

Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees:

Julianne (Lord) Wilson – Julianne Lord is a 2007 graduate of Kennedy High School. While wearing the Green & Gold, Julianne was a three-sport athlete, competing for all four years in volleyball, basketball, and soccer, competing at the varsity level 11 of her 12 competitive high school seasons. On the volleyball court for Coach Michelle Goodall, Lord was a four-year varsity athlete as an outside hitter and defensive specialist for the Cougars, earning 1st team All-Metro and All-MVC honors during her senior campaign. The team was a state tournament qualifier her junior season in 2005. Competing for Hall of Fame Coach, Dennis Roloff, Julianne was a three-year varsity letter winner as the Cougars point guard. She was a multiple year All-Metro and All-MVC player and was named the MVP of the team at the conclusion of her senior season. On the soccer pitch, Lord was a part of a special time for Kennedy girls' soccer. The team had raised the competitive level of the program under Coach Samantha Hittman her freshman and sophomore seasons and leaped into state-wide prominence in her final two seasons under Coach Sean McCoy. Lord was part of the foundation in building the soccer program into a state powerhouse that still continues today. She played center midfield and forward for the Cougars. She earned All-Metro and All-MVC honors all four years of her career, capping things off sweeping 1st team honors in the Metro, the MVC, and Elite All-State following her senior season. The Cougars finished the 2006 and 2007 seasons as the state runner-up, playing West Des Moines Valley in epic shootout losses in both years. Lord was named the All-Tournament team for her excellent play throughout the 2007 tournament.

Following her career at Kennedy, Julianne continued her education and athletic career at Loras College in Dubuque, majoring in Physical Education and playing volleyball, earning 2nd team All-Conference honors in 2009. The Duhawks were two-time Iowa Conference champions during her career in 2008 and 2010, and advanced to the NCAA Division III tournament in 2010.

Reflecting on her experiences as a Kennedy Cougar, Julianne states, “My experience at Kennedy were some of my most favorite memories. My best memories come from all of the athletics. Laughing with teammates, high competition games, cheers before volleyball games, bus rides, early morning lifting and conditioning, team sleepovers, and overall just great times with great friends. I was given the opportunity to play with other amazing players as well as great coaches. Volleyball state tournament and getting 2nd place at soccer state tournament for two years were great accomplishments I will never forget. Hard work and mental toughness have carried on throughout my life from all of my athletic experience at Kennedy as well as knowing how to coach now in my adult life.”

Lord now lives back in Cedar Rapids with her husband, Britain Wilson, and her two children, Jazmyn (3 ½), and Gideon (2). She is currently a physical education teacher at Cedar Valley Christian School and served as a volleyball and basketball coach for the Huskies for six seasons. Her primary focus in on her family these days and looks forward to watching them grow up and pick up in athletics where she left off.

Please welcome to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Julianne (Lord) Wilson.

Michelle Murdock-Cue – Michelle is a member of the Kennedy Class of 1990. Murdock attended Kennedy for three years as her class was the final group to enter the high school their sophomore year. From that year forward, Kennedy was a 9-12 building. As a Cougar, she was a four-sport varsity athlete, participating in volleyball, basketball, track & field, and softball. She earned a varsity letter as a freshman playing softball for Hall of Fame coach, Ed Miller. The team won 108 games over her three seasons, winning the sectional championship in 1988. Michelle played basketball for two seasons during her sophomore and junior years. She was a three-year track and field participant for one of Kennedy's legendary coaches, Harold Wilkinson, qualifying for the Drake Relays in the shuttle hurdle relay in 1988. The sport of volleyball was the sport Murdock had the most success in as a four-year player for Hall of Fame coach, Rose Elvidge. Her teams were state qualifiers in both her sophomore and senior seasons. Her list of team and camp awards reflect the qualities that made Murdock such a tough competitor as she was routinely recognized for hardest work and best

teammate on multiple camp teams and on Kennedy's team. Michelle was recognized as the KCRG Athlete of the Week and named 1st team All-MVC her senior season in 1989. Following the 1989 state volleyball tournament, she was selected to the all-tournament team and was also selected to play for the Iowa volleyball all-star team.

