

BARBARA WOOD

Barbara Wood, a Nelson County High School and Lynchburg College basketball player, commenced her career at Amherst County High School 1964, and emerged 42 years later with a stellar record in teaching, counseling, and coaching. Essentially the only sport available to female athletes in the public schools of Central Virginia prior to the 1970s was basketball, with its rules changing periodically in conjunction with changes in society and its perception of women in athletics.

Barbara excelled as a scorer at Nelson County High, then became adept at the art of the assist in college. By the early 1970s, the game had changed dramatically, with the adoption of full-court rules for all players. Coaches had to be more adaptable than the players who had never experienced the earlier game.



The ever-changing student population of ACHS dictated that its sports classification in VHSL competition be changed every few years. These changes in district and regional alignment also created organizational changes in the sports program – girls' teams were being developed, then dropped, then re-introduced; some basketball teams played in the fall and some in the winter, with volleyball following an opposite schedule. Stability in the program was provided more by the coaches' leadership than by the system itself.

Barbara, with a bachelor's degree in health and physical education, taught those subjects at ACHS for 28 years. She then applied her master's degree from the University of Virginia as guidance counselor, later director of guidance, for another 6 years prior to retirement in 2006.

She has also utilized her coaching abilities in Amherst County Recreation Department summer sports programs and the Dixie Girls softball program, as well as with Upward Basketball. Several of her track participants and basketball players enjoyed collegiate careers.

As a self-described "demonstrative coach", her teams exhibited the same effort, commitment, and determination, and were responsible for elevating the status of girls' sports at ACHS from a consistent non-contender to a veritable force in district and regional play on an annual basis. Girls who enjoy extensive opportunities in high school sports are indebted to the steady and persistent efforts of these Hall of Fame coaches who led the way.

Barbara Steele Wood – May 7, 1943

Career Highlights

- ACHS coach: 25 years, basketball; 8 years, track and field; 18 years, tennis
- Basketball: Coach of the Year, 1991; 2 regular season championships; 2 tournament championships; 1 regional finalist; 1 state semi-finalist
- Track: founder of program in 1971; one regional championship
- Tennis: Helped in founding the program; one district championship
- Drill team: founded program to enhance girls' opportunities for extracurricular activities
- Numerous All Star players