

# LINDA (Kunkler) NIEWEDDE

## A Life Journey Beginning with Practice and Ending with Patience

Graduate: Class of 1986    Occupation: Teacher and Coach

When asked where she works, 1986 graduate of Forest Park High School Linda (Kunkler) Niewedde stated this: "I never tell people I go to 'work'; I tell them I go to 'school' every day". Teaching health, physical education, and coaching basketball keep her busy. To add to her resume, she has previously coached softball and tennis. As a mentor, Linda prepares students for life after high school, teaching them responsibility, respect, and life in general.

Recently, Linda made a career move. After teaching P.E. at Roncalli High School in Indianapolis for 18 years and coaching girl's varsity basketball for seven, she traveled across town to Irvington Community High School, a public charter school. Adventurous and knowledgeable, she left an established program behind in hopes of starting a new winning tradition, this being the inaugural varsity season for the Lady Raven's. Patience-a recent discovery for Linda-has helped her lead the first-year program. The limited number of players makes this a challenge. She strives to coach them not only about the game she loves, basketball, but also about life lessons-in particular the value of persistence and perseverance.

Where did her journey begin? Linda grew up in St. Anthony, Indiana. During her high school career, she was successful in many avenues. As a member of the Ranger band, she won two state championships. A multi-sport athlete, Linda participated in volleyball, softball, tennis, and became a standout member of the Lady Ranger basketball program. To this day, Linda still holds the record for Most Career Points (1,466), and Most Rebounds (833). Added to her list of accomplishments, coaches selected her to the All-Conference team her junior and senior year. In 1986, before class basketball, the Lady Ranger's advanced to semi-state. A talented basketball player, she was invited to participate in the Hoosier "Top 40" workout.

Given a scholarship to play basketball, Linda attended the University of Indianapolis. There, she discovered that college basketball and high school ball differ in many ways. This difficult challenge resulted in a switch from college basketball to softball. Looking back, she considers not playing basketball a "bump in the road" on her journey through life. At the end of her college career, she graduated with a B.S. degree in physical education with a minor in health.

One could conclude that winning remains in her blood. In her career, she has coached an undefeated freshman girls' team and led Roncalli's girl's basketball team to a sectional championship. Instilling a sense of accomplishment, Linda enjoys watching her former players compete on the collegiate level. When speaking of former players, Linda says, "The relationships we formed are second to none."

A resident of Indianapolis, Linda shares her home with husband Andy and a menagerie of pets. She still finds time to return to Dubois County. She lovingly refers to it as "God's Country". The values and work ethic she learned here have served her well in life.