

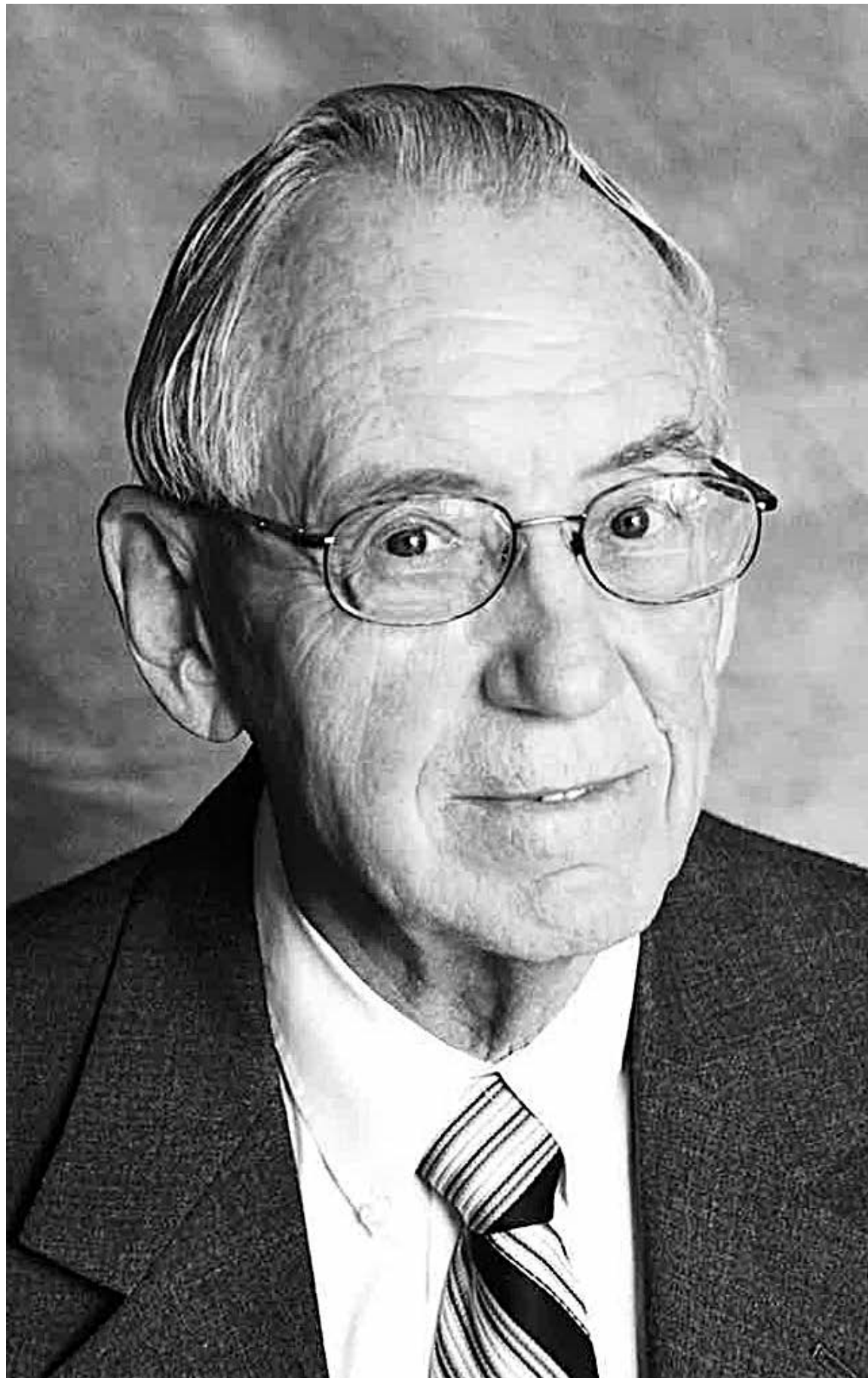
OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

2013



JAMES (JIM) HARRIS

Teacher and Coach 1956-1988



James (Jim) Harris was a mathematics teacher and coach at Ottawa Township High School from 1956 – 1988. He earned both his bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics at Western Illinois University. He was head of the mathematics department from 1963 through his retirement in 1988, and led an unprecedented period of performance within the department and among its students during that time. He had the rare ability to connect with and inspire both the highest performing students, and those for whom mathematics was a greater challenge. During his tenure the Ottawa Township High School students collectively and consistently outperformed state averages and peers on standardized measurements and tests of mathematics skill and aptitude. Early in his career he was selected from a national pool of mathematics teachers and awarded a two year fellowship to participate in a National Science Foundation advanced mathematics workshop at Wayne State University, then returned for one additional year to assist with instruction at the workshop. He attained the designation of Master Teacher and was active in the North Central Evaluation program providing guidance and counsel to other instructors within the field of mathematics and secondary education. During that period he also served as a successful freshman and sophomore boys basketball coach (Freshman Assistant 1956-57; Freshman Coach 1957-61; Sophomore Coach 1961-79) with his teams winning in excess of 70% of their games (344-146). The sophomores were North Central Illinois Conference champions 4 times during his tenure, Ottawa Christmas Tournament champions 7 times, and Bradley-Bourbonnais Tournament champions 2 times. Early in his career he served for a short period as the head boys track coach.