

4 Of MMC's Finest

Quartet To Be Inducted Into Mount Marty Athletic Shrine

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Two ground-breakers on the diamond, the school's first Great Plains Athletic Conference Coach of the Year and a supporter who has seen it all make up this year's class of the Mount Marty College Athletic Hall of Fame. Laurie (Boynton) Baily, Tim Lorang, Kelly Heller and Sister Ann Kessler will join the elite group of Lancers during a ceremony May 3.

Baily and Lorang were pioneers for Mount Marty, Baily in softball and Lorang in baseball. Each was part of the first varsity teams fielded by MMC.

Heller had two outstanding seasons for the MMC baseball team, then became an assistant coach for the program. When Bob Tereshinski retired in 1999, Heller took over the program, leading it to a fourth place finish in the GPAC in 2004 and earning the league's Coach of the Year honor.

Kessler, a former MMC professor, has been a mentor for student and student-athletes alike, and has been a vocal supporter of athletics since MMC began offering those programs in the 1970s.

The induction will take place at the Cyber Cafe on May 3. A social will begin at 3 p.m., with the ceremony beginning at 3:30 p.m.

Here is a look at the four honorees:

SISTER ANN KESSLER

Sister Ann Kessler's own athletic career consisted of neighborhood baseball games in Aberdeen, yet the impact she has had on Lancer athletics towers over even her towering presence.

Kessler arrived at Mount Marty in 1945, a quarter-century before MMC sponsored its first varsity athletic teams. The then-all-female school had physical education, then eventually intramurals before sponsoring its first athletic team, men's basketball.

In the time between, Kessler graduated from MMC, taught at Mount Marty High School, traveled abroad for research and earned degrees from both Creighton University and the University of Notre Dame before returning to MMC in 1963.

When varsity athletics arrived on the MMC campus, Kessler embraced it, especially basketball and baseball because of her youth.

"These were the sports I grew up with," she said. "When I was in high school, I was in the band, and we had to go to everything. We played baseball, neighborhood baseball, all through my grade school years, at least."

Kessler became a regular fixture at many sporting events. "I would be in the front row at the basketball games and the baseball games when I could, simply because I

wanted to support them," she said. "They would often take roll call, and I would have to, at the next class, defend myself when I didn't show."

While Kessler was being counted at the games, she made sure those same student-athletes were holding their own in the classroom.

"They also knew that I would insist that they fulfill their assignments," she said. "They also knew that I would arrange the test-taking if they couldn't do it because they had to be gone for a baseball game, usually it would be because basketball games were usually on nights and weekends."

"They knew that I would make allowances, but they also knew that they had to produce." During her years of teaching — she retired from full-time teaching in 1999 and from teaching altogether three years ago — she only recalled one student-athlete that she "lost."

"I had one student, and he was not coming to class. He was failing his tests. He was not a student. It was all basketball. I warned him, 'Unless you have a change of heart, you are going to fail this course,'" she recalled. "I mimicked the student's voice. Sister, you wouldn't do that," I said, "Watch me."

"Nobody else, no one else made a statement like that because they knew that I was fair. I may have been tough, they said, but I was fair."

Many of those same student-athletes went on to appreciate Kessler's tough-but-fair approach with them. "I always say that Bob Tereshinski was the one that recruited me to Mount Marty, but Sister Ann Kessler is the one that kept me at Mount Marty," said Kelly Heller. "She was a great supporter of students, not just athletics. She was a phenomenal teacher and a great mentor for all of us that went on to pursue fields, professions in education."

When Mount Marty revived its Hall of Fame, Kessler was one of the first individuals on the list for the selection committee. Kessler's historian mind and attention to detail was invaluable in selecting those honorees, said MMC athletic director Chuck Iverson.

"We've never talked about anybody that she doesn't have an opinion on. She knows everybody," he said. "She has a tremendous memory."

Kessler recently resigned her position on the committee, but Iverson expects that she will be called upon to help.

"Just because she's not on the selection committee doesn't mean we won't be using her a lot because of her knowledge of the people and what they were like, the athletic part of it, the character part of it and what they meant to the college," he said. "Officially she's off the committee, but that doesn't mean she won't be a big part of it."

Kessler still intends to continue going to games and supporting Lancer student-athletes.

"I don't drive anymore so I don't get to the games I used to go to, but it meant so much to me to see my students out there," she said. "And it meant so much to them, I found out."

LAURIE (BOYNTON) BAILY

Laurie Baily's college athletic career began not with a recruiting visit, but a sign-up sheet in Roncalli. It ended with leaving a legacy for Lancer softball pitchers.

Baily, who grew up in the Aberdeen area, enrolled at Mount Marty in the mid 1970s, pursuing coursework in home economics, dietetics and education.

"It was a smaller college and, at that time, there were only two colleges in the state that had dietetics, SDSU and Mount Marty," she said. "And I wanted to go to a smaller college."

