

For immediate release

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Peace Inducts Third Athletic Hall of Fame Class

Twenty-one Peace graduates, coaches and friends were inducted into the third class of the Queen of Peace Athletic Hall of Fame in a ceremony Oct. 7. This year's honorees included the 1998 Volleyball team – regional and sectional champions – and coaches Peggy O'Keefe Meyer, Victor Botwin and Denise Graney. The following alumnae were inducted for their outstanding accomplishments in their respective sports – Colleen Sexton Coddington '97, basketball; Missy Moran '97, basketball and soccer; Beth Ryan '94, softball and volleyball; and Tairisha Sawyer '03, track and field. Nancy Janachowski was inducted as a friend of the Peace athletic department.

The Peace Athletic Hall of Fame was created to recognize players, coaches, entire teams, athletic directors and friends of Peace who have made significant contributions to the athletic program.

“When you read or hear about tonight's inductees, you will realize the role that their experiences at Peace, as students and as athletes, contributed to their successes not just in high school, but in their futures as well,” athletic director Darlene Graf told a packed gymnasium of spectators who attended the ceremony, which followed the Varsity volleyball team's Homecoming Game victory over Regina Dominican.

The 1998 Volleyball team, under the direction of head coach Peggy O'Keefe, achieved what only two other teams have accomplished since the GCAC began establishing divisions based on parity in 1987. They defeated Mother McAuley to win the prestigious GCAC Red Tournament and were crowned 1998 GCAC Champions. The only other teams to accomplish

this feat in the past 23 years are Resurrection in 1987 and Queen of Peace in 2003. The 1998 team won their IHSA Regional and advanced to the Sectional Championship by defeating St. Ignatius and Lyons Township. They finished the season with an overall record of 34-5 after losing to Naperville Central in the Super Sectional.

Inducted members of the 1998 Volleyball team include: Jacqueline Sokolowski Anderson '00, Kristen Anderson '00, Claudia Camarena '00, Elizabeth Gertos '99, Melanie Grabowski '99, Lisa Hennigan '00, Kristen Daly Kennedy '99, Kristin Bortoli Leshinske '00, Molly Mann '99, Liz Nowak-Muniz '99, Jessica Sulkowski '00, Melissa Vandrey '00, Carolyn Zemar '00, assistant coach Victor Botwin, assistant coach Denise Graney and head coach Peggy O'Keefe Meyer.

“The 1998 team was totally driven to win, and besides that, they had the commitment as young athletes and the physical ability to put up a strong block,” said O'Keefe, who compiled a 95-18 record with a .841 winning percentage during her three years as head coach at Peace.

“They were enthusiastic.”

O'Keefe and Botwin described the 1998 team as a positive group who had “great chemistry and great leaders.” The coaches and players best remember the team's GCAC Championship victory over Mother McAuley.

“We beat them in two games; (our) gym was packed, there were tons of people and everybody was going crazy,” said Lisa Hennigan '00, current assistant JV volleyball coach at Peace. “It was one of those things where all of our hard work paid off.”

The individual honorees inducted Oct. 7 also achieved numerous feats during their athletic careers at Peace. Colleen Sexton Coddington '97 scored over 1,000 points at Peace and

was a three-time GCAC All-Conference selection in basketball. In 2001, she broke the free throw percentage record and was named the Female Athlete of the Year at Quincy University.

Missy Moran, Peace's valedictorian in 1997 who earned an academic scholarship to DePaul University, scored 57 career soccer goals at Peace - a record that still stands today. Beth Ryan '97, a police officer, was named to the GCAC All-Conference Team as a junior and senior in softball and garnered Varsity Volleyball MVP honors during those seasons. She earned an athletic scholarship to Lewis University, where she continued her excellence on the softball diamond.

Tairisha Sawyer '03 showed potential from the moment she stepped foot on the track. As a senior she took first in the 100m, 200m, and 400m dashes at the GCAC meet and was named the GCAC Track & Field Athlete of the Year and finished her career competing at the state track and field meet.

Sawyer continued her education and track career on an athletic scholarship at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville. She currently holds the indoor records at SIUE in the 55m dash, the 200m and the Sprint Medley, as well as outdoor records for the 100m, the 4x100m, 4x200m, the 4x400m and the Spring Medley.

Nancy Janachowski, who recently received the Friend of Athletics award from the Illinois Athletic Directors Association and a Peace employee for 20 years, was inducted as a friend of the Peace athletic department for her devotion to the program. Janachowski remodeled the school's concession stand with her own money and works the stand during countless games. She makes prizes for the Candlelight Bowl, assists with Awards Banquets and much more. Queen of Peace is proud to welcome this year's honorees into the Athletic Hall of Fame.

Cutline:



Members of the 1998 Queen of Peace Volleyball team pose for a picture following the 3rd Annual Athletic Hall of Fame Induction on Oct. 7. Twenty-one Peace graduates, coaches and friends were inducted at the ceremony.

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