



Western Michigan University
ScholarWorks at WMU

WMU President John Dunn

Office of the President

1-27-2017

Hall of Fame Tribute to Dr. John Hubert Dunn

John M. Dunn

Western Michigan University, john.dunn@wmich.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn>



Part of the Higher Education Commons

WMU ScholarWorks Citation

Dunn, John M., "Hall of Fame Tribute to Dr. John Hubert Dunn" (2017). *WMU President John Dunn*. 609.
<https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/dunn/609>

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of the President at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in WMU President John Dunn by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



Hall of Fame Tribute to Dr. John Hubert Dunn
by John M. Dunn, nephew
Jan. 27, 2017

Thank you. I have the honor tonight of speaking on behalf of my uncle, Dr. John Hubert (Hubie) Dunn. Please, however, let me quickly introduce others from the family who are here with us tonight - Pat and Cathie Dunn, Hubie's daughters, his daughter-in-law Carrie and granddaughter Delaney. Also, here today are my brother Jerry, a SIU graduate, and sister, Fran.

Uncle Hubie is very deserving of this honor and while we might lament the fact that he is not present to receive the acknowledgement, I know he would be proud of the honor. In some ways, too, it is fitting that he is "remembered", after life, not only by his family and loved ones, but by his alma mater, SIU.

John Hubert was a very modest individual and first he would want to thank several people. I will keep the list short. First, thanks to Tommy Bell and the selection committee. Second, Hubie Dunn would thank his family for their unceasing support, with a particular appreciation to his life's mate who preceded him in death, Aunt Mary.

The accomplishments of Hubie Dunn are countless and some are included in tonight's program. He has been inducted into several Halls of Fame and he played a prominent part in the history of several years as the President of NCAA Gymnastic coaches.

Equally important, Hubie Dunn was a teacher extraordinaire with expertise in biomechanics having earned a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois. His strength and

artistry as a professor certainly did not go without notice on this campus. In fact, Northern Illinois University selected him "TWICE" as the University's outstanding teacher. He also was elected twice to serve as the President of the NIU Faculty Senate - a true leader.

What might be most important to remember about Hubie Dunn is that he was raised not far from here, one of ten children, in the small town of Pinckneyville, a place known for one sport, Basketball. How he found and developed into an all-American gymnast is nothing short of phenomenal. My brothers, sister and I many years later graduated from PCHS and we do not recall even then seeing a piece of gymnastics equipment!

At SIU, Hubie went to work with whatever skills he'd developed in his younger years, earning recognition as an outstanding Gymnast with all-American status. His noted strengths were the parallel bars, long horse, tumbling, and the rings. He was the first SIU gymnast eager and brave enough to try out the introduction of a new piece of equipment - the trampoline.

His senior year was cut short due to his commitment and service to his country, entering the Navy as a Lieutenant JG, assigned first for training at Harvard and then to the USS Shubrick. He saw some serious "conflict" during the war, but chose to not dwell much on the tragedy of his military experiences. Instead, he recalled, with some humor, how he suffered from a war injury by falling from a ship's ladder - as he would say, "so much for all that gymnastics stuff."

As a gymnastics coach, Hubie is known as the father of gymnastics in the Pacific Northwest, where he taught and coached gymnastics for 15 years at Washington

State University. He developed several all-American athletes, who with his guidance, traveled to high schools throughout the Northwest to introduce young people to the sport. Later, to be closer to their families, Uncle Hubie, Aunt Mary and family moved to DeKalb, where Hubie was asked to help NIU develop its program - from the floor or "dirt" up. Many in the sport questioned "why" Hubie would leave Washington State, a well-established program only to "start" anew at NIU. One reason might be that Hubie was first and foremost a family man and he and Aunt Mary were circling back to where they began their lives together to keep an eye on aging parents in Carbondale and Pinckneyville.

Hubie's teams at NIU developed quickly and it was not long before he was not only competing against Illinois and Minnesota, but beating them as well. He stepped aside from active coaching at NIU in 1972, but stayed very active in his support of the new coach and the sport for years after.

What guided John Hubert - a strong faith, high ethical principles, a commitment to serve others, and an unyielding belief in the power of sport and education to transform lives. He also was a great father. He and Aunt Mary were blessed with five children. Pat and Cathy are here tonight however Barb, the youngest girl, is not with us tonight because of some health issues. The youngest, two boys, David and Dan, preceded Uncle Hubie in death. John Hubert was very proud of his children.

Finally, Uncle Hubie would graciously acknowledge tonight's other award recipients and their accomplishments and state with pride that is he proud to share tonight's program with them.