The spring of her freshman year, she came upon a call for tryouts for the softball team.

"They had a sign-up sheet on the table in Roncalli Center, and it said, 'Softball Tryouts,'" she said. "I thought, 'Well, I didn't know they had a softball team.'"

Years earlier, Baily had learned to pitch softball while watching her mother play in a softball league in Aberdeen.

"I was the batgirl and my mom played softball in Aberdeen," she said. "We had two ladies there that did the windmill, just watched them and practiced. My dad put up a tire out by the barn, and I would just go pitch every day. That was my target."

"That's how I got started pitching. I just loved it, and I would go out and practice every day."

Baily joined the league when she turned 14 and continued to play until coming to MMC, then got her opportunity to play again when the team had an open tryout. The team practiced on a dirt field on campus, located where the northwest parking lot is now, and didn't even have uniforms that first year.

On top of it, the Lancers had never had a windmill-style pitcher, which Baily was.

"The other players on the team my freshman year were already players on the volleyball and basketball teams, so they already had their scholarships to the other sports. I was really the only one that just played softball," Baily noted. "When I came on, I don't think the coach knew what to do with me because she'd never been around the windmill."

But the Lancers figured things out quickly. By Baily's sophomore season, the team had uniforms and, with Baily toting the rubber, started a string of third place finishes in the SDAIAW Tournament.

By the time Baily graduated, she owned at least 10 school records, including every record for strikeouts and victories.

"She was one of the pioneers in women's athletics, and really got Mount Marty competitive across the state," Iverson said. "She did a lot, not only for our softball program, but for our athletic program, in terms of credibility. It was very important in those early stages of athletics here."

For Baily, it wasn't so much about the record — or records — but the chance to compete.

"I just thought it was exciting. It was fun to play on a college level, to play against great competition," she said. "I just loved to throw the game. That was fun, and we gained a lot of team spirit as we started to go around."

After graduating, Baily has led a busy life. The Crofton, Neb., resident taught school at Wynot, Neb., and has since been involved in several business ventures, including Aten's resort and Mary Kay Cosmetics sales.

"Badger" Baily for 31 years. The couple has raised three children: Drew, Eric and Nicole. Baily has also found time to volunteer, including with the Yankton Special Olympics and at the United Methodist Church.

"I just have a lot of energy. I just try to do my best, do as much as I can," she said. "I just try to focus on one thing at a



Laurie (Boynton) Baily (above left) and Sister Ann Kessler (shown with Mount Marty College athletic director Chuck Iverson), along with Tim Lorang (left) and Kelly Heller (right), will be inducted into MMC's Athletic Hall of Fame on May 3. The ceremony will be held in the Cyber Cafe on the school's campus.



time, and do what I can do. I don't get it all done, but it's the thrill of trying to get it done. I like helping other people, doing what I can do."

TIM LORANG

When a training injury left Tim Lorang unable to continue playing football at Augustana, the former Sioux Falls O'Gorman standout followed his Catholic roots to Mount Marty and became one of the greatest players to step onto the field for the Lancer baseball program.

Lorang had left Augustana after a year and a half when the Vikings pulled his scholarship due to the back injury. After working for one year, he decided to restart his educational endeavors.

"I was looking for a college to transfer to, and I decided I might as well go to a Catholic college. My Catholic faith was important to me," he said. "Of course, in southeast South Dakota, unless you

want to go a little ways away, there aren't too many choices for Catholic colleges."

That decision came at the same time that Doug Smith was preparing to field the first varsity baseball team for MMC, in the spring of 1987.

"Doug did a little checking up on me and found out I was a pretty decent ball player, and he gave me a very modest scholarship," Lorang noted. "So the second semester of the 1986-87 school year, in January of '87, I started going to Mount Marty."

The Lancers went 23-21 in that spring, with Lorang earning All-District 12 honors. He would go on to win three more All-District awards under longtime coach Bob Tereshinski.

"He could pitch for you, play first base, go to the outfield. He even did a little catching," Tereshinski said. "He was a foundation player for us."

Lorang earned his all-District selections at four different positions, outfield, catcher, first base and third base.

"I grew up playing baseball all the time as a kid. I felt comfortable playing any position, because I had a million hours, so I was able to pitch. I played outfield. I played first base, I played third base," he said. "Then one year when our catcher, Bill Conkling, tore up his shoulder early in the season, I caught the rest of the way."

When Lorang finished his playing career at Mount Marty in 1990, he left as the record holder in 11 different offensive and pitching categories. His .478 batting average and 17 doubles in a season still stand as Lancer standards. He also still ranks in the top five in at bats, hits, RBI, pitching victories and strikeouts in a season for MMC.

"I can't say enough about Lorang as a baseball player," Tereshinski said. "He was a total baseball player. He was the total package, the whole thing."

Lorang did not graduate from Mount

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