

**NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

PO BOX 3216, FINLEY GOLF COURSE ROAD • CHAPEL HILL, NC 27515-3216
PHONE: (919) 962-2345 • FAX: (919) 962-4438

NCHSAA HALL OF FAME NOMINATION FORM

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE ALL INFORMATION)

I. NOMINEE INFORMATION

NAME Baker Michael D
LAST FIRST MIDDLE NICKNAME
ADDRESS 405 Iona Street. Fairmont NC 28340
STREET CITY STATE ZIP CODE
AGE 65 DATE OF BIRTH 02/08/1959 PLACE OF BIRTH Fairmont, NC
TELEPHONE: WORK 910-733-3081 HOME () DECEASED* No
YES/NO
NAME OF HIGH SCHOOL Fairmont High School YEAR GRADUATED 77
NAME OF COLLEGE Roanoke College YEAR GRADUATED 81
ADDITIONAL DEGREES (MASTERS, DOCTORATE, ETC.) _____
IF NOMINEE IS DECEASED, GIVE DATE OF DEATH AND FILL IN SECTION II

II. NEAREST RELATIVE

NAME Baker Ellen Wife
LAST FIRST MIDDLE RELATIONSHIP
ADDRESS 405 Iona Street. Fairmont NC 28340
STREET CITY STATE ZIP CODE
TELEPHONE: WORK 910-734-5303 HOME ()

III. SPONSOR INFORMATION (PERSON MAKING NOMINATION)

NAME Barton Anthony A
LAST FIRST MIDDLE
ADDRESS 11865 Deep Branch Road Maxton NC 28364
STREET CITY STATE ZIP CODE
TELEPHONE: WORK 910-628-6727 HOME () 910-316-8340
TITLE/POSITION Principal-Fairmont High School
SCHOOL SYSTEM Public Schools of Robeson County
SIGNATURE [Signature] DATE 10/31/24

IV. PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

IN CHART BELOW, PLEASE LIST CHRONOLOGICALLY THE NOMINEE'S POSITION
(COACH, PRINCIPAL, ETC.) AND OTHER APPROPRIATE DATA

POSITION	DATES	SCHOOL OR SYSTEM	HONORS	COACHING RECORDS
Science Teacher	10/83-6/24	Fairmont High School	Robeson County TOY 2007	
Athletic Director	1994-2024	Fairmont High School		
Basketball Coach	83-04, 09-14	Fairmont High School		471 (W)-206 (L)
Track Coach	1995	Fairmont High School		
Volleyball Coach	2011-2013	Fairmont High School		

CIVIC/CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES (INCLUDE CHURCH, CIVIC OR CHARITABLE INVOLVEMENT)

1. _____
2. 20 year volunteer with Robeson County Chapter of Special Olympics
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

HONORS

(PLEASE LIST HONORS EARNED IN COLLEGE, POST GRADUATE WORK, AWARDS FROM CIVIC CLUBS, ETC.)
(EXAMPLE: PHI BETA KAPPA, MAGNA CUM LAUDE, JAYCEE PERSON OF THE YEAR, ETC.)

1. Robeson County Teacher of the Year 2007-2008
2. Conference Coach of the Year (13 times)
3. Served as Conference President
4. 2004 NCHSAA Athletic Director Award of Outstanding Service to District 4
5. Homer Thompson Memorial Award-"Eight Who Make a Difference"
6. Coached the 2A State Champions for Basketball in 1994
7. Virginia's Small College Player of the Year for Basketball (1981)
8. _____

V. PHOTOGRAPH

ATTACH A PHOTOGRAPH OF THE NOMINEE
(preferably head and shoulder shot, wallet size)



VI. SUPPORT OF CANDIDACY

Using whatever supportive data you may wish, please describe the activities and accomplishments of this candidate which make him/her a viable candidate for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame. Please remember that only thorough and complete documentation will be considered. Two letters of recommendation (minimum) will be necessary, and newspaper articles, etc., in support may also be submitted.

The committee shall seek to honor those who have directly influenced the history and evolution of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. Attachments are considered appropriate.