Following high school, Michelle attended Kirkwood Community College. She has worked for eighteen years in human resources and employment law. She earned her Professional in Human Resources certification in 1997 and her Senior Professional in Human Resources in 2003.

Looking back on her experiences at Kennedy, Michelle states, "There were SO many smart and overachieving students that it immediately made me have to work harder to be able to participate in the things that were important to me. As a result, I think we all made each other better and there was always so much support and appreciation from one another's achievements. Jealousy wasn't an issue. It was always pride for the accomplishments of the individual and as a result the accomplishment of the school. That support was given from every level, whether it be an upperclassman, teachers, coaches, or parents. We were such a big community, but it really felt more like a family. That's really what stands out to me the most in my memories."

Michelle currently resides in Cedar Rapids with her husband, Greg Cue. They have three children – Lane, Jordan, and Jackson, and four grandchildren – Greyson, Bryleigh, Brielle, and Eva. She is very involved and active in the Cedar Rapids community, volunteering with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, the Especially for You breast cancer awareness efforts, and many other community focused initiatives. She has stayed active in volleyball, softball, basketball, tennis, and golf through adult leagues, as well as participating in four Pig Man sprint triathlons and six rides on RAGBRAI. An unfortunate back injury ended her sports participation as an adult, but she is still an avid fan of athletics and spends her time loving being a grandparent.

Please join me in welcoming to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Michelle Murdock-Cue.

Courtney Strait – Courtney is a 2012 graduate of Kennedy High School. While wearing the Green & Gold, Strait was a three-sport athlete, competing in track & field for one year, softball for three years, and basketball for all four years. She gave track & field a chance her senior year, participating for Coach Mark Jensen in the sprints and the high jump; qualifying for the 2012 state track & field meet. On the softball diamond, Strait made an immediate impact, starting at shortstop for the Cougars as an 8th grader for Coach Katie Bova. She was a two-time All-Metro and two-time All-MVC performer during her three-years. The basketball hardwood is where Strait thrived for the Cougars and for Coach Roloff. She was a three-year varsity starter and the lone starter on the state semifinalist team in 2009-2010. Courtney stepped to the forefront as a junior, earning team MVP, best offensive player, and best rebounder awards, as well as being named 1st team All-Metro, All-MVC, and All-District, and 3rd team All-State. She also set the school record for most consecutive free throws made (26). Following her senior campaign, she was named the Metro Player of the Year, the MVC Player of the Year, and was named 1st team All-State by multiple organizations. She set another school record, this time for most free throws made in a game (20) and she led Class 4A in scoring that season, putting up 20.7 points per game. She capped her career being named the Co-Female Athlete of the Year in 2012.

Strait's basketball career continued at Truman State University while she pursued a degree in communication. She scored 1,126 points and played in a school record 115 games for the Bulldogs as a shooting guard from 2012-2016. She served as the team captain her junior and senior seasons, earning Academic All-Conference and 2nd team All-Conference honors along the way as she led the team in scoring, rebounding, and steals. She had the opportunity to represent USA Basketball on a basketball tour through Austria, Slovenia, and Italy. She graduated with a degree in communications with an emphasis in public communication and journalism.

Reflecting on her experiences at Kennedy, Strait states, "My experience at Kennedy High School was memorable because I was able to challenge myself with the utmost support from my classmates, teachers and administrators. Because of the positive, encouraging environment at Kennedy, I was able to pursue success

while creating lasting memories and lifelong friends throughout my four years there. During my time at Kennedy, I was encouraged to seize every opportunity possible and set big goals for myself. Because I was provided with so many outlets as a Cougar, it led me to pursue as many athletic and academic opportunities as I could after graduation, at Truman State, in England and beyond. I attribute this can-do attitude to my time at Kennedy High School.”

Strait is currently playing basketball professionally overseas with Koyer Sports Management, based in Belgrade, Serbia. When she is not playing basketball, you will find her working out, reading, or cooking. She loves traveling and has had the opportunity to visit 20 countries to date. Her future plans when her basketball playing days are complete are to become the Director of Basketball Operations for a division 1 program or become an Athletic Administrator at the collegiate level, looking to continue in the field of athletics, inspiring the next generation of athletes to aim high and achieve their goals.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Courtney Strait.

Erin (Thornton) Burgess - Thornton is a member of the Kennedy Class of 1998. She was a four-sport athlete for the Cougars, competing one year in basketball and all four years in volleyball, track & field, and softball. As a track & field athlete for the Cougars, Thornton excelled in the field events, specifically the throws for Hall of Fame coach Mark Wilden. Her leadership skills led her to be named a team captain and her throwing skills earned her All-Metro honors and qualified her for the State Meet her senior year. In the summertime, Thornton patrolled the outfield for Dennis Roloff and Steve Johnson, earning honorable mention All-MVC honors. On the volleyball court, she was a middle blocker for Hall of Fame coach Rose Elvidge, but she was versatile enough to play through the entire rotation. She was again recognized for her leadership and named a team captain. As a junior, Thornton was named 1st team All-Metro and All-MVC, as well as 5th team All-State. The accolades continued following her senior season, where she was again 1st team All-Metro and All-MVC and earned honorable mention All-State. She also excelled in the classroom, being selected for induction into the National Council on Youth Leadership and the National Honor Society.

Thornton attended Western New Mexico University on a volleyball scholarship where she was a four-year starter for the Mustangs as a middle blocker. She was a three-year team captain, earning conference player of the week honors multiple times as well as being named an Academic All-American. She was selected for the National Honor Society, “Who’s Who Among College Athletes” in 2002, and represented volleyball on the WNMU Student Athlete Association all four years of college, the final two as an officer. She graduated with a degree in Secondary Education and a minor in mathematics. Thornton has also earned her master’s degree in Educational Leadership from Eastern New Mexico University.

Looking back on her days at Kennedy, Erin states, “The opportunity to be involved in many school activities was also memorable. Most of our volleyball team began playing school and club volleyball together in 6th grade, which led to our decision to train from the end of our junior season for our last year as a unit. This preparation resulted in a strong senior season with many team and individual accomplishments. Coach Roloff was a positive influence, especially his Cougar Time expectation, which still guides me today. Qualifying for the state track meet junior and senior year was exciting. I was also a teacher assistant for every math teacher I had. Coach Herkelman was most memorable as my Trig teacher, which is now my favorite class to teach.”

Erin is currently in her 17th year as a high school math teacher. She coached volleyball, softball, and track & field early in her career, up until she had her first son. She is now pursuing a move into administration and educational leadership with aspirations of becoming a district level curriculum director, specializing in high school achievement.

She now lives in Goodyear, Arizona with her husband, JD Burgess. They have been married 16 years and have two sons, Brayden (11) and Peyton (8).

Please welcome to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Erin (Thornton) Burgess.

Austin Christensen – Austin is a member of the Kennedy Class of 2011. Christensen was a two-sport athlete for the Green and Gold, playing both basketball and baseball. On the hardwood for Coach Bob Fontana, Austin was a long and athletic forward for the Cougars with a soft shooting touch. He was a two-year letter winner, earning honorable mention All-Metro and All-MVC his junior season. It was the heat of summer that brought out the best in Christensen as he is one of the best players to come through Kennedy's storied baseball program. He was a four-year letter winner for Coach Bret Hoyer, but he made his varsity debut for the Cougars in the summer of his 8th grade year in centerfield...at the state tournament. For the next four seasons he dominated the MVC on the mound, in the outfield, and at the plate. He was a four-time 1st team All-Metro, All-MVC, and All-District performer. Christensen earned All-State honors four times in his career, securing 2nd team All-State as a utility player and a pitcher during his freshmen and sophomore campaigns, and 1st team All-State Super Team in both his junior and senior seasons. The left-hander made playing tennis on the Kennedy courts a risky proposition during baseball games, recording a school record 42 career home runs, including a school record 19 during his senior season. His teams qualified for the state tournament in four of his five seasons, including the magical run that ended with a state championship in 2010, where he was named the tournament MVP. Following his senior season, he was named the Iowa Gatorade Player of the Year and the captain of the Super Team, solidifying his spot as the best baseball player in the state of Iowa. Interestingly, his 42 career home runs ties him for the Cedar Rapids metro lead with his older brother Chad, who played at Washington HS. Along with the home run records, Christensen still holds school records in career batting average (.429), season batting average (.543), career RBI's (172), career hits (216), career doubles (53), career walks (100), career runs scored (157), and career wins (29).

