

Harold Dean Pearson to be inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame

(ED. NOTE - Fourth of a four-part series on the 2013 inductees into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame. The dinner and induction ceremony will be Saturday, May 11 at 6 p.m. at Central United Methodist Church. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at the door.)

Like most kids growing up in a small mill town in the 1940s and 1950s, Harold Dean Pearson dreamed of one day becoming a major league baseball player.

He was quite good at Kings Mountain High from 1948-1952 and at Gardner Webb Junior College in 1954. In fact, he was an All-State pitcher at GW, posting a 5-1 record and leading the team in strikeouts.

He also enjoyed success in fast-pitch softball in Cleveland County and during his time in the military, pitching his Army teams to numerous championships.

But, Pearson knew all along he was not going to be a major leaguer, and after a brief stint as a teacher in Reidsville he turned to doing the next best thing to playing

sports - writing about them.

He always loved his hometown and began his journalism career here with the Kings Mountain Herald. He later moved on to the Gastonia Gazette. He enjoyed covering all sports - albeit mostly high school - for those papers but he still yearned for bigger pastures.

He found what would be the job he really wanted in 1965 when he joined the staff of the Richmond Times-Dispatch. Over a 30-year career with that paper he became a national award-winning writer covering college sports, NASCAR and the PGA.

Pearson developed a rapport with his subjects, something that is rare today. He not only had kind things to say about their accomplishments on the court, course and track but he gained their trust.

He rubbed shoulders with some of the greats such as the late Dale Earnhardt of NASCAR fame and golfing greats like the late Sam Snead, who still holds the record for most PGA tournament victories.

Pearson did it, not with a

cell phone or email that far too many journalists today use for communication, but with personal contact. "He had a list of the personal telephone numbers for all the (NASCAR) drivers," said his former co-worker at the Times-Dispatch, Arthur Utley in a letter recommending Pearson for induction into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame. "No cell phones or public relations people then. If Harold wanted to talk to Richard Petty or Cale Yarborough or David Pearson, he called them."

The same was true for others he covered in sports. They weren't just his subjects, they were his friends.

Jim Hunter, Vice President of Corporate Communications for NASCAR, also highly recommended Pearson via letter. "I can think of no journalist who had a bigger impact on NASCAR racing than Harold Pearson."

Pearson wasn't just a sports reporter, he was a sports promoter. During his tenure at Richmond, he served as President of the Southern Conference of

Sports Reporters Association for two years and President of the National Motorsports Press Association for five years. After retiring in 1995 he edited the Virginia State Golf Association magazine, "The Virginia Golfer."

Pearson won first place in the Sports News Writing Press Association for his coverage of the PGA and won nine different awards from the National Motorsports Press Association, including the prestigious "Joe Littlejohn Award" for his contributions to the sport of NASCAR.

While he rubbed shoulders with the greats of the game, Pearson never forgot his roots. He came home as often as possible to visit his parents, the late Mr. and Mrs. Olland Pearson; his sister Shirley Mayes, and friends around town and at the Kings Mountain Herald.

He was an ambassador for Kings Mountain as well as the sports he covered. One of his favorite sayings, always with a chuckle, was "I always wanted to be a sports writer...from the time I found out I wasn't going to make the big leagues."



Harold Dean Pearson, right, with golfing great Sam Snead. Pearson will be inducted into the Kings Mountain Sports Hall of Fame at its 26th annual ceremony Saturday at 6 p.m. at the Central United Methodist Church Christian Activities Center.

3 KMHS tracksters qualify for state

Kings Mountain qualified three track and field athletes for the state championship at last Saturday's 3A West Regional at Western Carolina University.

Sophomore Graham Keeter advanced to this week's state meet by finishing third in the shot put with a throw of 44.05 feet.

Adrienne Green and Cassie Morton qualified for the girls state championship.

Green came from behind in the 400 meter dash to finish third in the Region. She was ranked 12th going into the meet. This marks her second trip to the state. She qualified last year as a leg of the 4x400 meter relay team.

Morton qualified in the 3200 meter run by finishing fourth in the Region.

The ladies of KMHS performed well in all their events last Saturday, including many personal records. Notable mentions included:

-Emily Harris who placed fifth in the discus for the second year in a row.

-4x100 m relay team of Tyquassia Mackey, Adrienne Green, Betzaira Saenz and Tynesha Merriman, who placed fifth.

-4x800m relay team of Mackenzie Smith, Mariah Roberts, Radhika Patael and McKay Williamson, who placed fifth.

-Shakayah Stephens who placed fifth in the shot put.