FOR OFFICE USE: DATE RECEIVED _____



Public Schools of Robeson County

**Post Office Drawer 2909
Lumberton, North Carolina 28359**

Phone (910) 671-6000

Fax (910) 671-6024

October 28, 2024

Hall of Fame Committee

North Carolina High School Athletic Association

Dear Committee Members:

I am honored to nominate Coach Michael Baker for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

My first encounter with Coach Baker was during the 1983-1984 basketball season when, as a junior at Red Springs High School, I competed against his Fairmont Golden Tornadoes. Throughout my journey from Player to Coach to District Athletic Director for the Public Schools of Robeson County, I have witnessed his remarkable career achievements, including:

- Multiple conference regular season championships
- Conference tournament championships
- Sectional championships
- Several regional championships
- 1994 State Championship

During his distinguished 43-year tenure at Fairmont High School, Coach Baker served in multiple capacities:

- Athletic Director
- Basketball Coach
- Volleyball Coach
- Track Coach
- Golf Coach

His contributions to North Carolina athletics extended beyond Fairmont, including coaching in the East/West Allstar Basketball Game and serving on the North Carolina Coaches Association Board.

Coach Baker's impact transcends his impressive coaching record. He has been an invaluable mentor to students, young coaches, and athletic directors throughout Robeson County. His influence reaches across North Carolina, where he is widely respected and admired. Even until his recent retirement, he continued to exemplify and share the qualities that defined his career:

- Strong work ethic
- Competitive spirit
- Commitment to exceeding expectations

Based on his outstanding career and lasting influence on North Carolina high school athletics, I wholeheartedly recommend Coach Michael Baker for induction into the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn Patterson Sr." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Glenn Patterson Sr.
Director of Athletics/Driver Education
Public Schools of Robeson County
(910)671-6000 ext. 3314

Home of the Golden Tornadoes	FAIRMONT HIGH SCHOOL	Dr. Anthony A. Barton, Principal
Mission: Educating all students to their fullest potential.	5419 Old Stage Road Fairmont, North Carolina 28340 Tel: (910) 628-6727 Fax: (910) 628-0652	

October 31, 2024

I am honored to recommend Michael Baker for induction into the NCHSAA Hall of Fame. As a dedicated basketball coach, athletic director, science teacher, and volleyball coach at Fairmont High School, he has profoundly impacted the lives of countless students and athletes.

Coach Baker exemplifies the qualities of leadership, commitment, and integrity. His coaching philosophy not only emphasizes skill development and teamwork but also instills values of discipline and sportsmanship. Under his guidance, the basketball program flourished, achieving numerous accolades and fostering a culture of excellence.

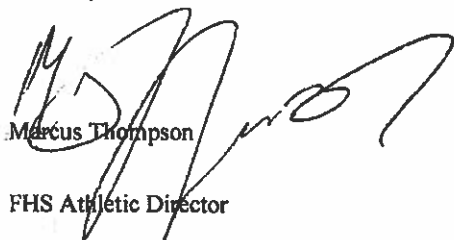
Beyond his coaching achievements, Michael's role as an athletic director has been instrumental in enhancing the overall athletic experience at Fairmont High School. He has tirelessly worked to ensure that all athletes have access to the resources and support they need to succeed, both on and off the field.

As a science teacher, he inspired students to excel academically while promoting the importance of physical fitness and teamwork. His dedication to education and athletics has created a lasting legacy that continues to influence current and future generations.

Personally, Coach Baker has been a mentor and role model to me. His guidance, encouragement, and unwavering belief in his students have made a lasting impact on my life and the lives of many others.

In recognition of his exceptional contributions to high school athletics and education, I wholeheartedly support Michael Baker's nomination for the NCHSAA Hall of Fame. His legacy of excellence is truly deserving of this honor.

Sincerely,



Marcus Thompson
FHS Athletic Director

Fairmont High School, complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, national origin, gender, marital status, age, or disability.

THE ROBESONIAN

Longtime Fairmont AD, coach Michael Baker to retire

Thompson picked to become Tornadoes' new AD

Chris Stiles The Robesonian - May 21, 2024



Fairmont volleyball coach Michael Baker, center, addresses his team during an Aug. 16, 2023 game at Lumberton. Baker has announced his retirement as the school's athletic director and head volleyball coach.

