



# NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF TECHNICAL AGRICULTURE

July 12, 2022

## **Courtside with the Coach**

Dean's Report by NCTA Dean Larry Gossen, Ph.D.

One of my earliest acquaintances when I arrived in Curtis in 2020 was a familiar face around campus, and at other colleges, too.

Del and Beverly Van Der Werff are Curtis residents who were honored by the Aggie Alumni Association last year for their longtime years of service to the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture and the earlier institution, the Nebraska School of Technical Agriculture.

From South Dakota, Del and Beverly moved to southwest Nebraska in 1973, where Del taught and coached at Maywood in the new high school which opened that fall.

Three years passed before the next step neither imagined after graduating from the University of South Dakota at Springfield. Just 7 miles east of Maywood, at Curtis, their 29-year career at UNSTA started in the fall semester of 1976.

They were UNSTA-NCTA employees for nearly 30 years, Bev as a staff secretary, recruiter and campus "ambassador" as she assisted Del in coaching women's volleyball and traveling to colleges and tournaments in the Midwest and other parts of the U.S.

### **July 30 Play Ball!**

Coach Del estimates he coached or instructed about 1,000 Aggies during his tenure from the fall of 1976 to May 2006 when they "semi-retired" with the Class of '06.

In general studies, Dell taught subjects such as general psychology, human relations, communications, and rural sociology. He also was the longtime editor of the college Aggie yearbook.

A highlight of coaching, he says, was the interaction with students, making a difference in a young person's life and career path, He also enjoyed meeting coaches and faculty all around the nation. UNSTA/NCTA was a member of the United States Athletic Association.

Though now retired, the Van Der Werffs are still a vital part of our Curtis community. They travel to see family and their grandchildren. They try to stay in touch with many of their former colleagues and UNSTA-NCTA graduates, too.

They influenced many students. Young men and young women who came to college for an education and continued their high school athletics on the court.

On Saturday, July 30, Coach Del has called a reunion for athletes he coached in Aggie men's basketball.

Players will gather at Curtis, meeting for a scrimmage in the gymnasium at the community center and later join in Frontier County fair activities at Stockville. He invites spectators to join in the events.

### **Spread the word**

Aggie Alumni Association president David Fulton of Pleasanton (Ag Business '80) is helping to spread the word about the reunion. Although not an athlete at UNSTA, Fulton was one of Van Der Werff's students.

Fulton plans to attend the activities on July 30, reconnecting with classmates and Aggie alumni.

Coach Del stopped by Ag Hall on campus earlier this week to share some information about the teams he coached.

Ever the statistician, he has compiled a listing of team captains, season records, and an accounting of leading scorers.

Jason Houghtelling of Cambridge, who played in 1997 and 1998, was among the leaders, scoring 552 points and averaging 30.6 points per game.

"Coach and Bev were some of the greatest mentors a player could have!" says Houghtelling, a banker in his hometown of Cambridge. "They truly cared about their players and have continued to stay in touch, even after we've graduated."

For 16 years, Del was joined by Bev as his assistant coach for the Aggie women's volleyball team.

Boni Perks Edwards played on their first volleyball team in the fall of 1976. "They were really good coaches and are good people," says Edwards, county surveyor in Lincoln County. "More important than volleyball, they shared guidance for life."

Active in Rotary International, Van Der Werffs have traveled the globe as ambassadors and educators serving programs multiple times to India and in Brazil. Their goodwill is shared regionally and locally.

I look forward to welcoming alumni back to campus on July 30, as we celebrate rural America and the people in our communities who are difference makers.

### **July 30 Coach Del's agenda:**

12-12:30 p.m. -- Campus tours of NCTA Education Center

12:45 p.m. -- Curtis Community Center gymnasium

    Welcome by Coach and NCTA Dean Larry Gossen

1 p.m. --- On the floor and run 2 miles (or 2 laps)

    Introduction of Teams

    Open Team Shooting

    Free-throw contest (10 each)

    Drawing for 2 UNSTA 1990's jackets

2 - 4:30 -- Tournament--(no fast breaks)

    3-Point Contest--shoot 10

4:30 p.m. -- Awards and Hydrate (Water, soda, tea courtesy of NCTA)

6 p.m. -- Free meal & watermelon feed at Stockville Fairgrounds

8 p.m. -- Music at Fairgrounds by the Randy Rogers Band & Wade Bowen

Questions: Call the Coach at 308-367-7900. Have a great week, Aggie friends!

**NCTA Events:**

July 14: NCTA at Nebraska Agricultural Youth Institute Career Fair, Lincoln

July 17-18: NCTA to National High School Finals Rodeo, Gillette, Wyoming

July 26: Cover Crops & Conservation Field Day, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., NCTA Ed Center and Farm

July 30: Aggie Basketball Team Reunion, 12-5 p.m., Curtis Community Center

*Part of the University of Nebraska system, the Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture is a two-year institution with a statewide mission of preparing students for successful careers in agriculture, veterinary technology and related industries. NCTA is known for its affordable tuition, high job-placement rate for its graduates, and for the success of student teams in competitive activities including crops judging, ranch horse events, livestock judging, shotgun sports, stock dog trials, and intercollegiate rodeo. The college is consistently ranked as one of the best two-year schools in the nation.*



Aggies of 2003-2004 join Coach Del Van Der Werff after his 400<sup>th</sup> win.

Article online: