

Award in memory of coach and friend

Written by Chris Lee

Rudy. Notre Dame fans know the name. Many other fans of football know the name. Now, Holyoke students and residents will know the name.

Daniel Ruettiger nicknamed "Rudy" was a football player at Notre Dame in 1974. He was determined to walk on to the Notre Dame Fighting Irish football team. His small size kept him off the varsity squad but he was able to make the scout team.

Rudy was never given a chance to play in an actual game until the final game of his senior year. The Irish were playing Georgia Tech on Nov. 8, 1975. Head coach Dan Devine gave Rudy the chance to play during the final minutes of the game. Rudy went in as a defensive end. He was unable to get to the quarterback on the first play but on the next and final play of the game, Rudy sacked the Georgia Tech quarterback.

Rudy was carried off the field, one of only two players in Notre Dame history to ever be carried off.

Rudy, a 1993 movie, was the true story of the determined Notre Dame student.

With the recent death of Tim Gribben, a coach and friend of many around the area, comes the Rudy Award. An athletic scholarship for the Holyoke High School (HHS) boy or girl who has the qualities of Gribben and/or Rudy. A student athlete who respects his/her coaches, works hard and is dedicated.

Gribben graduated from HHS in 1979 and went on to play football at McPherson College in McPherson, Kan.

He began his coaching and teaching career in Syracuse, Kan. in 1983. In 1985 Gribben moved to Burlington where he served as the woodworking and drafting instructor. During his time at BHS, he was the assistant football coach. The team won state championships in 1995 and 1997. He also led the boys' basketball team to the state tournament as the head coach, something not achieved for 32 years at BHS.

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In 2000, Gribben made the move to Idalia where his list of accomplishments continued to grow. He served as the physical education instructor, athletic director, superintendent, principal, head football and head boys' basketball coach.

With a 64-3 overall record, the football team won four state championships under Gribben's watch. In 2006 he was named the Denver Broncos coach of the year.

Gribben, 48, lost his battle with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) July 27.

On Sunday, Aug. 9, friends and family gathered at HHS to celebrate and remember Gribben's life. Stories were told and songs were sung. A letter from coach Buck Schiltz was read. Boys' basketball coach John Baumgartner spoke to the crowd and explained the Rudy Award.

Friendly, hard working, dedicated, loyal, caring and all around nice guy were all words used by those present to remember the life of Gribben.