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# Five athletes from Clay Center played professional football

## Dallas Cowboy linebacker turned home into ranch for underprivileged boys

By **Ryan D. Wilson**,  
Dispatch Publisher

**8 Amazing 8**  
**All-Star Athletes**  
*Eldon Danenhauer, AFL player*



Danenhauer, born in Clay Center, played in the NFL as offensive tackle with the Denver Broncos from 1960 through 1965. He was an AFL All-Star in 1962 and 1965.

Clay Center can say five pro-football players can trace their roots to Clay Center, though the only one to make it all the way to Super Bowl is probably one you didn't know lived in Clay Center as a youth.

Ray May, a linebacker for several pro-football teams lived on a ranch southwest of Clay Center. After winning the Super Bowl he bought the ranch where he spent part of his childhood and turned it into a ranch for underprivileged boys from Baltimore both during and following his professional career.

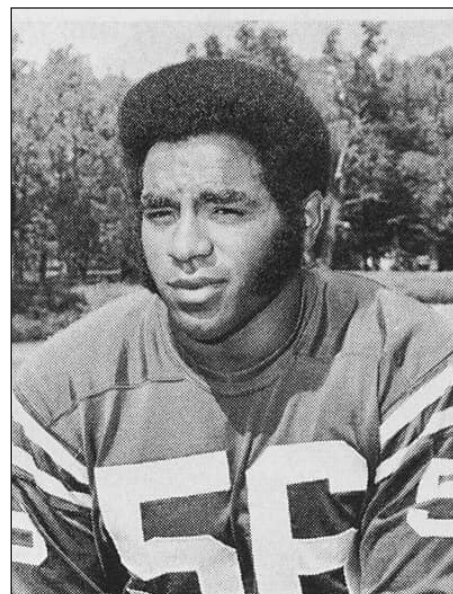
He attended LA High School where he played football and baseball. In baseball, May played first base and was named to the All-Southern League team as a senior.[1] In football as a tight end and defensive end, May earned WSC All-League honorable mention honors on both offense and defense as a senior. played football at the University of Southern California from 1964-1966 where he featured as a defensive end.

May was selected in the fourth round of the 1967 NFL/AFL draft by the Pittsburgh Steelers as the 89th overall selection

May spent his first three years of his career in Pittsburgh, spending the last two seasons as a starter. He was traded to the Baltimore Colts prior to the 1970 NFL season in In Baltimore, May made up part of a potent linebacking corps that included Pro Football Hall of Fame member Ted Hendricks and All-Pro Mike Curtis. May was a member of the Colts team that won Super Bowl V against the Dallas Cowboys in January 1971.

Following the Colts' 16-13 victory over the Dallas Cowboys in Super Bowl V, May took his \$15,000 winnings, paid off the mortgage on his parents' house and bought a ranch for underprivileged kids in Kansas - the one he had spent time at as a kid. He'd already opened his Pikesville home to several urban teens, for whom he served as guardian, tracking their studies and taking them to Colts games.

"They had nothing and they needed a chance," May said in a Baltimore Sun article. "Once, I found [teammates] Bubba Smith and Roy Jefferson in the house, wrestling with the kids, who were small but raw-bone tough. Bubba [6-7, 265 pounds] kept hollering, 'Get 'em off me! Get 'em off me! I'm thankful the players gave of themselves, and that the kids could feel that



wholesomeness."

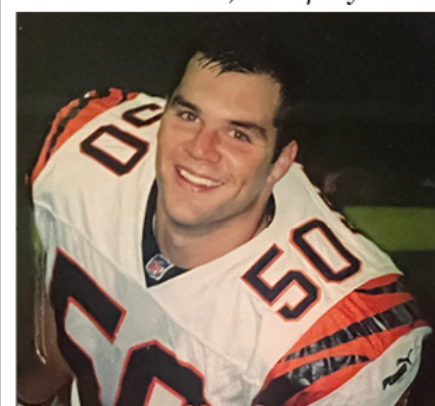
Mike Curtis called May and Hendricks, "two of my favorite guys and two of our best players." [6] Curtis also expressed great admiration for May as a "remarkable man" for spending "nearly all his time - and damn near all his money" raising three troubled adopted children as a bachelor. May won the "Whizzer" White NFL Man of the Year Award following the 1971 season.

May began the 1973 NFL season in Baltimore, but lost his starting position to Stan White. May claimed that he asked to be traded by Colts general manager Joe Thomas. His request was granted following week three, when May was traded to the Denver Broncos in exchange for draft considerations. May remained with the Broncos until the 1975 season.

