

Jack Jones, Athletic Director 1989-2000



Jack Jones became the Director of Physical Education and Athletics for the Norwich City School District in the fall of 1989, retiring in 2000. Prior to coming to Norwich, Jack served in similar positions in both Sidney and Vestal. Jack's teaching and coaching careers spanned roughly

20 years in both Liberty and Sidney.

In addition to this classroom teaching, Jack coached football, basketball, tennis and track and field. The breadth and depth of his teaching and coaching careers, as well as administrative experience, contributed fundamentally to his success in Norwich.

While many factors contributed to the success of Norwich during the decade of the 90s, the most fundamental and important was the culture and climate which Jack built, nourished and maintained. He created an environment that was inclusive of parents, coaches and players. He actively challenged all athletic participants to commit to excellence. He enthusiastically encouraged and supported participation by students and demanded that their coaches ask as much of themselves as they did members of their teams.

Most importantly, Jack gave leadership to Norwich athletes and coaches by example. He was "the first to arrive and the last to leave" and, throughout, totally focused on the tasks at hand. He was almost uniquely optimistic, straightforward, honest and focused... the very characteristics he sought to instill among those involved with Norwich athletics.

Four former Tornado coaches reflected on how much Jack Jones meant to them, their team and their respective programs in general.

Football coach John Pluta remembers Jack's persona well. "Jack was the first on the field with a smile and congratulations after a big win. He was the first to offer support after a tough loss. He was always there for coaches. He lived his words "coaching is teaching", as he taught us to constantly strive for excellence."

Described by John Martinson, another head football coach: "I respected Jack Jones as much as my own father. God rest his soul. Jack provided me with great structure, support and encouragement during my early years of coaching."

Former basketball and baseball coach Mark Abbott echoed: "Mr. Jones brought stability to our athletic programs. He demanded that coaches be teachers on the court, field and mat. He guided us when we needed to be guided and led us when we needed to be led. Above all else, he was always there for us and he always had our back."

Longtime wrestling coach Don Kovalchik said, "Jack Jones was a great people person. He was very organized, honest, accessible and supportive of the Norwich programs. He was always on top of things and very much operated by the book. He was a leader for all of us."

In recognition of his organizational and professional contributions to athletic success, Jack has previously been elected to the Halls of Fame in Sidney, Section IV and New York State. As well, he has been designated as New York State Athletic Director of the Year.

—Dr. Robert Cleveland