



2006 Master-of-Wrestling Award

Bill Archer Huntington, West Virginia

Archer, former state champion at Huntington High and wrestler at Marshall, started coaching at Huntington High in 1971-72. He had his first state championship in 1974 in Richard Johnson at 138 pounds. Johnson repeated in 1975 to cap a second straight unbeaten season.

"He taught us patience, not to be quitters and to always look at the positive side," Johnson, now 50 and a pastor at First Baptist Church, said. "If you ever got in trouble, he was there for you. He's given great advice and it's had a lasting impact."

Johnson said Archer got his wrestlers involved with camps during the summers to help improve their skills.

"He was a major motivator," he said. "He gave us discipline. Be on time, respect those in authority, honor your parents. Whether you liked him or not, he had an affect on you. He touched you."

"His success endures forever. He's a trailblazer. He's taken a sport and exalted it. There's not a big (talent) pool around here. He promotes the sport and does all he can to compete."

"He's a special person," Mike Hayden, executive director for the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission, said while watching action on the eight mats. "No one knows how fair and ethical a person he is unless you've been around him. He has the highest degree of integrity. I'm glad he's staying around



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the state. I just wish I could see him win one (state championship)."

Dr. Bill Welker, rules interpreter and clinician for SSAC, former wrestling official and sports writer, said Archer provided assistance whenever needed from day one.

"He's a promoter, he's an ambassador. He's a coach's coach," said Welker, who writes a column *West Virginia Mat Thoughts* for *wvmat.com*. "He's a prolific reader and writer. When I started in 1984, he was very supportive, always willing to help. When you think of the West Virginia State Wrestling Tournament, you think of Bill and Diane Archer. They're quite a team."

"When I wrestled, and he was coaching, he was there to help," Sparks said. "No matter who you were, he would help you out. When I started coaching and truly needed help, I called Bill. He had the answer or knew where to get it. For us, it's been more than wrestling. He's been a person I could lean on for a lot of different reasons – in wrestling, yes, and in life."

That capable, likeable crutch is now gone.

Hometown: Huntington

High school: Huntington High

College: Marshall University

Coaching Career: Huntington High, 1971-2006

Career Record: 465-83

Achievements: 25 regional titles, 26 individual state champions, 1 Olympian (Ken Chertow), state tournament director 24 years, NAHCA Wrestling-Coach-of-the-Year, 1998.

Current Position: Assistant Principal, Huntington St. Joseph High School

Previous Assignments: Counselor, teacher, athletic director, assistant principal at West Middle, Cammack Middle and Huntington High.

