DENNIS TURNER BIOGRAPHY

Teacher/Coach Dennis Turner started his teaching career in Storden in the spring of 1964 at 21 years old. After Denny did his practice teaching and coached track that year, he and his wife, Mary, decided to make Storden their home for more than 45 years!

Denny was a 1960 graduate of Round Lake High School and a 16-time varsity letter winner (4 each football, basketball, baseball and track) for the Wildcats. Denny attended Mankato State College, where he majored in biology with a minor in math and physical education. He married Mary Dahlin from Okabena, and together, they raised 4 children: Kimberly, Shelli, Jason and Dominic.

Throughout his career, Denny taught biology, life science, phy-ed, and business math at Storden and Storden-Jeffers. In 1978, he was SJ teacher of the year. He had a passion for teaching and believed in teaching by association in order to avoid memorization, but instead, build a long-lasting understanding of the information.

Denny coached basketball for 22 years, track for 18 years, and football for 13 years. He took pride in building the track program, which he believed built stronger allround athletes. For 12 years straight, his track teams finished 1st or 2nd in the Red Rock Conference. They always had exceptional sprinters, relay squads, hurdlers, and dominated field events.

While he loved track, Denny's real passion was coaching basketball. His first year of basketball was 1964-1965 when the Storden Tigers finished around .500. The The following season, the '66 Tigers won the Red Rock Conference! The final 5 years of SHS, the Tigers were Conference Champions. After consolidation with Jeffers, Denny coached an additional 15 seasons while claiming 6 more championships and 2 runners up. He finished his basketball coaching career with a first or second place outcome in 14 of his 22 seasons. In addition, Denny was a two-time WCCO Prep Coach of the Week and won 4 consecutive conference crowns in the early 80's. The Chiefs advanced to the District finals in 1980 before losing a tough game to Windom. They came back strong in '81, winning 22 straight games and securing Conference, District and Region titles, as well as earning themselves a trip to the state tournament. They finished the 1981 season with a 22-3 record.

Denny retired from teaching after the '81 season, but continued his coaching career for 5 more years. After retirement, his passion for sports never ended. Denny volunteered his time coaching elementary basketball for boys and girls, as well as coaching summer leagues. He took pride in and loved watching his sons play high school and college ball, as well as his grandchildren. Denny followed all area sports events, including high school and college, until the week he passed away in January of 2016.

Denny’s beloved ’81 basketball team was pallbearers for his funeral, where he was laid to rest wearing the coveted powder blue sport coat the Chiefs were well known for. Denny once said, "you earn respect by your intensity and ability on the court, but you demand respect with your actions and attire before and after games.”