

GEORGE E. HANSON

A 1935 graduate of the South Dakota School for the Deaf, George E. Hanson was an all-around individual any school would be proud to display as the typical product of its system. George, according to many of his former students, was an outstanding teacher and coach throughout his 38 triumphant years in Deaf Education, 36 of them at the Minnesota State Academy for the Deaf (MSAD) in Faribault, Minnesota.



As a teacher, he met all of the requirements and qualifications for the job – he was academically qualified; he was a prelingual user of American Sign Language (ASL); he challenged students to tasks larger than the strength they felt; and he had the knack for seeing behind students the assets they have and the remarkable capacity to utilize those latent abilities for their own benefit.

As a coach, he was phenomenal at motivating players to perform at their capacity, ever so ready to convince them that they had the talent for the skills yet to be developed, nearly always with positive results; he had a great capacity for work after which the athletes unconsciously patterned theirs; and his vivaciousness, genuine interest in kids, and a sense of togetherness contributed to a winning environment.

Three of his outstanding MSAD student-athletes were regular Dean's List recipients and starred in athletics at Gallaudet University prior to earning doctorates in their respective fields at the American University, Catholic University, and Syracuse University. To this day, they have been exceedingly active as community leaders on the national level, attributing their successes to their MSAD foundation significantly shaped by the George E. Hanson brand of training, compassion, and guidance. Another standout student-athlete, Richard Caswell, acclaimed by many as MSAD's basketball player of the century, also excelled academically and athletically at Gallaudet. He served for four terms as president of the American Athletic Association of the Deaf (AAAD) during its golden years, working alongside South Dakota's John Buckmaster and other stalwarts such as Robey Burns, Art Kruger, Alex Fleischmann, and Ed Carney.

George himself was a dedicated community leader. He served as president of the Faribault Division of the National Fraternal Society of the Deaf for five years and as secretary for 19 years. He was inducted into its Hall of Fame in 1975. He held a number of offices in the Minnesota Association of Deaf Citizens and served in various capacities in youth programs, including the MSAD Junior NAD and Boy Scout organizations.