

The Creation of the Mesa City Sports Hall of Fame

In 1992, a group of longtime Mesans, all members of the Mesa Historical Society, saw a need for acknowledging the importance of a long tradition of sports excellence in this city. They formed a committee, drawing upon the expertise and memories of sports lovers, sports writers and a few old warhorses. This group dug through the mythology, the folklore, and the records to compile a list of outstanding athletes who not only outstanding on the playing fields of Mesa, but who went on to excel in college or in professional sports. They had lists of all-state teams, the championship teams, and the past records. They admitted ten members and one coach the first year, setting a pattern for future votes. On the Monday before Thanksgiving, 1992, they inducted the first group of honorees to the Mesa City Sports Hall of Fame. To do this, they enlisted the participation of Tribune Newspapers and Cox Communications as co-sponsors. A room at the Mesa Historical Museum was dedicated to the program, and they began to collect memorabilia of importance to Mesa.

Breakfast of Champions

A feature of the annual induction, the Breakfast of Champions, was initiated by accident. That first year, committee chairman Curt Dana and emcee Don Millett met at the hotel with three or four of the honorees who had come from out of town. They all had such a great time indulging in "remember when" that they incorporated the breakfast into the Hall of Fame induction. Breakfast is open to all Hall of Famers and their partners annually, which makes it an ever increasing popular affair.

Video Library

Videos of inductees were added to the ceremony in 2013. Videos can be viewed at www.mesasports.org/halloffame. If you are an inductee and would like to have a video please contact us at 480-472-0250.

Criteria

From the beginning, the committee decided to honor outstanding coaches and championship teams from Mesa schools, usually on the 20 year anniversary of their championship, they also set ten years after graduation as the earliest time for Hall of Fame election. Naturally, they initially emphasized the pioneers of Mesa sports because the ranks of those people who remember these athletes are thinning. Both committee membership and criteria for election have never been publicized, although the identities are not shrouded in secrecy, and the criteria are usually apparent in the presentation. The citations are engraved on plaques which hang in the Hall of Fame and are posted at www.mesasports.org/halloffame.

Sponsors

A special thanks to SRP, the HoHoKams, and Mesa Public Schools for their continued support.