Chris Stiles | The Robesonian

A A A



Fairmont's head coach Michael Baker, center right, speaks during a ceremony honoring the 40th anniversary of the school's 1984 boys basketball state championship team. He is pictured with the members of the team who were present. Baker is the school's athletic director and head volleyball coach.

Photo by Mike Katersham

FAIRMONT — An era of Fairmont High School athletics spanning back over four decades is coming to an end.

Michael Baker has announced his retirement, completing a 43-year career as a teacher, coach and administrator at his alma mater. He was currently serving as athletic director and head volleyball coach.

Marcus Thompson, who has served the last five years as girls basketball and cross country coach, will become the new athletic director.

"An old teacher once, a long time ago, said you'll know when you're through, when it's time to go," Baker said. "And I just felt like it was time — what they said was true. You did something that you loved doing for so many years, but all good things come to an end. I enjoyed it; when I got to 30 years, I just didn't feel like retiring, I felt like I had more to give, more to offer. But it's time for me to ride into the sunset."

"His impact has just been legendary," Fairmont Principal Anthony Barton said. "Coach Baker doesn't say a lot, but the few words he does say, you take notice and listen. I'm going to miss, not just his expertise, but he knows the history of Fairmont better than anybody in this building. ... He's a walking tank of knowledge. He's so respected and revered, not just by students and the coaching staff, but the community."

With the exception of the four years he spent attending college, the 65-year-old Baker has been on the Fairmont High School campus in some capacity since 1973. He graduated in 1977, and after a Hall of Fame career playing basketball at Roanoke College returned to Fairmont as a both a science teacher and a coach in 1981. He began by coaching JV boys basketball, and was the varsity head coach two years later, a role he held from 1983-2004 and again from 2009-14. The Golden Tornadoes boys basketball team won a state championship under Baker in 1994.

He has also served as the athletic director for the last 31 years, and has been the head volleyball coach across multiple stints dating from 1986 to the present.

"I've coached it all," Baker said. "Tennis, volleyball, track and field. I've enjoyed it. Where I work at, it was a lot of family. I coached my younger brother in basketball. I coached a lot of nephews and nieces and first cousins, then it got down to where I started coaching classmates' kids. I looked across the desk and the faces don't change, I say 'your parent is such-and-such.'"

Fairmont's gymnasium was named in Baker's honor in 2022, with a dedication ceremony attended by hundreds of former players, friends, family and community members.

"I think by me being from Fairmont, I understood what the kids and parents were going through," Baker said. "A lot of times, you can see in their faces, in the parents' faces, when they were going through some hard times, and as a teacher, a coach and friend, you try to help them the best you can, and I always tried to be fair. ... Everybody says 'well you gave all this (to the community)' — no, it was a two-way street. I gave, and they gave back to me."

The number of students coached or taught by Baker is likely in the thousands, and the number of coaches to work alongside him or be supervised by him as athletic director is likely several dozen.

"Coach Bake has created a legacy here at Fairmont High School, and he's done a great job being able to coach and run a great athletic program," said Thompson, who played for Baker and has coached at Fairmont for the last 10 years. "It's interesting taking over after someone's held that title for so long, and Coach Bake has definitely made his mark, as a coach and an AD at Fairmont High School, and a player as well."

His impact extends beyond Fairmont, though, to the rest of Robeson County and beyond.

"He's truly going to be missed," said Glenn Patterson Sr., the Public Schools of Robeson County athletic director who coached against Baker for decades while at Red Springs, and considers him a mentor. "He's always been competitive; I heard about him when I was younger, about the Baker boys in Fairmont and all the great athletes. ... He's going to be truly missed, not only in Fairmont but throughout the county and the state of North Carolina. I think he made a name for himself in the coaching field during his tenure."

After working tirelessly over the more than four decades he's spent in education, Baker says he's ready for a more relaxed lifestyle in retirement.

"I'm 65, my wife has put up with all that for so many years, me being gone late through the night and eating supper late at night. I'm going to take some time to eat at the right time, when regular people eat, I'm going to see what that feels like," Baker joked. "It's time to enjoy a little bit of something else, just do something different."

