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TRINITY - When Tim Kelly began his basketball coaching career at Trinity High School back in 1989, he said his main objective was "to win some games." He's done so much more than winning "some" games.

For a 35-year career at THS and an overall 42-year coaching career - which included coaching stints in just about every sport - Kelly was honored by being named to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. The announcement came Thursday morning. Kelly is one of 10 who will make up the 2025 class of inductees.

"It's really special and it reflects on a lot of different people," said Kelly, who retired in June of last year. "I had a lot of good kids come through Trinity. This is something that happens once in a lifetime and it humbles you, too. I always heard people say that, but it really does. It makes you reflect on everything you have done in your career. It's something I am extremely proud of."

Kelly won 673 games as a basketball coach at THS, earned a state championship, two regional titles, four sectional championships and more than 35 regular-season, conference tournament and holiday invitational championships. He won The Courier-Tribune Christmas Invitational a record 15 times.

And this after he applied to but failed to get the varsity head coaching position at THS on three separate occasions.

After spending three years at Roanoke Rapids High School, the Kellys wanted to move closer to family and moved into the area. Kelly landed a job at the middle school. He spent four seasons there, being turned down three times for the varsity position.

When Tommy Pursley became Athletic Director, he recognized the strong coaching ability Kelly had - for football - and offered him an assistant football coaching job and the head basketball position..



Long-time coach Tim Kelly on the Trinity High School sidelines.



Tim Kelly.

"I was brought in to help the football program," Kelly said.

He ended up helping in many areas. He took a basketball program that had won just 34 games in the previous 17 years to incredible heights, culminating in a state championship in 2004.

"First of all, you have to find a place where you can create a new culture," Kelly said. "When we first got to Trinity, basketball was not a high priority. It was kind of a stop-gap between football and baseball. We had to convince the kids they could be successful. Building the program took a lot of tough love. It wasn't easy. We always said we would win with fundamentals, hustle and strength."

After surviving through the first few years and producing more wins per season than the program had enjoyed in two decades, some of the parents still went to the administration asking for a change.

But the administration backed Kelly and the rest, so they say, is history. The Bulldogs became one of the most successful programs in the state, the school renamed the gymnasium in his honor and he was a member of the inaugural THS Hall of Fame. He was the N.C. Associated Press Coach of the Year in 2004 and coach of the East-West All Star Game in 2005.

"High School sports go in cycles," said Kelly. "We were able to withstand some of that. We were one of the first to schedule out-of-season stuff and it paid off."

In all, Kelly, 67, coached 35 years of basketball, 14 years of football (including six as a head coach), one year of baseball and one year of track.

"My family would be first," he said when asked about who he would like to share the honor with. "I was gone a lot. I don't think people realize how much high school coaches are away from their families."

Kelly is now, after a historic coaching career, able to spend time with his family.

"Trinity High School just fit my personality," Kelly said. "You don't always get that. I had that for 35 years."