



The Marionette

Coach Baxter Inducted into the Men's ITA Collegiate Tennis Hall of Fame



Francis Baxter

Congratulations go to former Harding teacher and coach for his recent induction into the ITA Collegiate Men's Tennis Hall of Fame.

Most Harding High School students remember their beloved mathematics teacher, tennis, basketball and swimming coach, Francis Baxter. A Central State College graduate Mr. Baxter joined the Harding faculty in 1960 and stayed in that position until the school was converted to a middle school. In 1970 Coach Baxter joined the faculty at the former Central State College (now UCO). He was the Men's Varsity Tennis coach, Physical Education Instructor and

Intramural Director. Shortly thereafter, he also became the first male to coach a women's sports team when he was named as coach of the women's tennis team in 1979.

Coach Baxter held numerous administrative positions in the Oklahoma District Tennis Association, the Missouri Valley Tennis Association and the United States Tennis Association including being captain of the "over-60 team" for International competitions that placed first 5 times.

The winning teams that he coached during his long career include Harding High

School teams that won the state championship three times, college teams ranked first in Oklahoma doubles competitions three times, and first in Missouri Valley Tennis Association doubles competitions three times.

Over his career Coach Baxter estimates that he coached over 1000 dual matches in high school and college. Among

Cont. Pg 3—Coach Baxter

Class of 1958 60th Reunion

The class of '58 is planning a 60th reunion to be held in the latter half of April 2018. Look for a "save the date" card to be mailed very soon.

Events for the weekend will include:

- Friday night party
- Saturday at the Blackledge's home
- Sunday Brunch at Judy (Evans) and Guy Liebman's home

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these were 673 wins!

For his accomplishments in coaching Coach Baxter was inducted into the Missouri Valley Tennis Hall of Fame, the Oklahoma District Tennis Hall of Fame and received the honor of NCAA II National Men's "Coach of the Year", and

the Lone Star Conference Women's and Men's Tennis Coach of the year.

In his acceptance speech for the current honor, Coach Baxter related that he learned a lesson from his dad while growing up on a farm in Oklahoma when

trying to learn how to get the horses to plow a straight furrow. That was to "pat'em on the back, feed and water them and they will work all day". Coach Baxter finished his speech by saying "I am a very fortunate guy who had the privilege of showing up each day and trying to plow a straight furrow."