

DONOR STORIES

PAT MITCHELL

“Coach Pat Mitchell Scholarship Fund”

Never Give Up!” That simple phrase defines the life and legacy of Coach Pat Mitchell. Coach Mitchell inspired his players and friends with his philosophy that to win you must “pick yourself up every time you get knocked down” and to “get back into the game.” He is a motivator who has taught many how to exceed expectations and to reach extraordinary heights.



COACH PAT MITCHELL

In the fall of 2006, a group of Cedar Falls High School players and alumni worked together to raise the funds to start a scholarship to honor the man who had helped them become who they are today, Coach Pat Mitchell. The impact that Coach Mitchell had on these former players speaks to his character as a Coach, and teacher.

Coach Pat Mitchell is the son of Coach Robert and Frances Mitchell of Osage, Iowa. Coaching, teaching and football were always played pivotal part of his life. Education was very important to his family, as is evident in the number of educators in his family. Pat comes from a long line of teachers: his Father, Robert, Sister, Betty, Aunt, Sarah and Aunt, Betty, were all teachers. Coach Pat Mitchell has taught Business Education, Drivers Education and Physical Education as well as serving as a department chair for two years.

“Coach Mitchell was named to the UNI Hall of Fame and the Iowa Football Coaches Hall of Fame.”

Pat Mitchell and his wife, Jo, reside in Cedar Falls and have three children. A daughter, Susan, who is deceased, daughter, Julie Whitley and her husband Miles and daughter Haley, live in Olathe, Kansas and their son, Mike, and his wife Gracie call Austin, Texas home. Pat’s sister Betty Haynes and her husband, Steve and family of Dunedin, Florida.

Pat began his football career early in life, played through high school and then was a student athlete from 1958 until 1963 at the University of Northern Iowa. Pat played under Coach Bill Hammer and Stan Sheriff, a coach at UNI for 23 years and after whom the Sheriff field on the University of Northern Iowa campus takes its name. During his years playing the positions of tight end and defensive end for UNI, Pat was a three year starter and letterman, and was named all conference in 1962. In 1963, he graduated with a double major in Physical Education and Business Education.

After the completion of college, Pat began his teaching and coaching career with positions in Bakersfield, CA and Kenosha, WI. He then returned to Cedar Falls High School to teach Business Education and to be the Defensive Co-Coordinator under Head Coach Ed Lyons. Mitchell went on to become Head Coach for the Tigers in 1967.

This began the legacy of Coach Mitchell's successful career. He has led players through 36 of 40 winning seasons, made 19 playoff appearances, four State Final games and one State Championship, and now has a win-loss record of 273-120-2 through the end of the 2006 Football Season.

Coach Mitchell has coached 77 All State players, five High School All Americans. Five of his players were invited to pro camps. One former player, Troy Stedman went on to play for the Kansas City Chiefs and the Pittsburgh Steelers. Mitchell's career does not stop at Football, though. He has also coached golf for men and women for over 30 years.

Over his career, Coach Mitchell has been blessed to work with 85 excellent assistant coaches, and several of them have gone on to be head coaches. Many of his former players are now in education or coaching fields, including Rick Hartzel, Athletic Director at the University of Northern Iowa. Several of his golfers have gone on to be professional players and make a living through the game of golf. With his career in coaching and teaching, Coach Mitchell has been a part of the lives of approximately 20,000 students and 1,300 football players.

Coach Mitchell's success has certainly not gone unrecognized. He was named to the UNI Hall of Fame and the Iowa Football Coaches Hall of Fame. He has been selected as the Mississippi Valley Conference Coach of the Year several times, was named as the Des Moines Register Coach of the Year in 1986, the Iowa Football Coaches Association 4-A Coach of the Year in 1999 and 2006 and was the 2003 National Federation of State High School Association Coach of the Year for the State of Iowa. He has also had the opportunity to be the Assistant and Head Coach for the Iowa Shrine North-South game.

Coach Mitchell's impact is evident in the efforts of Alumni of Cedar Falls High School to start a scholarship fund with the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa to honor the commitment of Coach Pat Mitchell to Cedar Falls High School. His dedication to educate, motivate and celebrate the accomplishments of students is his enduring legacy and we are proud to honor the Coach in this way. Through the Coach Pat Mitchell Scholarship, the determination and the spirit to never give up will help many students continue their education. This scholarship gives students the inspiration that can motivate them to succeed the rest of their lives.

***Historical vignette prepared by the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa.*

