

Daise enters Wrestling Hall of Fame

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

It was a big day in the life of Gene Daise Saturday, May 12, when he was one of six Coloradans inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame for lifetime achievement.

Honored at the Colorado Chapter's annual banquet, Daise represented Holyoke proudly.

Now 84, Daise's love for wrestling spans eight decades, back to when he was 4 years old and started wrestling with his older brother Bob.

"Winning was not important, it was the thrill of the match," he told the assembled crowd at the Crowne Plaza in Colorado Springs last Saturday.

Daise wrestled when he served in the U.S. Navy, he competed for Colorado State University, lettering four years and even tried out for the Olympics.

"In 1948, I drove back to Ames, Iowa, to try out for the Olympics," Daise said Saturday night. "The rules were a little different from the college rules. If you didn't get a pin, you got eliminated. Although I won all four of my matches, I didn't get a pin, so I drove back to Colorado."

When he returned to Holyoke from his second tour of duty with the Navy, Daise said Holyoke had decided to add wrestling to the winter sports, and he was assigned to be the coach for the inaugural season in 1953-54.

Lots of memories on the mats were made for Daise, and his induction into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame comes as a well-deserved reward for such a strong supporter of the sport of wrestling.

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