

Sports Hall of Fame

2015

Danville Community College

Alumni Association

June 19, 2015



O. Bruce Burnette

Bruce Burnette played on the 1965-66 and 1966-67 Danville Technical Institute teams. An outstanding center, he was chosen during his sophomore year at DTI as the Most Valuable Player on the DTI basketball team. Playing against The College of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City, NC, Burnette scored 59 points, grabbed 34 rebounds (he said, “many were his own”) and hit 19 of 22 free throws.

Burnette's scoring average ranged in the upper 20s, scoring 41 and 49 points in two other games. He says he “took up lots of space on the floor,” meaning his bulk inside the paint made a natural defense. On offense, his size made him hard to guard and to stop from scoring.

Buddy Clayton who played basketball with Burnette at DTI explains, “I had the opportunity to play basketball with Bruce as a DTI teammate during the 1965-66 school year. He was very talented, improving the quality of our team immensely when he joined the DTI squad.”

The D.T.I. Knights team played larger colleges with all scholarship players while DTI players held no scholarships because scholarships were not available. Team members and coaches had to provide the transportation, whether by rented vans or members’ cars. They traveled across Virginia and North Carolina playing junior colleges Gardner-Webb College, Ferrum College, Louisburg College, Chowan College and other junior colleges that are now four-year colleges.

Beyond supplying their cars for travel, their equipment and uniforms had to be supplied through fund-raising. During travel the team did not dress in their uniforms. Instead, sport coats and ties, mandatory when they traveled, were supplied by the players. For Burnette, the highlight of traveling to the different colleges “was the bonding with his teammates, interesting conversations, (tall tales) and future plans.”

After D.T.I./DCC graduation in Machine Technology, Burnette began work for Inland Motors in Radford, Virginia, while continuing his education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute at night. While living in Radford, he met an old teammate from DTI, Bill Vaughn. Together they formed a basketball team from young men in the surrounding cities of Blacksburg, Radford, Christiansburg, and outlying areas. Ever the strong competitors, Burnette and Vaughn's team won the local championship.

Leaving Radford, Burnette joined Westinghouse in South Boston, Virginia.

Continuing his education at night at Halifax County High School, through Danville Community College and Southside Community College, Burnette also attended the Westinghouse Learning Center in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After being promoted into management at Westinghouse, he utilized Danville Community College, recruiting employees for Westinghouse and later for his own business. His efforts not only provided eventual employees for Westinghouse but also provided DCC students part-time employment week nights and on Saturdays. After the students graduated, they were hired full-time in entry level employment in skilled jobs.

As an entrepreneur, Burnette formed and operated four different businesses over his career, often promoting young men and women's attendance at DCC and Southside Community College. Long before students were high school seniors, Burnette encouraged talented high school students to attend DCC to obtain the education that was required to be hired in his department at Westinghouse and in his businesses. Some of his hires are still working at ABB, the company that replaced Westinghouse in South Boston while others are teaching at DCC.

Always associated with DCC's programs related to machine technology, Burnette and Dr. Carlyle Ramsey, DCC's president at the time, were commissioned by Governor Douglas Wilder to engage with the Virginia Education Department's initiative on "Work Force Development." Burnette also worked on the road with DCC's Dr. Netty Simon Owen on the Virginia Education Department's "WORK KEYS" Program. Beyond these initiatives, Burnette worked with the A.L. Philpott Manufacturing Center, headquartered at Patrick Henry Community College in Martinsville as well as the Virginia Department of Business Assistance.

Working on community needs, Burnette served on the boards of directors of the Halifax Vocation Foundation and the United Way. Beyond these commitments, he was a member of the Rotary Club and the Halifax County Humane Society.

His wife of 48 years, Elaine Mills Burnette, graduated from DCC in 1967 after being the head cheerleader Burnette's last year playing basketball at D.T.I. They have two daughters, Leigh Anne and Angela, four grandchildren, and one great grandchild. Their oldest granddaughter is a sophomore at West Point.



Joseph M. Carr

Joseph M. Carr (Joe), an Associate Professor of Biology at Danville Community College from 1971 to 2005 and then an Adjunct instructor from 2005 to 2014, had been involved in the sport of running since his very early years on the farm. Carr explains, "Growing up in rural southeastern North Carolina during the forties, fifties and sixties provided little formal

opportunities for the development of athletic potential through a varied sports program. Although I participated in team sports, there was always that feeling that I was not reaching my potential. My identity as a developing athlete was uncertain.”