May played in 118 games during his time in the NFL from 1967 to 1975. He intercepted 13 passes and recovered three fumbles. He also helped the Baltimore Colts in 1970 to win Super Bowl V over the Dallas Cowboys, 16-13.

But it was as a team leader where Ray May was probably most remembered. While in Denver in 1973, he introduced the custom of holding hands in his team's defensive huddle, as a sign of brotherhood and unified strength. That simple gesture may have seemed a little bit odd at that time, but today, many pro, college, and high school teams hold hands in their huddles.

**8 Amazing 8**  
**All-Star Athletes**  
*Ben Petersen, NFL player*



Ben Peterson, who grew up on a farm near Clay Center, played three games as a linebacker for the Cincinnati Bengals in the NFL in 1999.

**8 Amazing 8**  
**All-Star Athletes**  
*Hal Brill, NFL/AFL player*

A native of Clay Center, Kansas, Harold "Hal"

Brill signed with the Detroit Lions of the National Football League (NFL) after he couldn't afford to go to college and made the club's lineup in September 1939. He appeared in two games for the Lions during the 1939 season. He finished the 1939 season with the Los Angeles Bulldogs of the American Professional Football Association.



BRILL

**8 Amazing 8**  
**All-Star Athletes**  
*Bill Danenhauer, AFL player*



From Clay Center, Bill Danenhauer was drafted by the Baltimore Colts in 17th round in 1956 and played for two years. In 1960, because the AFL was starting a new league and the Denver Broncos, he signed with his brother Eldon. He played for one year as a defensive lineman for the Broncos and was then traded to the Boston Patriots at the end of the season.

# Olympian hails from Clay Center



Ken Swenson competes in The 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, West Germany (Photo by Tony Triolo /Disney General Entertainment Content via Getty Images)

A three-time Big Eight champion in the 880, Ken Swenson anchored four K-State relay teams to world records, two NCAA championships, and one American record.

Not bad when you consider Swenson was nearly overlooked coming out of high school in Clay Center. He was recruited by just two schools – Kansas State and Fort Hays State. Swenson opted for Kansas State because, like most middle-distance runners during that era, he wanted to line up against Jim Ryun of Kansas and see how he measured up.

"I think we were about 50-50," Swenson said of the rivalry with Ryun. "The fact that Ryun was at Kansas, and I knew some of the other athletes that were either at Kansas or Missouri, I just figured if I was going to compete and run against the best, then I needed to be in a conference where I was going to get that exposure."

And not being highly recruited coming out of Clay Center Community High School was certainly a motivation to prove people wrong.

"Yes, it certainly was," Swenson said. "Those were some great times in track and field in Kansas."

In 1966, Swenson was undefeated in the 880-yard run both indoors and outdoors as a senior in high school. In 1970, he ranked first at 800

meters among U.S. runners by Track and Field News and 1971 and 1972 he was ranked third.

Swenson was part of one of the greatest 800-meter races of all-time during the 1972 Olympic Trials when he edged Ryun at the tape to qualify for the Olympic Games in Munich, Germany.

"It was a great experience," Swenson said of the Olympics. "Running took me places I could have only dreamed of."

While running at Kansas State from 1966-70, Swenson was a three-time 880-yard champion in the Big Eight Conference. He was a four-time All-American, anchored a pair of NCAA champion relay teams and was the 1970 NCAA Outdoor champion at the half-mile.

"The Relays circuit (Drake, Kansas, Texas) were really big back in those days and certainly gave us a lot of national exposure," Swenson said. "You think back on all those experiences and you are certainly glad of those opportunities. But eventually, it's time to move on."

Swenson still holds the Clay Center Community High School record of 1:55.8. While at K-State in 1970, he had the fourth-fastest 880 time in history with his 1:44.8 clocking.

Source: Kansas Sports Hall of Fame, when Swenson was inducted in 2019

## 8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Ken Swensen, Olympian



Ken Swenson, competed in the 1972 Olympics in the 880-yard run and is a former American record holder with a time of 1:44.8. A three-time Big Eight champion in the 880, Swenson also anchored four K-State relay teams to world records, two NCAA championships, and one American record.

