. Whiteman's father, Clarence Whiteman, was an inaugural Hall of Fame inductee in 1992.

The 1976 Mules' cross country team, coached by Jim Pilkington, tied for eighth at the NCAA Division II Championship in Springfield. Individually, Ron Tabb finished sixth at the national meet and the late Rick Clear, a Hall of Fame inductee last year, finished 21st. Tabb's sixth-place finish allowed him to become the first CMSU athlete to advance to the NCAA Division I Championship. During the regular season the Mules won the Missouri Intercollegiate meet, which included most of the college teams in Missouri. They finished second in the MIAA meet behind Southwest Missouri.

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In coach Peggy Martin's 20th season, the 1995 Jennies' volleyball team may have logged more miles than any other Jennies' team, as it started the season with a trip to Hawaii and finished the season in Florida, finishing fourth at the NCAA Division II Championship with a 37-8 record. The Jennies won their 14th straight MIAA title with a 16-2 record, then won the NCAA regional on their home court, beating West Texas A&M in five games. At the Division II Championship at Barry University, the Jennies beat Nebraska-Kearney to reach the semi-finals, but then lost to Northern Michigan and Cal State-Bakersfield to finish fourth. Senior Krista Geick was a first-team all-America selection and senior Rachel Gatewood was a second-team all-America selection. Martin was named South Central Region Coach of the Year.

The 1995 Mules' basketball team, coached by Bob Sundvold, finished with a 24-8 record and capped the season with a trip to the Division II Elite Eight in Louisville, Ky. It was the farthest a Mules' team had advanced since winning the 1984 national championship. After finishing second in the MIAA and losing in the second round of the MIAA Postseason Tournament, the Mules picked the right time to get hot. They won an NCAA play-in game to qualify for the NCAA South Central regional, then proceeded to win the regional on the home court of MIAA rival Missouri Western after losing to the Griffons three other times earlier in the season. Senior guard Tyrone Latimer averaged 26.0 points per game, was named Division II player of the year by *College Sports* magazine, was named to three all-America teams and was the MIAA MVP.

The Feb. 23 induction brunch is open to the public. Tickets are \$12.00 and can be obtained by contacting the Central Missouri State athletics office at 543-4250 by Feb. 18. The 2002 inductees also will be introduced and recognized at halftime of the Feb. 23 Mules' basketball game against Emporia State.

To be eligible for selection to the Hall of Fame in the student-athlete or team categories, nominees must have completed their eligibility or competition at least five years prior to selection. Student-athlete nominees must have earned at least two varsity letters at Central Missouri. Qualifications and criteria are based primarily upon accomplishments at Central Missouri, but also may include accomplishments outside the university. Nominees in the coaches category must have completed their service to Central Missouri at least five years prior to selection. Nominees in the special recognition category can be selected without any restrictions on their dates of employment or service.

Pronunciations

Piontek	(Pea-ON'-tek)
Mihlfeld	(MILL'-feld)