



# 2026 HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

## 1984 SOFTBALL TEAM



The dominant 1984 St. Mary's softball squad, led by third year coach Dwight Widen and assistant coach Deb Leslie, finished the season with a 35-6 record, which is the most wins of any team in school history. They were also the first Panther softball team to advance to the one-class state softball tournament where they went 2-2, finishing in 11<sup>th</sup> place among the 16 teams that qualified.

Other notable achievements by the team include: scoring 10 or more runs in 13 games, recording 15 shutout victories, allowing only 83 runs in 41 games, having two different win streaks of 11 and 10 games during the season, and never losing 2 games in a row.

During their successful season, they notched wins against many schools with much larger enrollments, including Harlan, Fort Dodge St. Edmond, Hull Western Christian, Carroll Kuemper, West Des Moines Dowling, and Sioux City East. Three of their six losses came to the hands of other teams qualifying for the state tournament. In total, they only lost to 4 different teams, and they earned victories against 3 of those 4 teams in separate contests.

The team captured an amazing 6 tournament titles during the course of the season. They were champions of the West Des Moines Dowling Tournament, the Quad County Invitational, the Spencer Tournament, and the Northwest Webster Tournament during the regular season. During postseason play, they captured the Sectional and Regional Tournament Championships to earn their trip to State.

Upon winning the regional title to advance to state, Panther coach Dwight Widen praised the team by saying, "These kids are like veterans. They all have proven they deserve to be there. It's nice to be rewarded for believing in ourselves. It's real satisfying for me as a coach to be able to know what some of these kids go through, like playing injured. That's playing on guts and determination. We don't let anything bother us; we just play our game."

Seven players from the squad earned 1<sup>st</sup> Team All-Quad County Conference Honors, two earned Honorable Mention All-Conference honors, and two players received All-Northwest Iowa and All-State honors.

Team members included seniors Dawn (Hinnert) Simpson, Kathy (Liske) Berg, Beth Loats, and Melissa (McKenna) Fagan. Junior members were Jill (Cavanaugh) Rotert, Molly (Connell) Crosby, Marilyn (Drey) Peters, Sue (Loats) Leuer, Christine Shearer, and Jennifer (Young) Whelan. Mary (Overmohle) Barngrover and Dawn (Wiseman) Mentzer were the two sophomores on the squad. Sharon (Zimmer) Benna and Jan (Murray) Acquaviva were the freshmen team members, and Ann (Kestel) Meyer was the lone 8<sup>th</sup> grader on the squad.