# Clay Center coach wrote the book on how to coach high school football — literally

## 9 Innovative 9 Inventors

Otto Unruh, T-wing offense

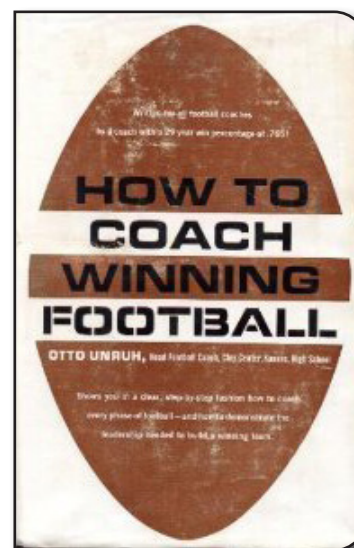


Otto Dean Unruh coached football at CCHS from 1942 to 1967 and at Bethel College 1929 until 1942 and again from 1967 through 1969. He literally wrote the book "How To Coach Winning Football" in 1960 and is credited with inventing the T-Wing offensive football formation, having run the play as early as 1938. He is a member of the Kansas Sports Hall of Fame.

Otto Dean Unruh made his mark as a one-man athletic department at Bethel College for 14 years and later was a highly-successful football and track coach at Clay Center (Kansas) High School. Unruh attended high school at Bethel Academy in North Newton where he participated in basketball, football, tennis and track. He scored 32 points in one basketball game, a school record that stood for 37 years.

Unruh played basketball at the University of Kansas for one season before graduating in 1926. From 1929 to 1943, he served Bethel College as the football, basketball, tennis, and track coach.

After Bethel dropped its athletic programs because of World War II, Unruh was hired at Clay Center in 1945. His teams won six Central Kansas League titles



Clay Center Head Football Coach Otto Unruh published "How to Coach Winning Football" on Jan. 1, 1960 after 29 years of coaching.

in 22 seasons and he posted a record of 126-65-8, including a 52-40-4 mark against much larger CKL schools from Salina, Manhattan, Junction City, Emporia and McPherson.

The Tigers won three mythical state titles in 1956, 1957 and 1963. Unruh also coached CCHS to two state titles in track and field, and began the school's wrestling program in the mid-1950s.

He authored the book "How To Coach Winning Football" in 1960 after coaching 29 years with a winning percentage of 76%. He is credited with inventing the T-Wing Offense in 1938, a full 12 years before it was "invented" at Michigan State in 1950.

"Having a thorough knowledge, studying, modernizing and keeping up with all of the modifications of the game are just as essential in coaching sports as it is in the aircraft industry," Unruh

advised, according to one passage of the book.

He advised coaches to remind the athletes they coach that the sport isn't one that they can be an athlete for three months out of the year, but a 12-month commitment that includes staying in shape by going out for other sports. Writing a letter of the encouragement is something he recommended coaches do over the summer.

Unruh was inducted into the KSHSAA Hall of Fame in 1976; the Bethel College Hall of Fame in 1999 and the Clay Center High School Hall of Fame in 2004. Clay Center's football stadium was renamed "Otto D. Unruh Stadium" in 1988. After that stadium was demolished in 2024, Clay Center renamed the part of Prospect Street north of the new stadium in his honor.

Sources: Kansas Sports Hall of Fame (inducted in 2006),

# WNBA star returns to sport she loves as a coach

Fifteen years after retiring as a pro-WNBA player Nicole Ohlde-Johnson followed an incredible playing career with a career in coaching college basketball.

In Clay Center the foundation of her legendary career began. Her athleticism had immediate impact once she entered high school as evidenced by her eleven varsity letters in volleyball, track, and basketball. She was named an All-State basketball player by at least one publication during her sophomore, junior, and senior years. She was also an honorable mention USA Today All-American as a senior. Ohlde-Johnson captured the 4A state high jump title as a Clay Center senior in 2000 with a leap of 5'-6".

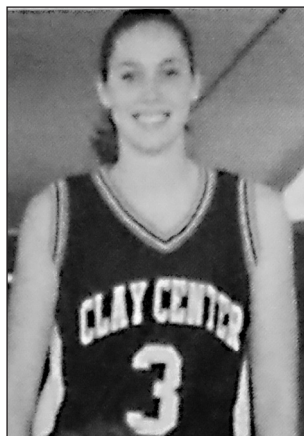
She played collegiately at Kansas State from 2000-04 where she was a two-time first-team All-American. She was a star the minute she stepped on the court for the Wildcats as a freshman, starting 24 games and averaging 17.2 points per contest on the way to being named the Big XII Freshman of the Year and an all-conference selection. As a sophomore, she averaged 17.9 points and 7.7 rebounds per contest and earned first-team All-Big XII Conference honors.

Ohlde-Johnson was on her way to stardom entering her junior year and she did not disappoint. Averaging over 18 points per game and grabbing 9 rebounds per contest, Ohlde was named the Big XII Player of the Year and was a first-team All-American selection.

