

His Coaching Career Complete, Swanson Gives Thanks

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Mel Swanson



Sherman Central School girls basketball coach Mel Swanson addresses the crowd during Senior Night last week at the SCS gym. Swanson is retiring after nearly 40 years on the Lady Wildcats' bench. P-J photo by Scott Kindberg

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter is authored by Mel Swanson, the longtime girls basketball coach at Sherman Central School, who will retire at the end of the Lady Wildcats' postseason. Swanson was honored for his four decades on the bench during Senior Night festivities last Tuesday night at the SCS gym.

I'd like to thank all of the people who took part in organizing our Senior Night and court dedication ceremony on Feb. 14.

I'd also like to thank all of my family, especially my wife Mary (of 42 years), for their dedication in helping me complete a wonderful and rewarding teaching and coaching career at Sherman Central School.

I'd also like to thank the Sherman community, who have always been supportive of all Sherman

athletics. Sherman Central School's various Boards of Education, along with present and past administrations, gave me the opportunity to teach and coach for four decades—thank you.

To the Sherman teaching staff, both present and past, our years together were more than rewarding. To the present and past maintenance staff, your competence has always been an important component of a successful program. To my players' parents and families, both present and past, thank you for loaning your daughters to me. They enriched my life, as I hope I did theirs.

To all of my stat keepers and scorekeepers, both present and past, my thanks for an underrated job well done. To our scoreboard operators from 1977-2017, (believe it or not there have only been two gentlemen, the late Harry Waite and currently Fred Hamilton), no one anywhere (did) does a better job than you!

To all of the young managers, and many that went from being managers to players, thank you for your efforts, and for taking the occasional "abuse" from the team. To all of my assistant coaches over the years (Bill Nicholson, Kathy Dearing, Kristin Rowan, Sarah Courtney, Ivy (Neal) Krenzer, Jess (Gorske) Weise, thank you for your valued perspectives and leadership.

With special thanks to my current assistant, Emily Eckwahl, our program is resting in good hands. You have done an outstanding job as my assistant for the past seven years; you will be a great varsity coach.

Finally, thank you to Geary TeWinkle, who has been with me on the bench for a couple of decades. Your guidance with our young teams was invaluable to me, along with being a good friend over the years.

Last, but not least, I would like to thank all of those young women who have suited up in the Sherman blue and gold over the past 39 years. These young women have given me everything they had—blood, sweat and tears. And a lot of laughs. As many have written their stories of what basketball has done for them, I can't come close to thanking them enough for what they have given to me as their coach.