



## *Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial*

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### LEON TEDDER

December 18, 1925 - May 18, 1990

Stillwater High School Class of 1943

8th Annual Memorial Induction Ceremony

October 4, 2003

Leon was born on an oil lease titled "Carter 9" nine miles out of Hominy, Oklahoma on December 18, 1925. The family later moved to Geary, Oklahoma where he began wrestling at the age of eight. His Uncle Bob Stegall coached wrestling in Geary for many years and was the one who influenced Leon and his brother, Robert, in wrestling. Uncle Bob had Robert and Leon giving exhibition matches when they were so young that their mother had to

alter the smallest tights they could find for the boys to wear.

The family moved to Stillwater in 1941 where Leon wrestled for SHS and played center and linebacker for Coach Hamilton. He was the perfect example of a clean living, good looking, blonde athlete. After graduation, he attended Oklahoma A&M College for one semester playing center for the football team and then entered the Marines for two and a half years during World War II. After returning to A&M, he obtained a wrestling scholarship where he never lost a match in the regular season. He was a four year letterman on the four year undefeated wrestling team. During these years, he taught our own Coach Jim Harris the art of wrestling on rainy days after football practice in the wrestling room of Gallagher Hall.

After graduating from A&M in 1951, he and his wife, Gina, moved to Cal Farley Boy's Ranch, Texas, where he taught math and coached wrestling and football. He started intramural wrestling for boys in grade school through high school. He worked a few other jobs before moving to Bakersfield, California in 1958. He taught mathematics and coached wrestling and football at East Bakersfield High School, where he developed many championship wrestling teams before he retired in 1987. At one point in the 1960's, Tedder's wrestling teams won 48 straight dual meets. He coached the Blades to one CIF Central Section Championship. A comment by one of his former wrestlers is: "He was a technician. He was like a father to everyone on the team. He was the finest wrestling coach ever in Kern County." A coach also stated, "Leon didn't get ruffled like a lot of guys. He didn't get fired up. He had a lot of patience."

Leon Tedder also officiated high school and college wrestling and football. He was inducted into Kern County, California, Officials Association Hall of Fame in June, 1989.

Leon taught himself to sail starting with a 14 foot Sunfish and later enjoyed sailing his 23 foot Islander. He taught his five children (3 girls & 2 boys) to sail and enjoy camping and traveling. He loved building with wood and completed many wood projects for his home.

Leon was a happy man who truly enjoyed life and his family. Next to his family, Leon loved sports and dedicated his life to many years of encouraging youth to participate.

Presenter  
Grover Rains  
Stillwater High School, Class of 1945