It is often hard for athletes to duplicate such success the following year, but not for Ohlde-Johnson. Her senior campaign was one of the greatest years by any Wildcat in school history. She was again named the Big XII Conference Player of the Year, again named a first-team All-American, and yet again was a finalist for the Wade Trophy and the Naismith Player of the Year awards. To top it off, she was named the Big XII Female Athlete of the Year as well.

When her career at K-State ended, Ohlde-Johnson had re-written the school record books, including marks for career scoring, rebounds, blocks, double-doubles, free throws made, and minutes played. She still stands second in school history in points with 2,241 and rebounds with 995. The Wildcats made three NCAA appearances and won 80 games her final three seasons at K-State.

Ohlde-Johnson didn't just shine on the court however. She was a three-time Academic All-Big XII first-team member, was a Senior CLASS Award finalist in 2004, and was a recipient of the Collegiate Basketball Award of Excellence as a senior as well. Needless to



From the Tiger Roar yearbook say, Seh was the embodiment of the student-athlete.

She left Kansas State as the school's all-time leader in points (2241), rebounds (970) and blocked shots (201). During her career she played in 126 games, averaged 17.8 points and 7.9 rebounds per game while shooting over 55 percent from the field.

Ohlde-Johnson racked up numerous accolades during her playing career. She was a Kodak All-American, an AP first team All-American, a USBWA All-American and the Big 12 Conference Player of the Year in her 2003 and 2004 seasons. She was first team All-Big 12 as well as Academic All-Big 12 first team in 2002, 2003 and 2004. During her freshman season, Ohlde-Johnson was named the Big 12 Freshman of the Year as well as third team All-Big 12. Her No. 3 uniform was retired by Kansas State University following her last game at the school in 2004.

She was selected as the sixth overall pick of the 2004 WNBA Draft by the Minnesota Lynx. In her rookie season, she averaged nearly 12 points and 6 assists per contest. After five seasons in Minnesota, Ohlde-Johnson was traded to the Phoenix Mercury in 2009. She would go on to win the 2009 WNBA title as a member of the Mercury. On July 22, 2010, Ohlde-Johnson was traded again, this time to the Tulsa Shock, where she would play the remainder of the season before announcing her retirement from the WNBA.

She played seven WNBA seasons with the Lynx, the Tulsa Shock, and the Phoenix Mercury, where she won a WNBA championship in 2009.



Nicole Ohlde-Johnson poses for a shot at K-State. (David Berggren/

For her professional career, Ohlde-Johnson averaged nearly nine points and seven rebounds per game. Ohlde-Johnson retired from the WNBA following the 2011 season.

She was a two-time gold medalist as a member of the 2002 and 2003 USA Basketball Championships for Young Women team. During her professional career, Ohlde-Johnson was named to the 2006 USA Basketball Senior National Team for the USA's European Tour and was a member of the 2009 WNBA Championship winning Phoenix Mercury.

She then went on to play for nine more seasons professionally in Europe.

For the last two years Ohlde-Johnson has served as the head assistant coach for Nebraska-Kearney women's basketball where her husband Drew is the head coach. She coached two seasons as Co-Head Coach at Newman University and coached the Jets when they beat Central Oklahoma in the 2023 regular season finale to reach the MIAA Tournament for the first time in program history. Prior to Newman, she spent four seasons at Bethel College.

Sources: Kansas Sports Hall of Fame, University of Nebraska-Kearney



Minnesota Lynx picked Nicole Ohlde-Johnson as sixth overall in the 2004 WNBA draft. (David Sherman/NBAE via Getty Images)



Nicole Ohlde-Johnson is now the head assistant women's basketball coach at the University of Nebraska-Kearney where her husband Drew also coaches. (CourtesyPhoto)

# Pitcher 'Slow Joe' became famous for stalling between pitches

A right-handed Major League Baseball pitcher from Clay Center, Judd Bruce Doyle.



Judd Bruce Doyle, pictured at South Side Park in 1909, earned the nickname 'Slow Joe' for stalling between pitches and taking eight to ten days off between games. (Historic photo)

became famous for how long he would take between pitches and earned the nickname 'Slow Joe' because of it.

From 1906 to 1910 Doyle pitched for the New York Highlanders and Cincinnati Reds. Doyle got his nickname "Slow Joe" early in his baseball career because he was a very slow working pitcher. He would take a lot of time between pitches, often stalling for notable amounts of time.

Upon graduation from Clay Center High School in May 1901, Doyle began pitching in Ellsworth. He caught the eye of Ted Sullivan, who recruited him for the Fort Worth Panthers of the Class D Texas League in 1902. In 1902, he also pitched for the Southern Association's New Orleans Pelicans, going 21-18 between his two squads.

