

2022 West Salem High School Alumni Hall of Fame Inductee - Bob Gorniak

Bob Gorniak is a 1976 graduate of West Salem High School. His legacy of service through coaching spans an amazing 44 years in the West Salem community. When asked to become a volunteer youth baseball coach in 1978, he stepped up, saying he would take any team that needed a coach. He continued this for 12 years until it began to conflict with the new challenge of being an assistant high school football coach. In 1981, the West Salem football team had a two and a half year, 23 game losing streak. Bob saw coach John Lewis at the gas station one day and asked if he could be a help to him in any way. This started his 41 year football coaching career that continues to this day. He selflessly gave of his time and knowledge the first 12 years of his coaching career with no pay. During this time, the West Salem High School football program made an amazing turnaround that included three state championship games and one state title.

Bob has also been very involved with West Salem's hockey program. He was a member of the group that first brought youth hockey to West Salem. He was a volunteer youth hockey coach for many years and once again mentored countless youth while helping to bring hockey up to the level it is today in West Salem. Eight years ago, he was asked to become an assistant high school hockey coach and once again, Bob chose to step up. He has always been willing to help with kids at any time and at any level, and there are many more teams and leagues that he has been apart of in addition to these two.

In addition to coaching, Bob has sung in his church choir and served as the head of the Christ St. John's school board for eight years, during which their new school was built. Typical of Bob, when told about this honor, he said those that truly deserve it are his understanding employers and especially his wife, Tammy. Countless people in the West Salem community have been touched through his service. It is difficult to coach in a small town and still retain a good name and reputation, which Bob has truly done.

-Written by John Hetland, 1974 West Salem graduate and member of the Alumni Hall of Fame Committee