

Iowa Wrestling Hall of Fame Announces 2019 Inductees

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CRESCO, IA: Four outstanding individuals who've contributed mightily to the sport of wrestling will be inducted into the Iowa Wrestling Hall of Fame in Cresco on Monday, April 8th. The 50th Annual Awards Banquet and Induction Ceremony will begin with a 5:30 social hour followed by a 6:30 banquet at the Cresco Country Club south of Cresco. Those being inducted Don Buzzard (posthumous), Joe Corso, Gary Steffensmeier and Jesse Whitmer. Also being recognized will be Dale Bahr. Bahr was inducted into the IWHOF in 1988, but was unable to attend that induction ceremony and banquet. The Board of Directors thought the 50th anniversary banquet would be an appropriate time to recognize Bahr as an inductee.

Don Buzzard was a two-time state champion for Waterloo East (1963, 1964). Buzzard went on to Iowa State University where he was a two-time NCAA runner-up at 191 pounds. As a sophomore Buzzard won the 191 pound Midlands Championship. Buzzard coached at Jesup before becoming an assistant coach at the University of Iowa (1973-1974). During his competitive career Buzzard only lost a total of nine matches.

Joe Corso won a state title for West Des Moines Valley at 113 pounds in 1971. After winning a bronze medal in the NCAA championships for Purdue, Corso continued his career in freestyle wrestling where he excelled. Corso went on to be a ten-time national freestyle champion, placed third in the World Championships of 1978 and was the 1979 Pan-American Games champion. Corso was also on the 1980 Olympic team and an alternate in 1984. Corso is still coaching and has had a long history with the Sunkist Wrestling Club.

Gary Steffensmeier wrestled at Fort Madison for Hall of Fame coach Mick Pickford. Steffensmeier was the Bloodhounds first two-time state champion and their first four-time state tournament medalist. Steffensmeier won titles in 1986 at 112 lbs and in 1987 at 119 lbs. He capped his senior year with a perfect 32-0 record. Steffensmeier went to the University of Northern Iowa where he was a three-time Division I All-American with a runner-up and two fourth place finishes. He finished with a collegiate record of 115-29-3.

Jessie Whitmer was a four-time medalist and a one-time state champion for Eagle Grove High School. Whitmer then went to the University of Iowa where he was able to break into the starting line up as a 118 pound senior. Whitmer was one of five national champions for the storied 1997 squad that broke the record for number of points scored at the tournament (170).

Dale Bahr was a two-time state champion for Iowa Falls high school, wrestling for Gary Kurdelmeier. Under Harold Nichols at Iowa State, Bahr won the 145 lb. national championship as a senior. He was a two-time All American before winning his national title. Bahr then went on to a successful coaching career where he ended up as head coach for the University of Michigan from 1978-99.

Banquet tickets are available at the Cresco Chamber of Commerce (563-547-3434) or CIA Insurance in Cresco (563-547-2382). Tickets are \$25 and advance registration is required.

The Iowa Wrestling Hall of Fame's sole purpose is the promotion of amateur wrestling in Iowa. The IWHOF has a rich history of honoring native Iowans at our annual awards banquet and induction ceremony. The inaugural banquet was held in 1970. When we conclude the 50th annual awards banquet on April 08, 2019, our roster of inductees will include 133 outstanding individuals for their contributions to amateur wrestling.

Visit our website at <http://www.iowawrestlinghalloffame.com/>

The Iowa Wrestling Hall of Fame is located in the Cresco Welcome Center at the intersection of Highway 9 and Elm Street. The Hall of Fame is open 9-5 daily.