In 1903, he and Ernie Baker formed a one-two punch that pitched the Baton Rouge Red Sticks to a 74-42 record, and the Cotton States League championship.

The 1904 squad sputtered to a 49-63 record, however, and partway through the season, Doyle departed the team with an 8-9 record.

Shortly afterwards, he began pitching for the Class B Central League Wheeling Stogies. On Aug. 21, 1906, Wheeling sold his contract to the New York Highlanders.

"He wants eight to ten days between the games in which he works. He is a slow chap, anyhow," said Jack Chesbro in Baseball Magazine in February 1910. "He claims that his arm needs rest. He is one of the greatest pitchers there is."

For the Highlanders, Doyle shut out the Cleveland Naps in his major league debut on Aug. 25, 1906. He followed this with a shut-out of the Washington Senators on Aug. 30.

He was the first 20th Century pitcher to throw a shutout in each of his first two starts. It had been accomplished only twice before he did it and has since been accomplished 11 times. Only three American League pitchers have thrown shutouts in their first two big league appearances since Doyle did it. Over the remainder of the season, Doyle appeared in seven more games, losing one.

The following season Doyle went 11-11 with a 2.65 earned run average in 29 games (23 starts). He completed 15 games, and his three home runs allowed were the fifth most in the league. His 4.37 strikeouts per nine innings ratio was the sixth best in the league.

In 1908, Doyle was the Highlanders' opening day starter. However, for the rest of the season he appeared in only 11 more games, starting only four. He went 1-1 with a 2.63 ERA. He appeared in 17 games in 1909, making 15 starts. He went 8-6 with a 2.58 ERA, throwing three shutouts.

Doyle took the losses in his first start of the 1910 season. Though he pitched effectively through seven innings, the Philadelphia Athletics plated five runs in their final at bat. In his next start, Doyle faced nine batters, and retired just one, giving up five hits and two walks.[9] He made one more appearance for the Highlanders against the Boston Red Sox on May 9.

On May 31 the Cincinnati Reds purchased

## 8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Judd Bruce Doyle, MLB player



Doyle got his nickname, "Slow Joe" early in his baseball career because he was a very slow working pitcher. He would take a lot of time between pitches, often stalling for notable amounts of time.

Judd Bruce Doyle, born in Clay Center, played in the major leagues, breaking on Aug. 25, 1906. He pitched for the New York Highlanders from 1906, until 1910.

his contract for \$2,000. He was relegated to "mop up duty" with the Reds, closing five games, all losses.

Despite starting out as a promising young pitcher, Doyle won only 22 games in his five-year career. He lost 21 games, and he posted an ERA of 2.85. In 75 appearances (50 starts), he walked 147 batters and struck out 209. As a batter, he hit .163 in 135 career at-bats.

Source: Wikipedia

## One of Major League baseball's first ever utility players came from Clay Center

Born in Clay Center, in March 1879, Timothy Samuel "Sam" Strothers is documented to have begun playing baseball with an integrated Concordia team in 1900. He spent several more years in Kansas, played with Topeka Jack Johnson, and the Topeka Giants.

He eventually made it to Chicago. He played for the Leland Giants, Chicago Giants, and Chicago American Giants from 1907 until 1917. The most remarkable of these teams is the 1910 Leland Giants, reportedly one of the best teams that ever played baseball. It was during this time Sam's most serious claim to professional fame came.

Rube Foster actually brought Strothers and Fred Hutchinson in to be utility players, someone who can competently play multiple defensive positions instead of just one. This is one of the first uses of the utility player in baseball. Strothers also successful in this role, playing the hide the ball trick twice on the Chicago Cubs during their series in October of 1909.

He managed the Rink Sports complex for a while, and also the Leland Colts baseball team for a short while.

## 8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Sam Strothers, Major Leagues



Tim "Sam" Strothers, born in Clay Center, played for Major League teams -- Leland Giants, Chicago Giants, and Chicago American Giants from 1907 until 1917. While playing for the Leland Giants, reportedly one of the best teams that ever played baseball played Strothers and Fred Hutchinson as utility players, one of the first uses of the utility player in baseball. Sam was also successful, playing the hide the ball trick twice on the Chicago Cubs during their series in October of 1909.

## Our own Minor League Baseball Team

# The Clay Center Cubs

Clay Center at one time has its own minor league baseball team, The Clay Center Cubs.

