

OVAC Banquet Of Champions Set for Tonight

Tonight the OVAC will hold its annual OVAC Banquet of Champions.

The event, being held at the Wheeling Civic Center, is directed by Ron White with doors opening at 5:30 p.m.

The banquet will commence at 6:30, honoring not only the OVAC championship teams from the 2000-2001 season, but a host of scholarships equalling over \$15,000 will be awarded.

Three additional special awards will also be handed out. The Dave Bierkorte Award, Cal Griffen Memorial Track Award, and the Wheeling News Register/Bill Van Horne OVAC Coach of the Year Award.

All tickets for the event are \$13 and must be purchased in advance. No tickets will be sold at the door. For tickets call White at 740-859-2357 from 7:30 a.m. until 2 p.m. and 304-277-3599 from 3:30 p.m. on.

Pre-dinner music will be provided by the Bellaire High School Jazz Band.

The main sponsors for this years event are Wendy's, Kroger, Pepsi, and the OVAC Foundation.



OVAC Banquet Set For May 21

Presentation of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference/Bill Van Horne-News-Register Coach of the Year Award will once again highlight the OVAC's Banquet of Champions to be held May 21 at the Wheeling Civic Center.

Doors at the Civic Center open at 5:30 p.m., with the dinner to begin at 6:30.

The cost of tickets is \$13. No tickets will be available that evening. Advance reservations can be made by calling banquet chairman Ron White at (740) 859-2357, from 7:30 a.m.-2 p.m., or at (304) 277-3599 after 3:30 p.m.

Pre-dinner music will be provided by the Bellaire High School Jazz Band.

Championship pennants will be presented to the teams winning conference titles during the current school year.

In addition to the championship banners, more than \$15,000 in scholarship awards also will be distributed during the evening.

Among the scholarship presenters include: Kroger's, OVAC Foundation, Pepsi-Cola, Anthony-Bodkin Co.; Ollie Olson/OVAC Track & Cross-Country Memorial Award; George Kovalick Memorial; Henry Lasasz Basketball; Richard Potts Basketball; Wheeling National Bank; Douglas Pilney Memorial; Ohio Valley Football Officials.

Giffin Award



T-L Photo/MIKE HARVILLA
ACCEPTING THE Cal Giffin Memorial Track Service Award from his son Sean McCrate, is former Barnesville head track coach Dennis McCrate. Sean currently serves as the Shamrock track mentor. The award was given at the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions.

OVAC Award



T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA
ACCEPTING the OVAC Foundation Scholarship are Amanda Mercer (Union Local), left and Christine Dovec (Weirton), right. Presenting the award is Nick Mihalik of the OVAC Foundation.

OVAC Banquet of Champions set for Monday

The OVAC Banquet of Champions will be held Monday, May 21 at the Wheeling Civic Center, commencing at 6:30 p.m.

The annual banquet is directed by Ron White. Doors open at 5:30 for the event which honors OVAC championship teams in the 2000-2001 season. In addition, a host of scholarships will be presented, totaling some \$15,000.

Scholarships being awarded include the Kroger, OVAC Foundation, Pepsi-Cola, Anthony-Bodkin Co. Soccer, Ollie Olson/OVAC Track & Cross Country Memorial, George Kovalick Memorial, Henry Lasasz Basketball, Richard Potts Basketball, Wheeling National Bank, Douglas Pilney Memorial, Ohio Valley Football Officials, OVAC Cheerleader, Daniel M. Burke, Dead Eye Morris Wrestling, Samuel A. Mumley, OVAC Swimming Scholarship and Wesbanco.

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T-L Photo/MICHAEL HARVILLA

WHEELING CENTRAL baseball coach Terry Edwards, center, was honored as OVAC Coach of the Year Monday during the OVAC Banquet of Champions at the Wheeling Civic Center. Other finalists were from left, Ty Fleming, Shadyside football coach; Bubba Kapral, St. John Central girls basketball coach; Carrie Hanna, Wheeling Park girls soccer coach; and Jim Thomas, Wheeling Central football coach.

OVAC Banquet of Champions set for May 21 at Civic Center

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COACH OF THE YEAR



Photo by Alex Kozlowski

Wheeling Central baseball coach Terry Edwards, left, stands with his wife Chris, and Tom Rataiczak, executive secretary of the OVAC, after he was awarded the OVAC/Wheeling News-Register-Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year award Monday evening at the OVAC Banquet of Champions, held at the Wheeling Civic Center.

Finalists Set for OVAC/News-Register Coach of the Year

Van Horne Award to be presented at May 21 Banquet of Champions

The Ohio Valley Athletic Conference has made a change in the format that figures to add even more lustre to the announcement of the winner of the 2001 OVAC/News-Register-Bill Van Horne Coach of the Year Award.

This year's presentation will be made, as usual, on Monday night, May 21, during the annual OVAC Banquet of Champions to be held at the Wheeling Civic Center.

In past years, all of the attention was focused on the winner of the Van Horne award and just a slight reference was made to some of the other worthwhile candidates.

Thanks to a suggestion from OVAC Executive Secretary Tom Rataiczak, the committee to select the winner - which is headed by yours truly - will bring in five finalists to the dinner, along with their spouses or significant others. The coaches will be brought up to the podium and introduced them individually in no particular order except that the winner is to be presented last.

While the identity of the coach of year will be kept secret until then, I feel we have compiled an impressive and very worthwhile list of finalists. Two of them coach at Wheeling Central Catholic High School.

One is Jim Thomas, who guided his Maroon Knights' football team to a 13-1 record and the West Virginia Class A football championship last fall. The other is Terry Edwards, coach of Central's two-time defending state baseball titlists and a staff member under Thomas both in 1979 and this past year when the Maroon Knights won their only two W.Va. gridiron titles.

Rounding out the list of finalists are Carrie Plute-Hanna, who directed Wheeling Park's soccer team to the West Virginia girls' title last November; Ty Fleming, who did a remarkable job of turning around Shadyside High School's football team, and Robert "Bubba" Kapral, who coached the Bellaire St. John's Central girls into the regional tournament this past winter and has had many successful years coaching the Fighting Irish track teams. Fleming's Tigers went 9-1 during the regular season, losing only to Wheeling Central, and advanced to

others as well, would be most deserving of this award, which is now named in memory of former News-Register Sports Editor Bill Van Horne. I'm confident that Bill would be especially pleased with this group of finalists because included are top candidates from sports other than just football and boys' basketball.

As many of you are aware, Bill was a champion of minor sports, particularly wrestling and track and field. They weren't "minor" in his eyes by any means. That's why I was so pleased last year when we were able to present Oak Glen wrestling coach Larry Shaw as our winner.

Each of this year's finalists will be given awards. Four will be designated as 2000-2001 school year finalists.

I hope all of the candidates realize that the committee had a difficult choice to make this year. We could have gone on and on with a list of finalist but because of time constraints we were limited to bringing in our top five choices.

We are proud of every one of them and, in my case, I wish we could have handed out seven or eight coach of the year awards this time.

However, as the public will find out on May 21, I don't believe we could have selected a more deserving winner than the person who will receive the OVAC/News-Register-Bill Van Horne Award.

Nick's Notebook



By NICK BEDWAY