

Richard “Dick” Thurin knew in high school that he wanted to be a coach. A pastoral friend of Thurin and his wife Karen says that some people are called to be a coach, and that Dick is one of those special people.



Since 2001 Thurin has served as the head women’s basketball coach at Mid-Plains Community College at North Platte. He rebuilt the struggling program and was recognized for his efforts, four times being named National Junior College Athletic Association Region IX Coach of the Year and twice District F Coach of the Year. He has also guided the Knights to the NJCAA Division II National Tournament twice in the last three years.

Thurin will receive the Distinguished Alumnus Award from Southeast Community College’s Beatrice Campus during commencement exercises at 7 p.m. June 12 in the Truman Center on the Beatrice Campus.

Thurin is overjoyed whenever “his” girls receive awards, both in academics and in basketball. He has coached several Academic All-Americans and one Academic All-American team. He wants to guide young people to get an education and get their lives on the right path.

Thurin was valedictorian of his senior class at Ong High School where he played baseball and basketball. His oldest brother, Leland, was his basketball coach.

Following in the footsteps of his two older brothers, Thurin attended Fairbury Junior College, where he received an associate degree in education. He played football for the first time at FJC and played basketball for two years.

He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in social science from the University of Nebraska-Kearney (then Kearney State College) and played basketball one season for the Lopers. He took graduate school classes at Colorado State University, Chadron State College, the University of Northern Colorado, Wayne State College, and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Thurin taught high school and coached football, boys basketball and boys track at Roseland (now Silver Lake) for two years. He also coached the only girls sport, volleyball.

Most of Thurin’s high school teaching and coaching career was at Grant (now Perkins County), where he taught history, government and law classes. He was an assistant football coach, assistant boys basketball coach, Mock Trial coach, and head volleyball coach. He also started the girls track and basketball programs at Grant.

Thurin received several honors while coaching in high school. He won the Buffalo Bill Coach of the Year, coached the Girls All-Star basketball game for the Nebraska Coaches Association and coached the Girls All-Star basketball game at Cambridge twice.

He received the Gold Award from the Franklin Circle for both girls basketball and track. He also received the Silver Award from the Franklin Circle for volleyball.

While at Grant, Thurin and his wife sponsored the Fellowship of Christian Athletes for more than 20 years. He served as president of the Grant Education Association and was a member of the Nebraska state and national education associations.

He and Karen have been married 47 years. They have one son, Trent, and two granddaughters, Abby and Zoe.

Thurin is an active member of the Grant United Methodist Church, a member of the Lions Club

and is in his second term as a member of the Perkins County Health Services Board.