They were founded in 1909, and played two and a half seasons in the Central Kansas League, until the league folded midway through the 1911 season. Lee Gramley managed the team. They placed seventh in the league the first year with a record of 32-37, second in 1910 with 48-33 and second in 1911 with a record of 4-21.

The team re-formed for the 1913 season as the Clay Center Colts under Max Addington and joined the Kansas State League. They finished 1½ games out of first place but folded again after the season, placing second overall in the league with a 51-40 record.

Three major league players played for



CENTRAL KAN. LEAGUE—Central Kansas League  
1, Fullwider; 2, Wentz; 3, Granly; 4, Strong; 5, Stokesberry; 6, Brooks; 7, Southwick; 8, Moorehead; 9, Allingham; 10, Barnes; 11, White; 12, Grubbs.

Clay Center: Clyde Southwick (1910-1911) a catcher; George Aiton (1911), a left-fielder, and shortstop Gil Britton (1911). Southwick and Aiton later played for the St. Louis Browns and Britton, the Pittsburgh Pirates.

# Clay Center native holds honor of being K-State's 'winningest' coach

Suzie Wiemers-Fritz, a 1990 CCCHS graduate, has had an outstanding career in sports, from a volleyball standout at CCCHS to a two-time Big 12 Coach of the Year winner at Kansas State University.

Since taking the helm of the program in 2001, Suzie Fritz has established K-State volleyball as not only a contender in the Big 12 but also the nation. A Kansas native and part of the program since 1997, Fritz is K-State's winningest coach and has helped the program reach the NCAA Tournament 17 times, including 13 as the head coach.

Prior to coming to K-State in 1997, Fritz spent two years as an assistant coach at NJCAA power Barton County Community College in Great Bend. During her stay with Barton County, she helped guide the Cougars to a 111-14 (.888) overall record and a pair of top five finishes at the NJCAA National Tournament. She helped coach two first team All-Americans, two NJCAA All-Tournament picks, seven Region VI honorees, and five Academic All-Americans.

Fritz also played two years at Barton County from 1990-91, helping lead the Cougars to a 107-10 (.915) overall record and back-to-back Final Four finishes at the NCJAA Tournament as the team's starting setter. During her sophomore campaign, she was named the school's Most Valuable Player and to the All-Tournament team at the NCJAA Tournament. She was also named to the Volleyball Academic All-American team. She ranked ninth in school history in single-season assists with 1,219 set in 1991.

After two years at Barton, Fritz transferred to Northeast Louisiana (now Louisiana-Monroe) for her junior season before transferring to Florida Atlantic for her senior campaign, finishing her playing career in 1994. She was named the Florida Atlantic's Most Inspirational Player and was an All-Tournament selection.

Upon earning a bachelor's degree in exercise science and wellness education from Florida Atlantic in 1994, she spent a year as an assistant coach at her alma mater before returning to coach at Barton County in 1995. Fritz earned a master's degree in educational administration and leadership from Kansas State in August of 2002.

Fritz began her head coaching career at K-State as an interim

head coach after Jim McLaughlin left the program shortly before the start of the 2001 season. After a 9-5 start in her first year, Fritz was named the program's permanent head coach. She took the reins from McLaughlin after serving as his top assistant for four years.

As an assistant coach for the Wildcats, Fritz was one of the chief architects of K-State's success from 1997-2000. She helped guide the program to four consecutive NCAA Tournaments, including its first appearance in the round of 16 of the tournament in 2000. In that span, the Wildcats posted a 103-52 (.665) overall record, including a 75-36 (.676) mark in Big 12 play. The program recorded four straight final AVCA/USA Today Top 25 finishes, including a then-program-best 16th ranking to conclude the 2000 season.

While an assistant at K-State, she helped produce two All-Americans - including the program's first in Dawn Cady in 1999 - along with three all-district selections, 11 All-Big 12 honorees, and 22 Academic All-Big 12 picks.

In her inaugural season as the K-State head coach, Fritz led the Wildcats to the second round of the NCAA Tournament and a 20-8 record. It was the highest winning percentage in school history (.714) by a first-year coach.

Fritz has also served as a coach for the USA Women's Volleyball program. She was appointed to a coaching role with the A2 team in 2006, and in 2009, she was named the A2 head coach, taking the team to a third-place finish at the USA Adult Open Volleyball Championship.

In 2013, Fritz and the K-State Wildcats represented the United States at the World University Games in Kazan, Russia.