-Sarah Scism who placed sixth in the triple jump with a jump of 31'10"

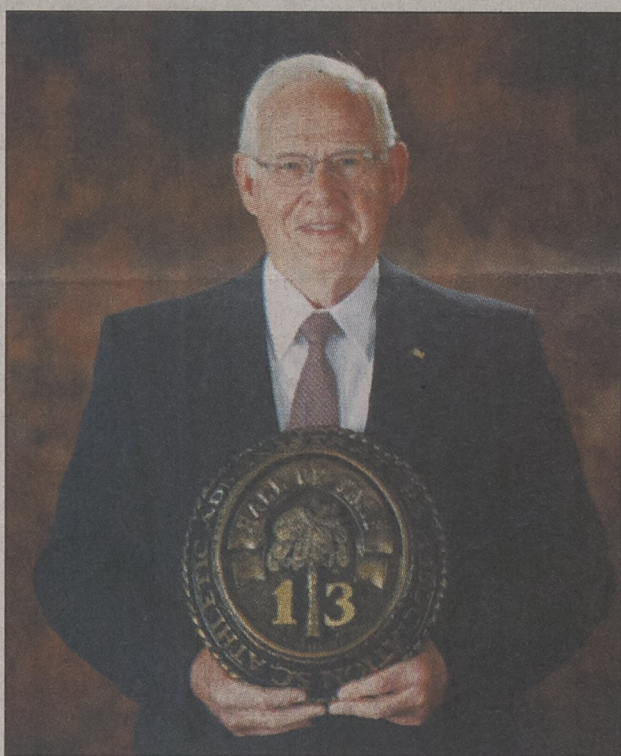
The Lady Mountaineers finished eighth out of 22 teams at the meet.

KM kickers open playoffs tonight at Burns

The Kings Mountain High women's soccer team will travel to Burns tonight at 7 p.m. for a first round game in the state 3A tournament.

The Lady Mountaineers go into the playoffs as the #3 seed from the Big South 3A.

Admission to the game is \$6.



Mike Ware with his 2013 SCAA Hall of Fame award.

KM native Ware inducted into SCAA Hall of Fame

Coach Mike Ware was inducted into the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association Hall of Fame on March 9, 2013. The SCAA members inducted Coach Ware for this honor along with eight other recipients. Among those honored were Keith Richardson from Clinton, John McKissick from Summerville, and Willie Varner from Woodruff.

Coach Ware attended Kings Mountain High School in North Carolina where he was a three sport athlete all four years. He attended Catawba College and graduated from Appalachian State Teachers College.

He began his teaching and coaching career at Fort Mill High School in South Carolina. Within the framework of his coaching career, he was head coach in seven different sports. Coach Ware served Newberry High School as head football coach and athletic di-

rector. Under Coach Ware's leadership, Newberry High School teams won 41 region championships in 13 sports, with five State Runner-Up victories and one State Championship. He then became the Athletic Director at Keenan High School for three years before retiring.

Among his many accomplishments, Coach Ware was an active board member of the SCAA, received the State Award of Merit from the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and earned two awards from the SC Coaches Association - Athletic Director of the year and the Charles B. Stuart Administrator award. Since 1990, Coach Ware has served as secretary/treasurer of the South Carolina Football Coaches Association.

Coach Ware graduated from Kings Mountain. **See Ware, 2B**

At Hickory Friday at 7 p.m.

Mountaineers blank Forestview to make state 3A playoffs for first time since 2009

Kings Mountain's Mountaineers shutout Forestview 2-0 Friday night in Gastonia to nail down fourth place in the Big South 3A Conference and gain their first state 3A playoff berth since 2009.

The Mountaineers won the Southwestern 2A/3A Conference in '09 but finished fifth in the Big South each of the past three seasons. Two years ago they tied North Gaston for fourth place in the regular season but lost a special playoff game to the Wildcats to determine the #4 playoff berth.

The Mountaineers, 6-8 in the BSC and 11-10 overall, will travel to Hickory High School Friday at 7 p.m. for an opening round 3A playoff game. The winner of that game will advance to the second round on Tuesday, May 14 against the winner of the R-S Central-Asheville game.

Hickory, 12-10 overall, finished fourth in the split Northwestern 3A/4A Conference but was the #1 3A team in that league. Asheville is the #2 seed from the Mountain Athletic Conference and R-S Central is the #2 seed from the 2/3A South Mountain Athletic Conference.

Kings Mountain's only

senior starter, Wil Sellers, pitched his second shutout over the Jaguars Friday night, a feat no other Mountaineer pitcher has experienced in recent seasons. He and his teammates shutout the Jaguars 1-0 in an earlier game at KM's Lancaster Field.

Sellers gave up only four hits, walked only one and struck out six. Forestview had runners in scoring position a couple of times but the Mountaineers gave a great defensive effort.

Forestview also got a great pitching effort from its ace, Trey Stallings. He gave up seven hits, including two by Daniel Barrett.

Kings Mountain scored both of its runs in the top of the seventh inning. Landon Bolin and Cameron Bullock led off with singles and Bolin scored the winning run

on a single by Colby Crisp. The Mountaineers got an insurance run when Crisp scored on a wild pitch.

The Mountaineers had to win against Forestview after dropping a tough 1-0 game to Crest the previous Tuesday night. KM went into the final week of the season with a one-game lead over the Jaguars, but the loss to Crest coupled with Forestview's win over Hunter Huss forced a tie and set up a winner-take-all situation for the playoff berth.

Junior southpaw Alex Grooms did a good job on the mound for the Mountaineers, but the Chargers nailed down second place when they scored on a bases-loaded walk in the bottom of the seventh. With one out and a runner on third, the Mountaineers intentionally walked two batters to load

the bases and set up a force situation.

Crest led 1-0 going into the top of the seventh when KM tied the game on Grooms' fielders choice. Alex Reynolds and Brandon Bell singled to set up the

score.

KM Coach Matt Bridges said Sellers, who will be pitching for the Gardner-Webb Bulldogs next spring, will get the starting assignment again Friday night at Hickory.



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