



# Sam McCreedy

**July 14, 1952 - July 9, 2018**

It has been said that words cannot fully describe how Sam was intimately involved with volleyball and that he had significantly influenced volleyball in Minnesota, the country, and even across the border into Canada. He was very kind and a modest gentleman that would not take much credit for his accomplishments, he would insist others deserved the accolades more.

Sam started teaching English at Apple Valley High School (AVHS) in 1978 with a sports background of basketball and football. He quickly became friends with another Minnesota Volleyball icon, Walt Weaver who was the Girls Varsity Volleyball Head Coach that started the AVHS program when the school opened in 1976. This was the beginning of a great friendship and lifelong partnership, Walt actually talked Sam into coaching 9<sup>th</sup> grade volleyball without having any previous volleyball coaching experience. Sam accepted the challenge by immersing himself in a stack of volleyball books so he could research to be the best he could, he certainly accomplished that task. In the early 1980s, Sam realized the importance of introducing the sport of volleyball to kids before they reached high school. With this idea, Sam formed the Apple Valley Volleyball Club (AVVC). Here he coached competitive volleyball to girls from 4<sup>th</sup> grade & up in the winter during the high school off season. In 1986, Sam became a pioneer by forming Apple Valley's, and most likely Minnesota's, first junior all-boys competitive volleyball team that competed in a national USVBA (United States Volleyball Association that is now called USA Volleyball) tournament held in St. Paul. This tournament hosted teams from all over the country including Hawaii. Sam's AVHS coaching career with Walt brought several awards and high State Tournament placements that includes 13-State Tournament appearances with 2- State Championships, 13-section titles, and 14-conference titles. Sam was nominated for the Minnesota Volleyball Coaches Association (MNVBCA) Hall of Fame in 1999 but kindly asked for his name to be removed so others could be honored. Sam stepped down from coaching in the early 2000s and passed the torch of the Apple Valley Volleyball Club to another AVHS legend, Jeff Groves.

Besides everything that Sam did for Apple Valley Volleyball, he was a co-director with Walt for the Midwest Volleyball Instructors (MVI) organization and also did some play-by-play announcing for Minnesota's professional Women's Volleyball team, the Monarchs. MVI hosted clinics for volleyball coaches from all over the country, including from Canada. These clinics would bring in top collegiate and professional coaches as both speakers and attendees. During these clinics, Sam befriended a couple of gentlemen from Canada that both had coached Canada's national team at some point, Dennis Nord and Mike Burchuk. During a 2003 fishing trip up in Canada, Dennis introduced Sam to one of Sam's few greater loves more than volleyball, his future wife Theresa. Sam found his perfect soulmate and decided to take a leave from teaching to spend more time with Theresa. They married in late 2004 and welcomed their son Jack the following year. Sam fully embraced the opportunity to be a stay-at-home dad and still was committed to travel the Minnesota for the large MVI clinics each year. Sam returned to AVHS in 2010 and retired in 2011 from teaching. During his last year teaching, Theresa was an elected official in the Manitoba Legislature and was not able to join Sam. Sam was making several trips up north to be with his family as much as he could that final year at AVHS.

Sam passed away on July 9, 2018, after a fast-moving case of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, just 5 days shy of his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sam was a true lover of many sports, he loved the outdoors and took up curling. Sam was active right up to his final days.

Thank you, Sam, for all that you have done for AVHS Volleyball and for every volleyball player that had the opportunity to meet you or be coached by you. You left far too soon.

