

# LEGACY MINUTE



Pictured here in the 1981 yearbook, Bruce MacKinnon (middle, left) coached boys varsity basketball at Sanford High School from 1973 to 1985.

## The legend of Coach Bruce MacKinnon will live on at SHS gym



When the whistle blew, it was game on.

When all was said and done though, win or lose, Coach Bruce MacKinnon was back to

his calm, cool and collected self, a beloved Sanford High School history teacher and principal.

“Bruce was a very vocal coach,” recalls John Dube, a standout forward at Sanford High School from 1976 to 1980. He had a bellowing “coach” voice his former players recall to this day.

“I’ll never forget, a loose ball went whizzing past him on the sidelines, and I wasn’t moving fast enough, and he yelled Dooooooo-beeee ... and I went FLYING after it,” said Dube.

“He was tough, intensely tough. But fair, so fair,” said John Roux, a forward who played his sophomore, junior and senior years for Coach MacKinnon.

Bruce is credited with elevating Sanford’s athletic reputation back in the late ’70s to a powerhouse school.

“Bruce’s tenacity and focus on the fundamentals stood out,” said his Assistant Coach Pat Conley, who grew up with Bruce’s family in Bath. Bruce recruited Conley to Sanford High first as a physical education teacher.

“Bruce was the leader of the pack. He was fanatical with the fundamentals. His practices were organized and

### Help us make it happen!

The Sanford Schools Legacy Foundation is raising funds to name the Athletic Achievement Showcase at Sanford High School in honor of Bruce MacKinnon. To make a tax-deductible donation, visit [www.sanordschoolslegacyfoundation.org/give](http://www.sanordschoolslegacyfoundation.org/give) or mail a check to the foundation at 917 Main St., Suite 200, Sanford, ME 04073.

planned to the minute. He was great at getting the best out of the kids.”

Bruce was the kind of coach who earned his players’ respect.

On and off the court, “he had a way about him that left an impression on his players,” said Dube, who babysat Bruce’s children as a teen and spent time with MacKinnon out of school. “He was like my second father, just the way he treated me.”

MacKinnon began his teaching career in Rhode Island, and came to Sanford in 1973 to teach U.S. history. He served as the boys varsity coach from 1973 to 1985, then served as Sanford High School Principal from 1985 to 1993. He also coached golf from 1978 to 1984, and retired from education in 1993 to serve as a state senator for four years.

“Everybody wanted to have class with him. I always loved what he had to say, I listened to everything he had to say. I actually went into business because of him. I wanted to be a teacher just like him, but I wanted to make money,” said Dube, who went on to play basketball at Husson University and now owns the Dairy Queen stores in Kennebunk and Wells, with a laugh. “The success I had was really because of him.”

Dube later became a basketball coach

because of Bruce. “I coached because of him, he just had a way about him,” said Dube, who coached basketball in Sanford at various levels, and also coached Kennebunk High School boys varsity basketball for six years.

MacKinnon had a nickname for everyone. “Nobody called me John or Dube. Because of Coach, everyone in Sanford still to this day calls me “Dooobe,” said Dube, #10 above.

When Bruce came to work in retirement for Roux at Garnsey Brothers Insurance together they coached the Sanford freshman boys basketball team for a few years.

“What was so funny was that he was no different. He was just as intense with the freshman boys as he was with his varsity team,” said Roux.

“There was one game and Bruce was going nuts, losing it,” said Roux, noting how freshmen afternoon games are more mellow than typical Friday night varsity games. “And (his good friend) Brian Flanagan just looked at me across the gym, shaking his head with a smile. That was Bruce. Always on!”

Off the court, he was as gentle and fair with his students as they come.

“Bruce was as polite as he was tough — from the No. 1 student to the 250th kid in the class. There was no difference to him. He treated all student equally,” recalled Roux. “He always had a way of bringing them up. He truly understood youth.”

Today, Bruce and his wife Sally divide their time between Florida and Kennebunk, where Bruce works at Webhannet Golf Club. And he still comes through the drive-through on occasion to say hi to Dube.

“I know it’s him because his booming voice comes across the intercom — Dooooobeeeee!”