And as he leaves, Baker is comfortable with his former player Thompson following in his footsteps.

"I think he'll do a good job," Baker said. "He's got ideas how he wants to go. Marcus is a Fairmont guy; I coached Marcus, I had him as a student and I worked with his parents and all

that. I think we've got a pretty good guy, a person that's really going to care for the community."

Thompson, who graduated from Fairmont in 2003, acknowledges he has big shoes to fill as he becomes the school's first new athletic director in over three decades.

"I think Coach Bake has done a great job at trying to make sure that the tradition stays the same, that Fairmont has had some type of tradition, from every kid knowing the school song to trying to make sure he holds spots for coaches who graduated from here," Thompson said. "I think he's done a great job at that, and just passing along tradition. I think my job is to come in and build on some of the things he's already put in place."

Thompson, 39, has been Fairmont's girls basketball head coach for the last five seasons, turning a program that had been winless the year before he took over into a Southeastern Athletic Conference champion in each of the last two seasons and winning the 2023 Robeson County Shootout and the 2024 Southeastern tournament championship. He also coaches girls cross country.

"I was looking for someone I felt like could take our program to the next level — just to see what he's done with women's basketball here at Fairmont," Barton said. "Marcus does things with class, he does things the right way. That's not just on the court, that's in practice, that's in how he does his job every day. ... The biggest thing that sold me was his vision, his connection with the community, and I think Marcus is here to stay, and that's what we need."

He previously coached the Golden Tornadoes' JV boys basketball program from 2014-19. Before entering education, Thompson worked as the senior sports director for all the YMCA locations in Durham. He is a graduate of North Carolina Central University.

"There are some things that will be easy and some things that will be challenging," Thompson said. "As far as being able to run a big program, I've had some experience in that, but there's also some things that's going to be challenging, as it concerns compliance and just making sure everything is in line with the North Carolina High School Athletic Association. I'm definitely up for the task, but I think one of the things I had to think of before I threw my name in the pot was can you do it and coach. After I found out I can do it and coach, I was all in."

Sports editor Chris Stiles can be reached at 910-816-1977 or by email at cstiles@www.robesonian.com. You can follow him on X/Twitter at @StilesOnSports.

Robesonian

[VIEW COMMENTS](#)

THE ROBESONIAN

'That says so much for Mike Baker': Fairmont gym dedicated to Baker in Saturday ceremony

Fairmont gym

dedicated to

Baker in Sat.

ceremony

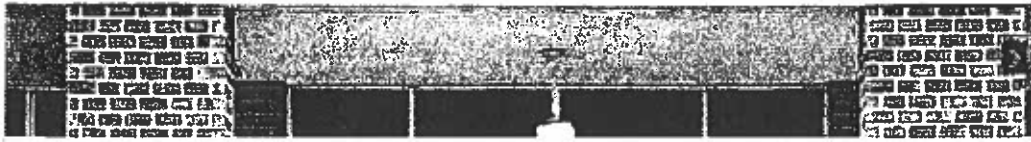
Chris Stiles Sports editor - November 22, 2022



Michael Baker, left, listens alongside William Freeman, center, as Zavery McDougald speaks during the Michael D. Baker Gymnasium dedication Saturday at Fairmont High School.

A A A

MICHAEL D. BAKER GYMNASIUM



The facade outside the gym at Fairmont High School now bears the name of Michael Baker, who has coached at the school for 41 years.

FAIRMONT — For the last 41 years, Michael Baker has had a regular presence inside the gymnasium at Fairmont High School.

One day, eventually, he won't physically be there anymore. But a decades-long legacy will live on there forever.

The newly-renamed Michael D. Baker Gymnasium was dedicated during a ceremony inside the facility Saturday, commemorating Baker's 41 years of service to Fairmont High School as a coach, athletic director and teacher at his alma mater.

"It was an awesome ceremony honoring Bake, it really was," Public Schools of Robeson County athletic director Jerome Hunt said. "Just to see all those folks show up for him and all those former players come back, and some of the things that were said about Mike. What he's done throughout his career is almost unheard of; it's a well-deserved honor."