Fritz boasts a career mark of 378-249 (.603) in her 21 seasons and has led the Wildcats to a national ranking in 12 different campaigns, including cracking the nation's top 10 during the fall of the 2020 season. She owns a 195-181 (.519) record in Big 12 action, with the 195 wins ranking third among Big 12 teams since 2001. Fritz helped lead the Wildcats to their first and only Big 12 title in 2003 when the nationally ranked Cats were 18-2 in conference and 30-5 overall.

From an individual standpoint, Fritz has helped guide 10 Wildcats



As head volleyball coach at Kansas State University, Suzie Wiemers-Fritz gives a high five to a player in the last season she coached there. (Courtesy Photo)

to 16 All-America honors, including the program's only three-time honoree in Wildcat setter Katie Brand. In 2018, K-State had three All-America Honorable Mention selections - most in program history - in setter Sarah Dixon, opposite Gloria Mutiri and outside hitter Kylee Zumach. Mutiri was also named AVCA Midwest Freshman of the Year - just the second in K-State history - as well earning All-Big 12 Second Team honors.

Under Fritz, the Wildcats have enjoyed great success in the classroom in addition to on the court. K-State has earned the most Academic All-Big 12 honors in conference history, including 148 since Fritz was named head coach in 2001, with a program-record 12 coming in 2018.

The Wildcats have also earned the prestigious AVCA Academic Team Award (3.3 team GPA or higher) 17 times under Fritz's direction, including in each of the last 11 years. In 2019, Brynn Carlson earned the program's sixth

Academic All-American honor and first since 2010. JuliAnne Chisholm and Cari Jensen have combined to earn four Academic All-American honors under Fritz.

The Wildcats have accumulated 25 Academic All-District distinctions, including Carlson's most recent selection in 2020. Brand and Kersten Kober notched that achievement in 2015 and 2016. Kober was also named Big 12 Volleyball Scholar-Athlete of the Year in 2015, the first recipient of the award in program history.

Over her 21 years at K-State, she compiled a winning percentage of .603, with her teams making 13 NCAA tournament appearances. Fritz coached 56 All-League selections and 16 All-Americans. While with KSU, she also coached with the USA Women's Volleyball Program, and her 2013 team represented the USA at the World University Games in Russia.

Fritz is not the first coach in her family. Steve, her husband, a decathlete who placed fourth in the

1996 Atlanta Olympic Games, was an assistant coach for K-State track and field for 21 years and served as the head boys basketball coach at Riley County High School. Her parents and both brothers have served in some coaching capacity as well. Suzie's father, Larry Wiemers, spent more than 25 years as head football coach at Clay Center High School. Her brother, Dave, was an assistant football coach at Pittsburg State from 2011-19 after serving as the head coach at Emporia State from 2001-06, and brother, Jon, is the assistant head coach and offensive line coach at Southeast Missouri State. Suzie's mother, Sandi, has been involved in baton twirling for years and has held positions in her national and world organizations.

After leaving K-State Fritz served as the first head coach for professional team League One-Omaha and helped organize that program.

She was inducted in the CCCHS Hall of Fame in 2025.



Phil and Jolie Kasper

# About this year's grand marshals

**Phil Kasper**, currently serving on the Clay Center City Council, has been involved in the community as a volunteer firefighter and a member of the Clay Center City Band. He is a U.S. Air Force veteran. In the past, he has announced games and DJ'ed in the evening for the local radio station, coached football, worked for USD 379 as in grounds and maintenance and managed the front of the 15-24 Brewhouse. He currently serves as the after hours director of KFRM Radio.

**Jolie Kasper**, owner of the The Dance Company, has been teaching dance to local youth in for over two decades. The Dance Company has been in business since 2004 and currently has dance studios in Clay Center, Concordia and Beloit. Jolie has been the head dance instructor at Cloud County Community College since 2017.



A Clay Center Rural Fire volunteer throws candy in last year's Piotique Parade.

PIOTIQUE 2026

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25TH

6:00PM.....15th Annual Cruise Night

8:00PM.....Sunset Sinners - The Garage Bar

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH

6:15AM.....10K & 2M Race Check In - Main Stage

7:00AM.....10K & 2M Shot Gun Race Start

8:00AM.....Vendors Open - Courthouse Square

8:00AM.....BPW Car Show Registration - Dexter Park

8:00AM.....Clay County Antique Power Association Display - Lincoln Ave between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>

8:00AM.....Sidewalk Art Contest - 440 Lincoln Ave, Sponsored by Clarity EyeCare

8:30AM.....Petting Zoo Opens - Little Learners Childhood Connections

9:00AM.....Bike Decorating Station - at the Rex Theatre sponsored by Farm Bureau Justin Tadtman

