

OTTAWA HIGH SCHOOL HALL OF FAME

2018



DONALD E. "RUSTY" WELLS

Class of 1971



Rusty Wells was an exceptional athlete at Ottawa Township High School and later Illinois State University. He was consistently among the top pole vaulters in the State of Illinois during his junior and senior years of high school. He finished 6th in the State his junior year and was the State of Illinois pole vault champion in 1971, his senior year, earning all-state and All-American honors. He also vaulted 15'4" in the N.C.I.C. conference meet at Sterling that year which was the second highest vault from a high school athlete in the nation. In 1971 he won every high school pole vaulting competition that he entered, as well as achieving a 4th place ranking in the nation during the indoor season. During the outdoor Nationals he placed second in the nation with a jump of 15'2". At Illinois State University he finished first in numerous competitions, vaulting 15'7" at the Northern Illinois Invitational setting a meet record, stadium record, and ISU's outdoor school record with the vault. He was selected as MVP of the track team both at OTHS as well as ISU. Rusty Wells served as a pole vaulting judge at Ottawa Township High School and other schools for over 40 years. Upon the passing of legendary vaulting coach June Gross in 2009, Rusty Wells succeeded him as OTHS pole vaulting coach, continuing in that role to this day and carrying on the rich Ottawa Township High School pole vaulting tradition. In 2012 Rusty Wells was honored as a recipient of the OTHS Booster Club Lifetime Member Award.