Following his career at Kennedy, Christensen attended the University of Nebraska and continued his baseball playing career for the Huskers as a pitcher and a first baseman. He missed his first two seasons due to Tommy John surgery but resumed playing in the 2014 season. He started 26 games that year, hitting .250 with 15 RBI's and was the starting pitcher in both the Big Ten championship game and an NCAA tournament game. In 2015 he hit .264 and had a 2.45 ERA on the mound. He later transferred to UNI to finish up his college education, graduating in 2017 with a degree in physical education.

Reflecting on his time at Kennedy, Christensen states, "Our state championship run in 2010 was my best memory. I have learned a lot from my coaches. Coach Hoyer pushed me every day to be the best player and person I could be. His preparation was, and still is, better than any coach I have ever played for, and a skill I work to use in my daily life. Coach Herks' attention to detail is something that really benefited me as a player. He never missed a teaching opportunity no matter how major or minor that opportunity was, this helped our teams focus a lot more, and play better together as a team."

Austin currently lives in Cedar Rapids with his wife, Kristin. He is a PE teacher at McKinley Middle School in the Cedar Rapids School District. He has been an assistant baseball coach at Washington HS for the past three summers, helping the team reach the state tournament in the past two seasons. His future plans are to continue teaching and coaching here in Cedar Rapids with the goal of eventually becoming a head baseball coach.

Please join me in welcoming to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Austin Christensen.

Ron Dearborn – Ron Dearborn walked the hallways of Kennedy High School back in the school's formative days in the mid-70's, graduating in 1976. He was a two-sport athlete for the Cougars, excelling in two sports that are no longer in existence in the state of Iowa, gymnastics and boys diving. The high schools were only grades 10-12 in those early years, but Ron made the best of all three seasons in the Green & Gold. As a diver for Hall of Fame coach Chuck Webb, Dearborn was the state runner up in both his sophomore and senior seasons, set school records in both the 6 and 12 dive events, amassed a 27-1 dual meet record during the regular season, and was named honorable mention All-American his junior season and 1st team All-American following his senior season. His 11-dive school record withstood the test of time and will remain on the record board

indefinitely. In gymnastics, competing for Hall of Fame coach Gary Williams, Ron was a three-time 1st team All-State performer, shining in the trampoline and the vault. He was a state runner-up in the trampoline as a sophomore and was featured for a cover shoot for the Nissen Corporation Equipment catalog, a premier gymnastics equipment provider. During his junior campaign, Dearborn finished 3rd at state in the vault and was again runner-up in the trampoline. In his senior campaign, Ron added a 4th place finish at state in the floor exercise, repeated his 3rd place effort in the vault, and was finally crowned state champion in the trampoline, the final time this event was contested. His efforts helped the Cougars to an overall 3rd place finish as a team that season. Through all of this athletic success, Dearborn maintained academic excellence as well, maintaining a GPA of 3.5 the entirety of his high school career.

Following high school, Dearborn went on to compete for the University of Northern Iowa in the sport of diving. He was a Division II All-American in both the 1-meter and 3-meter springboard events for the Panthers.