"I don't know of anybody that's more deserving of that kind of honor than Coach Bake, as much time (as he's given)," Fairmont Principal Kent Prater said. "You always see what he does on the court when he's coaching, but you don't see all the time behind it and weekends and everything else he puts in, and the stuff he's done for kids in this community, buying shoes, clothes, that nobody ever knows about."

Speakers at the ceremony included Hunt, Prater, Fairmont boys basketball head coach Montrell McNair, and other former coaches and players at the school who have coached with and played under Baker.

Most of the 1994 basketball state championship team was also present as its coach was honored; Baker "enjoyed that, just to see them and interact with them again," he said.

Appreciation for Baker from the approximately 200 people in attendance, plus the nostalgia of looking back at a four-decade career, made for an emotional night.

"You could really tell how much Mike meant to some of his players, not just when they were in school but how much he means to them now, because he's kept up with all of them in their careers," Hunt said. "One of his former players sat next to me throughout the ceremony, and he was emotional from the time it started until it was over with, he was wiping tears the entire time. ... And that says so much for Mike Baker. When it's all said and done they should put a statue out there in front of the gym."

Baker graduated from Fairmont High School in 1977, the first class to graduate from the current Old Stage Road campus just a few years removed from the school's integration. He and his brothers all played for coach Richard Bass, who was in attendance at Saturday's ceremony and gave Baker his first coaching job out of college back at Fairmont. Two years later, Baker was the head basketball coach.

Through his career, Baker says, he's tried to take the principles taught by his parents in his upbringing and apply them to coaching and teaching.

"They established those characteristics in me a long time ago — and all I did, basically, is carry their lessons through life," Baker said. "How to treat people, how to deal with people, how to deal with things, uncertainty, difficult situations in life that come up. I learned a lot of that from them."

That approach led Baker to strong relationships with his players and fellow coaches, which came as he coached in his hometown and had many connections to those he was coaching.

"This is home for me," Baker said. "There's always some nephew, cousin, first cousin's brother that I've coached, friends of mine when I went to school's sons, stuff like that. I always had a connection with them. We formed a connection with their children. People say how I influenced their life; they influenced my life too. It wasn't a one-way street; it was shared, we helped each other."

Those relationships are evident as others speak of Baker and what he's meant to them. McNair played for Baker and now coaches with him, as Baker is currently the Golden Tornadoes' athletic director and an assistant coach on McNair's boys basketball staff.

"As a player he stayed on me hard, he didn't give me too much of a break," McNair said. "Now he's leading and showing me the way, helping me where I need to be helped at. ... He's shared all the knowledge that he has with me and wants to be as successful as he has."

"It's selfless service, and just him being a mentor and a role model in my life, and teaching us how to be men, and how to continue to work regardless of what the outcome is, continue to work hard until you accomplish your goals."

Prater and Hunt both share strong relationships with Baker as a fellow administrator.

"We talk an awful lot about athletics and other things in the school as well," Prater said. "He pretty much knows the temperature of the community about any subject."

"Sometimes when I'm around him I don't even ask a lot of questions, I just kind of listen; listen to him talk to other folks, how he approaches things, how he goes about his business," Hunt said. "You have to take a part of that with you."

Baker served as the longtime boys basketball coach for the Golden Tornadoes, and has been athletic director for the last 29 years. He currently also serves as head volleyball coach. His career in education came after a successful college basketball career; Baker was inducted into the Roanoke College Hall of Fame in 1998 in commemoration.

In Baker's remarks, he made sure to thank his wife Ellen for her contributions to his career, and to many of the players he's coached.

"She's given up a lot of time too," Baker said. "She worked with me on everything that I had. She was on this journey with me all the way. She's in the background, didn't get the spotlight, but she was on the ride and has just taken it like a champ."

While much of the focus was on Baker's role as a coach and athletic director, he's also been a teacher in the district for the last 41 years, and says he gets just as much "thrill" out of teaching science as he does out of coaching.

"I enjoy seeing kids, when they grasp a new concept, their eyes light up," Baker said. "It's the same thing as playing basketball, or playing any sport. As a coach you see kids really get what you're trying to relate to (them), and their whole face lights up like a lightbulb, and I enjoy seeing that."