“Running was a natural movement for me and during my secondary school years. I was always the fastest student in class or on any sports team on which I participated,” Carr continued. A graduate of Campbell University with a B.S. in Biology, Carr continued his education, completing an M.A. in Biology at Appalachian State University and a M. Ed in Health Science at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

During the mid- seventies road running became established with large numbers of athletes and localities becoming involved in the sport. Later, larger races developed as financial support provided more conditions for regions to develop and broaden road races. During this time Carr ran all distances from 1500 meters on the track to full-length marathons, doing well at all distances. His race times were very consistent.

“This pace consistency” Carr says, “was due to my ability to develop a training schedule and maintain a high degree of motivation to follow the plan. Running goals were established within a framework of realistic knowledge about myself and determination allowed me to develop as a runner.”

By the mid- eighties multi-sport was developing that was to be the factor that would enrich his life. The duathlon involving two disciplines, running and biking, became the multisport that was most suitable for Carr. For the past 25 years, Carr has made the USA duathlon team.

Being on Team USA provides the opportunity to represent the United States as a competitor in the Duathlon World Championships. Carr has participated in 20 Duathlon Worlds with an Age Group Championship in 1999. Over the years he has always placed high among age group participants.

The first Duathlon World was held in 1991 in Palm Springs, CA. Carr qualified for each world under the rules established by the USA governing organization (USATriathlon). He made Duathlon Team USA for 24 consecutive years. Carr explains, “I am one of three individuals that made all duathlon teams. I also made the team for 2015 to be held October 15 in Adelaide, Australia.”

In 1999, Carr became the Age Group World Champion. Carr has been named an Age Group Duathlon All American 14 times over the years and an Age Group National Champion three times. He has participated in 28 national championships. On June 6, 2015, Carr participated in the 29th National Championship in St. Paul, Minnesota, placing third in his age group and qualifying for Team USA in Aviles, Spain.

The following are the Duathlon Worlds in which Carr has participated:

- 1991 Palm Springs, CA USA
- 1992 Frankfurt, Germany

- 1993 Dallas, TX USA
 - 1995 Cancun, Mexico
 - 1996 Ferrara, Italy
 - 1997 Gernika, Spain
 - 1998 St. Wendel, Germany
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- 2000 Calais, France
 - 2001 Rimini, Italy
 - 2003 Affoltern, Switzerland
 - 2004 Geel, Belgium
-
- 2007 Gyor, Hungary
 - 2008 Rimini, Italy
-
- 2010 Edinburgh, Scotland
 - 2011 Gijon, Spain
 - 2012 Nancy, France
 - 2013 Ottawa, Canada

However, development of such a competitive schedule and regimen over the years does not occur within a vacuum but happens with the help and support of others. Carr says, “Through the years my wife Judy has provided the love and support that has allowed me to develop as a runner and hence a person.” Carr and his wife have two sons and four grandchildren ranging in age from eight to nine months.

Carr is always interested in staying motivated. “In addition to national and international duathlon events, I plan to focus on personal adventure challenges. The southwestern United States with its desserts, canyons and high mountains offers an excellent topography for running and biking. In the next years I will be experiencing the challenges that these landscapes have to offer.”



Jean Styers Rogers

Jean Styers Rogers served as cheerleading squad coach during the 1965, 66, 67 era basketball period when Danville Technical Institute had a fully operational cheerleading group with both male and female members. She brought years of past experience to the job of coordinating male and female cheerleaders as a way to boost togetherness for the college and raise funds for a cheerleading operation. Her background included coaching cheerleading in Pittsylvania County Schools in previous years.

Rogers knew how to solicit those with cheerleading experience from the county/city schools' programs, so cheerleading also brought together students who were once rivals. Coordinating those who had once been rivals required diplomacy and consistent discipline.

Cheerleading is rigorous and can often be dangerous for participants if the stunts are not well-planned for effective execution. Planning was one of Rogers's qualities DTI leadership sought for those responsible for cheerleading.

Rogers brought training and conditioning knowledge to the program, so students were able to effectively build their bodies to perform coordinated jumps and movements. The college provided no funding, so the program was required to be self-sufficient. She organized travel by personal cars and the securing of uniforms and equipment, including large megaphones.

A specific practice schedule had to be adhered to as well as exemplary personal conduct on and off the court was required of her squads. Responsible for the safety of the cheerleaders and the promotion of the game, she was coaching throughout each contest from the sidelines.