

# Richard A. Yoder



A 1965 Tecumseh High School graduate, Richard (Rick) Yoder was an accomplished athlete participating in the Tecumseh football, basketball and baseball programs during his four years at Tecumseh. Rick's strongest accomplishments were in basketball, receiving the Most Valuable Player and Clark County Athlete of the Year Award.

Other high school extra-curricular activities included Choir, Class Vice President, Bible Club, and High School Musical (Oklahoma).

Rick is quoted as saying "As my high school teachers and coaches will surely testify, academics and scholarships were not one of my strengths. College became a time to bring balance into my life between athletics and academics and it was not until my junior/senior year at college that this balance was achieved." The most notable honor Rick received in college was being named to "Who's Who In American Colleges and Universities." He was vice president of his college class his first and last year of college, as well as president of the Peace Corp.

After graduating from Tecumseh High School, Rick attended Eastern Mennonite College, graduating from there with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology in 1969. While attending college, Rick resumed his athletic involvement by participating in Eastern Mennonite's basketball, track, and cross country programs. He received the prestigious honor of "Longacre Endowed Chair of Economics and Business" at Eastern Mennonite College.

Rick's accomplishments are many and quite impressive. He went from Eastern Mennonite to the University of Pittsburgh to pursue post graduate studies, receiving His Master of Public Health and Master of Public and International Affairs in 1976; and his Ph.D. at the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh. Rick has written over 25 publications and papers. (See display table). Again, Rick is quoted as saying "Given my high school academic record, obtaining a Ph.D. and two masters degrees was something I did not think I would ever do and, consequently, became a significant accomplishment for me." He states that he later came to realize that the discipline, structure, and hard work required for my high school athletic achievements are the same qualities needed to obtain higher education; and that a good share of the credit for learning these qualities can be attributed to his high school coaches.

Rick's extensive education in the area of sociology and economics led him to many career accomplishments as an international development specialist and economist. Rick has worked in more than 15 low-income countries attempting to reduce hunger and poverty and enhance the quality of life. He indicated that using these experiences in the university classroom has hopefully played some role in stimulating his students to be more globally conscious.

Rick began his career in 1969, serving as Material Aid and Sponsorship Director for the Mennonite Central Committee, Amman, Jordan, where he directed the material aid program in Palestinian refugee camps. He has held various assignments from 1970 up to the present in such countries as Bangladesh, Swaziland, and Nairobi, Kenya, to name a few. Rick is presently the Deputy Chief of Party and Research Advisor for Primary Health Care Initiatives, Abt Associates, Inc. in Amman Jordan, which is a \$40 million USAID financed project designed to increase access to and quality of primary health care services throughout the Kingdom of Jordan.

Rick and his wife, Carolyn, are the proud parents of three daughters, Katie (22), Jessica (20), and Sara (17) and they currently reside in Amman, Jordan (see picture on display table). Of course, Rick and his family are active participants in the Mennonite Church, plus Rick is affiliated with various professional organizations, including being elected to the International Health Section Council. In his "spare time," he enjoys playing the guitar, plus he ran the 42km Dead Sea Marathon in Jordan in April of 2000. He did indicate, though, that he did not set any records.

Tecumseh High School is proud to induct Mr. Richard Yoder into the Tecumseh Athletic Hall of Fame.