

2019 Senior Souvenir Edition

Coalgate Record Register

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Coming in with a **BANG!!**

Roland Fanning to be inducted into Coalgate Athletic Hall of Fame

—By Trent Bourland

Roland Fanning is the husband of Beverly and father of Emery Jo and Eastyn Rowe. He is the son of Ernie and Debbie, the brother of Amber and Nolan, the uncle of Atty, the nephew of Brenda “Bubbles” Burns, the uncle of Raymond Burns, and the grandson of Peggy and the late Ernest Paul Fanning and Frank and Imogene Forneris.

Roland is a 2001 graduate of Coalgate High School where he participated in football, basketball, baseball, and track. He owns school records for receptions and yards in a single season in football, and until last season held the career record for those totals. While basketball and baseball records are a little more challenging to track, I am sure he holds a couple in both those sports. In the spring of 2001, the Oklahoma Coaches Association selected Roland to the baseball all-state team.

Upon graduation from Coalgate High School, Roland attended Carl Albert University before transferring to Northern Oklahoma-Enid and then finishing his career as a two-year starter and team captain at Southeastern Oklahoma State University (SOSU).

Following college graduation, he spent five years at SOSU as an associate baseball coach

and assistant marketing director before accepting a position as the first base coach at Oklahoma State University.

After his stint in Stillwater, he moved to the University of Arkansas-Little Rock

with the news of his selection to the Athletic Hall of Fame, he immediately stated his grandfather would be so happy they were in the Hall of Fame together. The next thing he asked was who else was going

“EP” Fanning. EP was a fixture at sports events for years, and to my recollection, he attended every game Roland ever played. Regardless of how far away the game was or what time it would end, EP was always there

In the absence of EP, the spot of “Roland’s biggest fan” has been taken over by his oldest daughter, Emery Jo.

Although EP was a fixture at sporting events Roland competed in, his mother was the most significant role model in his life. From Debbie, he learned an unmatched toughness — to have thick skin on and off the field.

That trait would serve him well as he was often undersized. Whenever someone said he was too small, he turned the dial up a notch and worked his way into a starting role. To hear Roland talk about his mother, you get a feeling of sincere admiration for what she did for him. He understands the influence she had upon him and is not afraid to give credit to her for all the sacrifices she made to allow him to chase his dreams.

One other influential person in his life was Joe Avanzini. Joe coached him in every level of youth sports. Joe has a servant’s heart and never made anything about himself. It was always about what he could do for the kids. Joe served as not only a coach but a teacher for life. Roland said he could not say “Thank You” enough for everything Joe did.

Roland stated he will always cherish two seasons of playing at



Roland Fanning and family – wife Beverly and daughters Emery Jo and baby Eastyn Rowe.

where he served two seasons as an assistant baseball coach and recruiting coordinator. Currently, Roland is the baseball recruiting coordinator at the University of Kentucky where he coaches outfielders and hitting.

When I called Roland

to be inducted and then awed over how deserving each of those players was to be selected. It is that unselfishness that makes Roland a memorable teammate and person.

Those traits were more than likely learned at a young age from his biggest fan, Ernest Paul

to watch Roland and the ole Wildcats play.

Roland stated he would not have made it to where he is today without the influence of his grandfather who taught him how to be a man and instilled a demeanor in him to work hard at whatever he was doing.

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Coalgate FFA members at the state convention held May 1 in Oklahoma City. See page A-9

**Coalgate FFA Banquet, Saturday, May 11 at 6:00 p.m.
Coal County Fair Barn**

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 Coalgate.
 His junior season changed the culture for Coalgate football, bringing it back on the

yards records still stand today.
 The other most memorable season was his senior season of baseball. Guys playing

counties in the state, people from here have gone on to do great things, and Roland's goal has always been to honor his family, make people proud, and bring respect back to Coalgate. This persona is what makes him unique and has allowed him to move up to the position he currently holds.

Roland is genuinely one of a kind, and speaking with former teammates and coaches only further proves that point.