Looking back on his storied career for the Cougars, Dearborn states, “I have great memories from my three years at JFK. For me, high school was a time to not only have fun and enjoy life, but to also learn to accept the finality of some things. The time for being a kid was fast coming to an end and so I believed it would be a waste to not take advantage of every opportunity. The staff was always kind and supportive, the coaches were involved and caring, and the student body was the best of the best. Looking back, I don't know of one thing I would change. It was the time of my life. It is an honor to be recognized and inducted in to the Athletic Hall of Fame. I thank all who were involved.”

In January of 2018, Ron retired after working with the Quaker Oats Company for 40 years. He also served as a loan executive for the United Way for two years and is now vice chairman of the Benton County volunteer program Board of Directors. His future plans are simple...to enjoy life and his family and friends, always striving to be the best person he can be.

Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Ron Dearborn.

Josh Jahlas – Josh is a 2012 graduate of Kennedy High School. As a Cougar, Josh was a four-sport athlete, participating in football, basketball, track & field, and baseball, earning 8 varsity letters. Josh participated in football, basketball and baseball for all four years, adding track & field his junior and senior seasons. Jahlas finished his athletic career at Kennedy as one of the best all around, multisport athletes in school history. In his first year of track under Hall of Fame coach Dennis Roloff, Josh began hurdling and anchored the shuttle hurdle team. During his junior year, Josh placed 4th at the Drake Relays in the 1,600 meter medley relay and qualified for 3 events at state, taking 7th in the shuttle hurdle relay and 4th in the 4 x 400 meter relay, earning 1st team All-Metro in both of these events. During his senior year, under Coach Brian White, Josh was a team captain and placed 3rd in the shuttle hurdle relay at Drake and qualified for 3 events at the state meet, earning All-Metro honors in the Shuttle Hurdle Relay and the 1,600 meter medley relay. Jahlas played basketball under Coach Bob Fontana, earning the Coaches Award both his junior and senior year as well as earning the Best Teammate Award his senior year. Josh played center field for Coach Bret Hoyer and was the lead off hitter his senior year. Josh set a school record of most runs scored in a single season (57) on his way to earning 1st team All-Conference, All-Metro, All-District and 1st Team All-State honors. Football was Josh's passion, playing under Coach Tim Lewis. Josh excelled in football as a safety and receiver and also played on most special teams. During his junior season, he was awarded the Toughest Hitter “Hammer” Award and earned 2nd team All-Metro, 1st team All-Conference, and 2nd team All-State honors. During his senior year, as a captain, Josh was Kennedy's co-MVP, special teams player of the year and earned the Hustle Award. He earned 1st team All-State, All-Conference, All-District, All-Metro as well as earning 1st Team MVC All-Academic honors. During his career as a Kennedy Cougar, Josh recorded 237 tackles, 132 in his senior year. He was honored to represent Kennedy High School when he was selected to play in the 2012 Shrine Bowl where he was the recipient of the Monsignor Joseph E Tolan Award of Excellence recognizing one player for outstanding service to his school and community. Perhaps most impressive and indicative of Josh's loyalty and dedication to his teammates and

his school is the fact he chose to balance leading the Kennedy baseball team through the substate tournament while also simultaneously practicing for the Shrine Bowl, a tough balance but one he took on willingly. Academically, Josh was a member of National Honor Society and was a salutatorian upon graduation. Josh's remarkable athletic career at Kennedy was capped when he was named Kennedy's 2012 Male Athlete of the Year.

After high school, Josh chose to walk-on at Iowa State University to pursue his dream of playing division I football. Josh played for Coach Paul Rhodes for 4 years, with his final year being the first year of the Coach Matt Campbell era. He went on to play in 35 consecutive games for the ISU Cyclones and ended his football career at ISU with 44 tackles, 2 fumble recoveries, 1 forced fumble and 1 blocked punt. Jahlas earned a scholarship after his junior season, one of the first scholarships granted by Coach Matt Campbell upon his arrival on campus. He was recognized as one of the greatest special teams players in ISU history, earning the teams Jim Doran Outstanding Special Teams Player of the Year in 2014, 2015 and 2016. Josh earned his degree in Civil Engineering from Iowa State University.

