

Catawba County HOF Has New Home

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The Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame was recently relocated to Highland Recreation Center at Stanford Park in Hickory. Catawba Valley Community College originally housed the Hall of Fame. It was moved to the Hickory Metro Convention Center, in which it stayed at that location until it outgrew the space. At that time, the Hickory Metro Sports Commission approached the City of Hickory about moving the Hall of Fame to the Highland Recreation Center, which was presented to the City of Hickory's Parks and Recreation Commission. Once approved by the Commission, it was voted on by Hickory's City Council, which was also approved. From there, the process of putting the Hall of Fame together at Highland Recreation Center began.

Tara Hicks with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and PhilDiCasolo, who are both with the Hickory Metro Sports Commission, went through the photos and boxes of information to compile a beautiful plaque, honoring each recipient in the Hall of Fame, which includes 57 plaques. The Hall of Fame is located inside the Highland Recreation Center at 1451 8th Street Drive, Hickory. On Friday, August 9, a few members from the Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame, the Hickory Metro Sports Commission, and City staff were present to introduce the new Hall of Fame location and take photos of some of the members with their plaque.

JuJu Phillips, Chairman of the Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame Committee, led the introductions and thank yous, including a thank you to the City of Hickory Parks and Recreation Department. "The wall is very impressive," said JuJu Phillips. "It recognizes the pioneers, athletes, coaches, and contributors, showing the memories of Catawba County's rich sports heritage."

In addition, Mark Seaman, the Chairman of the Hickory Metro Sports Commission, said that on behalf of that Commission, that they appreciate the Hall of Fame being located at Highland Recreation Center.

Phillips took time to introduce each member of the Hall of Fame, including Jim Correll, David Elder, Tisha England, Ned Jarrett, who was part of the first Hall of Fame class in 2001, and Mike McRee. Each one took some time to say a few words of appreciation and they recognized the accomplishments of all who are a part of the Catawba County Hall of Fame.

"It is a huge honor that there was a Hall of Fame to be inducted into here," said Ned Jarrett. "I have been recognized in other areas, as well, and this ranks up there. I grew up here. This allows everyone to see the various, rich history where athletes are concerned. I am very, very proud to be a part of it and it being here in this fine facility."

Each year the Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame holds a ceremony to induct the newest members. This year, this ceremony will be held at Highland Recreation Center on Monday, May 12, 2014. The 2014 ceremony will induct the 14th class.

"The City of Hickory and the Parks and Recreation Department are honored that the Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame is housed at our facility," said Mack McLeod, Director of the City's Parks and Recreation Department. "The Hickory Metro Sports Commission did a fabulous job compiling the details and photographs for the plaques that now line our hall way. We encourage the community to stop by and take some time to look through the Hall of Fame honorees."

The Hickory Metro Sports Commission was formed in 2000. The Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 2001 and a committee was appointed for it. Their main goal is to promote and attract amateur sporting events in the Greater Hickory area.

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For more information on the Catawba County Sports Hall of Fame, contact JuJu Phillips at (828) 302-5073 or jujuphillips19@gmail.com.