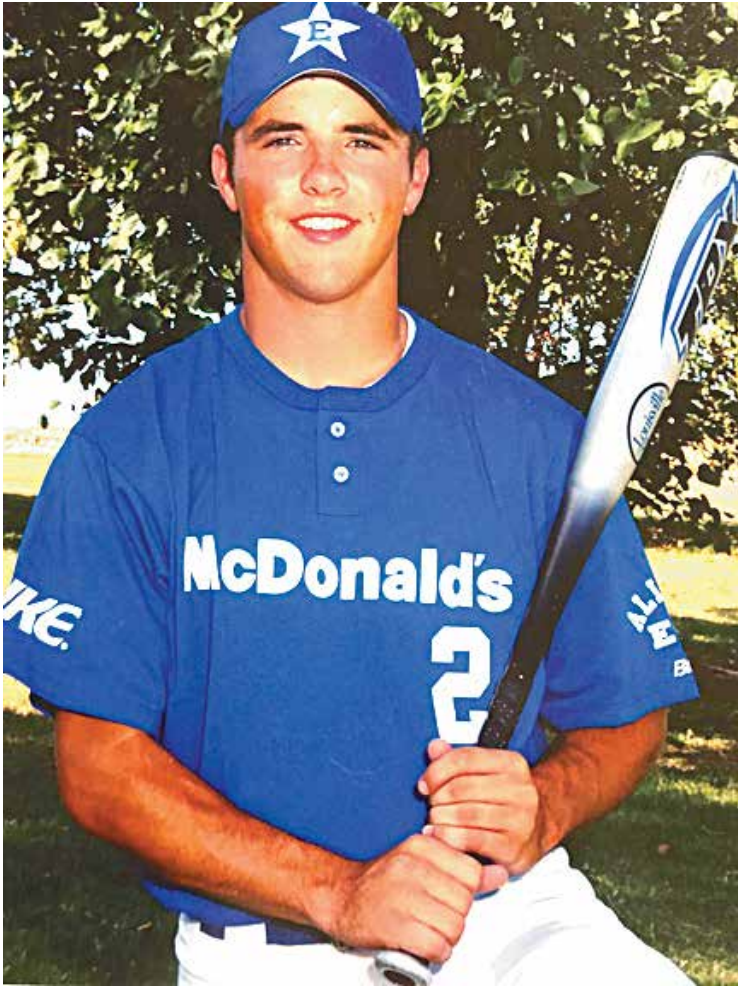
Joe Avanzini: Roland was always a kid who had an edge about him. He worked his tail off to be the best player he could be. He might have had a little bit of an attitude but trumped it with an unmatched work ethic that made him a pleasure to coach. I am happy to see him selected as a member of the Athletic Hall of Fame. No one is more deserving.

Brandon Madden: Roland is the kind of guy who was game ready every day. Before a game, he'd walk into the dugout and ask, "Are you ready?" We would play catch, and the way he approached something as simple as playing catch got me pumped up. He was always working to having quicker hands, moving faster to the right spot, and throwing farther. And that was just warming up. He paid attention to the detail. He pushed himself to take the extra step when things were tough and NEVER backing down to anything.

His work ethic on the field has carried over to help him be successful in all aspects of his life. He worked his butt off to make things happen for himself. There are many other great things that make him a true competitor, but there isn't enough room in this paper for all of them. He is very deserving for induction into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Tanner Corsini: Playing with Roland was always fun. We played baseball together through little league and high school. You always knew

filters in those practices. It was the best.
 I did not realize he was not already in the HOF. In my opinion, he should have been one of the first



Coalgate Wildcat Roland Fanning — 2001 All-State baseball team.

map. He said that was the most fun he ever had playing with a team. Not much was expected of the team when the season started, but they reeled off seven straight wins with a dominating offense. They finished the season with a 10-2 record, winning the first home playoff game in 15 seasons.

In the fourth game of the season, the Wildcats used the momentum of a legendary halftime speech to beat Quinton on the road. Roland stepped up big time in that game, setting school records for catches (15) and yards (242) in a single game. (In a playoff loss to Commerce, Roland broke his record-grabbing 16 receptions. That record still stands today.)

He finished the season with school records of 90 receptions, 1,399 yards, and 13 touchdowns. Both his receptions and

on that team had played together since tee-ball with Joe Avanzini. They were ranked in the Top 10 all season. Coach Neil Birchfield did a great job getting them ready to make a deep run, but unfortunately the season ended with a loss in regionals.

If you know Roland, you see a guy with an unmatched passion for what he does. But when talking to him, you will be more likely to answer questions about your family and friends than receive answers about any of his accomplishments. He also has a great deal of appreciation in being a kid from Coalgate. He talked at lengths about how his post-playing career accomplishments are not about him individually but showcase the way he was brought up by the teachers, coaches, and residents of Coal County.

Although Coal County is one of the smallest



Roland and his biggest fan, daughter Emery Jo.

Roland was going to play hard and encourage those around him whenever they needed a little pick-me-up. I am happy to see him selected for the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Forrest Mazey: Roland was always a great athlete; and even better than that, he was always a great role model for the younger kids who dreamed about being a Wildcat. He is well deserving of this wonderful honor and will always represent his hometown with immense dignity.

Garret Chaney: Ro was an amazing teammate. He was a guy you loved having on your team and hated playing against. Ro had a style and cockiness that I thought was awesome, and quite frankly I would try to emulate as an underclassman.

I remember as a sophomore, with Ro as a senior, in practice we would run 7 on 7 and I would line up across from him at cornerback, and there was so much trash talking. I mean if you can think of the worst diva of all time, it was Ro, and if you think of the second worst, it had to be me. There were no

inductees.
Trent Bourland: When guys were taking it slow in practice, Roland was taking each repetition like it was Friday night. He is a guy who has an enthusiasm about what he does, and that has aided him to reach the level he is today. Roland is more than deserving for induction into the Hall of Fame.

If there is one guy who embodies what it is to be a Wildcat and what is to work hard, Roland Fanning is the guy who comes to mind.

Head Coach Nick Mingione, University of Kentucky: What an incredible honor for Roland to be inducted into the Hall of Fame. He holds Coalgate in such high regard, with a love, loyalty and pride for where he's from and the people who influenced and molded him that he's carried everywhere he's been. His infectious personality has left an undeniable mark on everyone he's come in contact with and that's in no small part because of the teachers, coaches, and everyone at Coalgate who helped him become the man he is today.



Roland and his grandfather, the late Ernest Paul Fanning — a fixture at every Wildcat sports event for many years. Ernest Paul is a member of the 2014 Coalgate Athletic Hall of Fame.

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