Baker continued to get congratulations Monday from students, he said.

"I can't describe the feeling that I have, because I didn't do all the work to get my name on a gym, I did it because I love it," Baker said. "I don't know if it's sunk in yet that that will be up there for a long time, because I'm still doing what I've been doing from day one."

While the ceremony gave the important individuals in the 63-year-old Baker's life a chance to reflect on his career and impact, he made clear that this was not a retirement party.

"I still enjoy what I'm doing," Baker said. "The time that I hate going to work, I'll retire right then, but I still enjoy going to work, I still enjoy teaching, I still enjoy seeing kids grow."

But even while Baker continues on the job — and will keep coaching games in the gym that now bears his name — others had a sense of gladness that the honor could be bestowed on Baker with him in attendance and able to enjoy and appreciate the honor.

"I was glad to get it done, he deserves it, and I'm glad we could get it done while I could enjoy it," Prater said. "I think his family's really proud of him as well. I've never seen Bake like I saw him the other night, because you saw the emotion, and he'd break it up and laugh about stuff, but I think it was really meaningful for him and it really touched him and the community to get this done."

Chris Stiles can be reached at 910-816-1977 or by email at cstiles@www.robesonian.com. You can follow him on Twitter at @StilesOnSports.

Robesonian

**The
ROBESONIAN**

Fairmont educator, coach seeks to motivate students' success

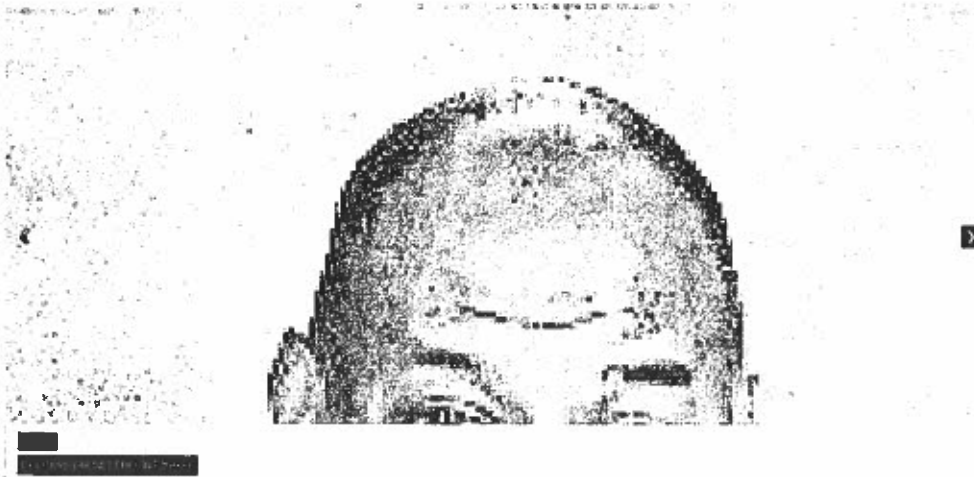
Jessica Warner Staff writer • February 18, 2022



Michael Baker, a science teacher at Fairmont High School, told The Robesonian he enjoys teaching students and motivating them to discover skills they didn't know they had. Baker can be seen in the classroom instructing students and in the gym in his role as the school's athletic director.

Courtesy photo | Michael Baker

A A A



FAIRMONT — From the sidelines to the classroom, one educator's journey continues to enrich his own life and impact the lives of many students.

Michael Baker is a science teacher at Fairmont High School, where he also serves as the school's athletic director.

But, his career in the classroom came after a disappointment on the basketball court.

Baker's career took an alternate direction after he was cut during tryouts for the Washington Bullets team following his college graduation.

"I came home to train with the intention of trying out [for the Washington Bullets] the following year," he said.

Baker was then given a chance to work in the school system and the basketball program, which changed his life.

"This connection with young people led me to want to help them have some of the opportunities that I had," he said.

Thus, his career as a teacher and coach began.

His 41-year career as an educator began at Fairmont Middle School where he served as a teacher assistant in an Exceptional Children's class and as the In School Suspension coordinator, he said.

