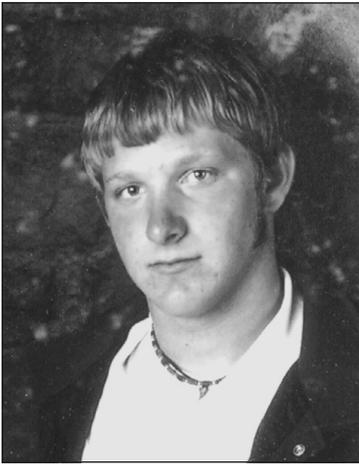




Stillwater Pioneer Athlete Memorial



WILLIE JAY WELCH

September 26, 1984 - May 14, 2006

Stillwater High School Class of 2003

12th Annual Memorial Induction Ceremony

September 29, 2007

Willie Jay Welch was a wrestler and he was an athlete. He began wrestling at the age of six for the YMCA and despite not being exceptional at the sport, stuck with it to make the difference for the Pioneer's during their Senior Night dual meet against Broken Arrow. After competing at 152 pounds as a junior, Willie wrestled in the 171 pound bout against the Tigers and secured a takedown before turning his opponent to his back and pinning him. Willie got a second wind and his effort led to a positive outcome. A 2003 graduate of Stillwater High School, Willie was a three-year letterman in wrestling and was voted "Smooth Talker" of his senior class - something we all experienced from him.

Willie wrote a poem in Mrs. Birdwell's high school English class which she found while cleaning her room. She gave it to Coach Chesbro to give to Willie's parents. The first and last sentence read, "I am a wrestler and I am an athlete".

Willie was born September 26th, 1984 and died May 14th, 2006, but anyone who knew him knows he lived life to the fullest. During his youth, this free spirit could be seen skateboarding the sidewalks of the Oklahoma State University campus and rollerblading the streets of Stillwater. When he wasn't attending wrestling camp, Willie spent his summers fishing or riding his bike. He also received a yellow belt in karate, played football in Junior High and baseball for SYBA which went to the state tournament in 1997.

Willie loved his jet ski, his Z28, rebuilding his 52 Ford pickup, and his pit bike. He worked hard with his father in their heating and air business, Willie played hard as well, he rode a bull, which became a PBR bull named Downside, for eight seconds, snow skied Crested Butte's cliffs, and surfed Maui's waves.

After his graduation, Willie returned to the wrestling room numerous times to wrestle with the guys on Coach Chesbro's team. He was a wrestler and he was an athlete.

Willie achieved goals that many may consider unattainable. He had God in his heart and a smile on his face that touched many. He admired his sister and loved most everyone he met. It was just natural for him to make you feel special.

Willie is somebody we will always love and the short time we had with him will be cherished. He will be greatly missed. He was a wrestler and he was an athlete.

Honorary Presenters

Jarred Welch, Will Lambert, Josh Bosler

Presenter

Jay Arneson,

Stillwater High School Class of 1968