Reflecting on his time as an athlete at Kennedy, Jahlas states, "My memories of playing football under the lights at Kingston Stadium, getting ready for a race to start or warming up at a baseball game will stay with me for my lifetime. As a Kennedy Cougar, every time I stepped onto the track, field or court, I tried my best to represent each and every coach, teacher, and teammate that had supported me. My experiences at Kennedy helped me grow into the person I am today learning the importance of working hard, being a part of a team and leading by example. The Kennedy Community instilled a strong foundation into my personal character that allowed me to succeed in future aspects of both my athletic and professional careers. I was, and always will be proud to wear the Green and Gold!"

Jahlas has been working for Engineered Equipment Solutions for the past year and a half as an engineering sales representative in Des Moines, a manufacturing rep company that services water and wastewater systems throughout Iowa. Josh recently accepted a similar position as a sales engineer for one of his suppliers, AEROMOD in Manhattan, Kansas, a company that he will be joining in January. He continues to be an avid sports fan, following his ISU Cyclones, the Cleveland Browns and the Boston Red Sox. He reads for fun and also golfs and plays in softball leagues in the summer.

Please join me in welcoming to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Josh Jahlas.

Andy Zediker – Andy is a member of the Kennedy Class of 1997 where he was a four-year varsity letter winner in basketball. He had the unique experience of playing basketball for his father, Kennedy and Iowa Athletic Hall of Fame member, Arnie Zediker. As many coach's sons do, Andy played point guard for the Cougars and was an extension of the coaching staff on the court. Zediker earned All-Metro honors in three of his four seasons leading the Green & Gold on the hardwood. During his junior season, Andy averaged 18 points per game, earning 1st team All-MVC and 2nd team All-State honors for his efforts and leadership on the court. His senior campaign was equally successful, both individually and as a team. He again averaged 18 points per game, added 7 rebounds per game, and led the Cougars to a 14-0 start during the 1996-97 season. The team rose as high as #2 in the rankings and eventually advanced to the IHSAA State Tournament. In Des Moines, he hit a buzzer-beating shot with two seconds remaining to lead the Cougars to an upset win over Valley and was named to the all-tournament team by the sports media. Zediker again earned 1st team All-MVC, rose to 1st team All-State, and was recognized as the MVC Player of the Year by the coaches in the league. He ended his career ranked 4th all-time in career scoring with 1,134 points which also ranked him 21st all-time in the Metro. Following his senior basketball season, Zediker was chosen as one of ten players to represent Iowa in an international tournament in Melbourne, Australia.

Following his high school career, Zediker continued his education and basketball career at Marshalltown Community College, helping the team to a school record 29-5 record. As a college sophomore, he had joined

the University of Iowa, playing basketball for the last Hawkeye team to make it to the Sweet Sixteen. He finished his collegiate journey at Drake University, earning his degree in marketing in 2002.

As he reflected on memories from his high school days, Zediker states, “Two big games stick out in my memory; scoring 28 points in an upset win over top-ranked Hoover as a sophomore and hitting the winning shot with 2 seconds remaining against Valley in the 1997 State Tournament. Without a doubt, the opportunity to play for my dad at Kennedy was a highlight. In addition, having the entire Zediker family, his two sisters as students, his mother as an English teacher, and his father teaching math and coaching basketball, made his senior year very memorable. Hard work, perseverance, and good decision making are what Andy feels he learned and are the hallmarks of success.”

Andy currently lives in Urbandale with his wife, Rachel, and their two children, Ava (11) and Quinn (9). He has been extremely successful in the medical sales business for the past 15 years with Medline Industries where he was recognized in 2011 as the National Sales Representative of the Year. He is active in his church, St. Francis, and enjoys coaching both his daughter and son in AAU basketball. He strives daily to be the best husband and father he can be.

Please welcome to the Cougar Athletic Hall of Fame – Andy Zediker.