9:00AM.....Bounce Houses Open - North Side of Courthouse

9:00AM....."Moments That Made US" Exhibit - Clay County Museum 9:00AM-5:00PM

9:30AM.....Line Up for Kiddie Parade - The Rex Theatre

9:45AM.....Kiddie Parade - Start at The Rex and stop at the Museum

10:00AM.....Grand Parade Line-Up - Enter at Crawford and Court Street

11:00AM.....BPW Car Show Viewing - Dexter Park

11:00AM.....Grand Parade - A Street to Courthouse to Fire Station

12:00PM.....FREE Horse Drawn Carriage Rides - Grant Street; Sponsored by St. Paul Lutheran Church

12:30PM.....Announce Contest Winners - Main Stage

12:30PM.....Cornhole Tournament - Court St between 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>

1:00PM.....Stark Dance & Baton Studio Performance - Main Stage

1:45PM.....The Dance Company - Main Stage

4:00PM.....Vendors Close - Courthouse Square

6:30PM.....Jayhuskers Race - Clay County Fairgrounds Race Track

8:00PM.....Phil Kasper & his Vinyl Collection - The Garage Bar

# ENJOY PIOTIQUE!

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### TwoCousins weeSale All-Season Family Consignment Sale

It's time again for the TwoCousins weeSale semi-annual Children's Consignment event to be held at the DoubleTree by Hilton, Manhattan

**PUBLIC SALE (Free Entry)**  
Thurs, Sept 24: 6 PM - 9 PM  
Fri, Sept 25: 9 AM - 9 PM (RESTOCKED)  
Sat, Sept 26: 9 AM - 3 PM (Half-Price)  
**MILITARY (Free Entry - ID Required)**  
Early Entry: Thurs, Sept 24 | 5 PM - 6 PM  
Half-Price: Fri, Sept 25 | 7 PM - 9 PM  
**DOLLAR DAZE (Cash Only)**  
Sat, Sept 26: 7 PM - 9 PM  
Sun, Sept 27: 10 AM - Noon

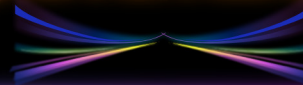


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### During Piotique: The following items are for sale:

- 1) The penny press at the Museum now has a Clay County 250 design plus 3 other new designs.
- 2) T-Shirts with the Clay County 250 design will be for sale on the courthouse square and at the Museum.
- 3) Raffle tickets for Patriotic Signature Quilt will be sold now until 3 p.m. Piotique Day. The winner of the quilt will be announced at the Museum at 4 p.m. on Piotique Day.
- Also,
- 4) Come see the exhibits that relate the history of Clay County to America 250.
- 5) Come participate in the Battle of the Ages.

### BATTLE OF THE AGES!

### WHO CAN TYPE THE FASTEST?

Put your typing skills to the test during Piotique at the Clay County Museum! Can you type fast and accurately? Choose your weapon: typewriter, computer, or your own device.

Come and go as you please between 10 AM and 3 PM. Give it a try and see how your typing skills stack up against the other generations!

FREE TO ENTER!

WINNER GETS BRAGGING RIGHTS AND A \$50 GIFT CERTIFICATE!

PIOTIQUE DAY

10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

CLAY COUNTY MUSEUM

Think your generation has what it takes?

COME PROVE IT!



### 8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Nichole Ohlde, WNBA player



Nichole (Ohlde) Johnson played professional basketball for the WNBA's Minnesota Lynx, Phoenix Mercury and Tulsa Shock from 2004 to 2010. Since then, she has held several coached women's basketball for several universities, most recently for the University of Nebraska-Kearney.

## About these cards in this edition

The Dispatch created an 'Old Maid' deck of cards featuring famous Clay Centerites we intended to release as a Piotique souvenir. Since the project is still in the works, it is being use to promote Piotique, this year and last.

The cards you see in this edition (including the ones above and below) are draft versions of those cards. You can view more draft versions of cards under the Facebook group, "Clay Center Dispatch Archives."

Please let us know what you think by leaving a comment under one of the cards or send a recommendation to newseditordispatch@gmail.com.

### 8 Amazing 8 All-Star Athletes

Ray May, NFL linebacker



As a child, Ray May lived southwest of Clay Center which he later turned into a ranch for under privileged boys from Baltimore. A linebacker in the NFL from 1967 to 1975, he played for the Pittsburgh Steelers, Baltimore Colts and the Denver Broncos and was part of the Colts team that won the Super Bowl in 1970.

CLAY COUNTS COALITION

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Welcome to

**PIOTIQUE 2026**

Making memories.

Supporting Community!