"After completing my certification, I was moved to Fairmont High School where I have been teaching science for 35 years," Baker said.

Baker continues to motivate students to hustle both athletically and in the classroom.

During his time at the school, he has served as a volleyball and basketball coach.

"The most important part of teaching, to me, is motivating students to dig deep and discover abilities they didn't even know they had," he said.

The lifelong Fairmont resident said one of his favorite labs involves students who work in different teams to construct rollercoasters.

"After completing the task, one class was able to take a field trip to an amusement park where they observed and rode a roller coaster," he said.

"They were able to successfully calculate speed, velocity, and acceleration. The ride operators were amazed at how much they understood about the operation of the ride!" Baker added.

To be an effective teacher, one must be "genuinely caring and approachable with a good sense of humor," Baker said.

"Sometimes teachers have to push themselves out of their comfort zone and get creative to meet the needs of their students. We learn, adjust, and 'borrow' good ideas as we go," he said.

The career also comes with challenges and with the help of modern technology, teachers can be reached 24/7 by students, he said.

"Many people seem to think teaching is an easy job with summers and weekends off but you are never really off ...," he said. "Also, much time is spent thinking about ways to improve."

Though teaching comes with its challenges, it is still a rewarding vocation, he said.

"You won't become a millionaire but teaching will enrich your life in so many ways!" Baker added.

THE ROBESONIAN

Baker and the best

July 20, 2015

A A A

First Posted: 7/21/2014

GREENSBORO — After coaching basketball for 24 years, it might be hard to experience new things on the court.

Don't tell that to Mike Baker.

"Every time you go, every kid is different," said Baker, the long-time Fairmont coach. "If it's the same thing, you get bored, so it's not. It's fun when you come in and you have a new exciting kid that comes in and is excited about playing."

Baker's past few months have been anything but boring. Not only did he get his 400th career victory but on Monday night, he coached a team of top graduated seniors from around the state at the 66th annual East-West All Star basketball game at the Greensboro Coliseum.

Baker said that the event was about more than just the game, but also building relationships through the sport.

"You meet kids from other areas and you find out you have something in common, and that's basketball," he said.

Even though Baker's East team was on the losing end of a 98-86 final score, the experience wasn't one to be upset about.

"I enjoyed it," he said. "We battled, we competed, and they hit more shots than we did."

There was one disappointment in the festivities, and that was Fairmont senior Jarrod Neal being unable to attend the game and play one more game along side Baker before moving on to play football in college.

"It would have added to it, because that's a person I knew for the last four years," Baker said. "I would have loved to have had him play in an environment like this. You have some disappointments in life and you learn to move on."

Baker wasn't the only one who was disappointed in the late scratch. County athletic director Jason Suggs also felt it would have been a memorable moment.

"I would have loved to see them play together one last time," Suggs said. "He's been one of the faces of Fairmont basketball for the last three years."

Suggs was in attendance on Monday night, and was adamant in how deserving Baker was for the opportunity.

"I mean he's basically done everything you can possibly do in high school basketball," Suggs said. "When you talk about basketball in Robeson County, you have to mention Mike Baker."

In Suggs' eyes, it isn't just Baker's personal achievements, but the way he went about coaching as well.

"He's someone that everybody looked at," Suggs said. "He's somebody that each basketball coach in the county can look up to as well, because everything he does is professional and everything he does for kids. I wish we could clone Mike Baker and put him in every coaching position."

Baker said the appearance in the game was another addition to a lifetime of memories basketball has given to him.

"I can't even begin to express how much basketball has meant to me and my career and what it has done for me," he said. "To have the opportunity to coach these kids in a community that is so rich in basketball. You can't ask for anything else."

And for Baker, it all comes down to representing his home town, where he first started playing the game.

"Every experience I have, it all goes back to our Fairmont community," he said. "I'm blessed that they gave me the opportunity and they supported me."

Now that he has been to the top and coached the game, it isn't something he wants to hold for himself.

"This is a pinnacle," he said. "Every coach should get a chance to coach in the East-West All-Star game and work with other kids. Unfortunately some go through their entire career and it doesn't happen. I was fortunate enough for it to happen."