

# Looking back

Athletics has a long history at MCC

Kim Duflo, of Stanton, was a member of the 1971-72 basketball team.



By Renae Gould and Shelly Springborn

**A**thletics had its first run at Montcalm Community College from 1967 to 1979.

It all started on Oct. 11, 1967, when the MCC Board of Trustees approved a resolution appointing Larry Petersen, of Stanton, as the head coach for basketball and baseball and approved scheduling of games for the coming basketball season. MCC's sports teams were known as the Centurions.

Games weren't played on campus, though, as MCC didn't have its own athletic facilities. Instead, the college had an agreement worked out with Central Montcalm High School to use their gym for games and practices.

The boys basketball team began play in November 1967. They won their first away game against Grand Rapids Baptist College with a score of 76-58. It was the first of a 15-game schedule of which eight games were played at home. The team roster for this game included the following players and their home schools: Dave Bacon, Steve Foster and John Johnson, Greenville; Brian Benson, Grosse Ile; Bruce Griffin, Grand Rapids Central; Alva Hockstra and Dennis Smith, Montabellla; Henry King and Tom Skinner, Lakeview; Bob Noll, Carson City; and Tom Pressley, Tri County. Other team members included Jack Sulpher, Chuck Beach, Dave Gregg, Roger Hansen, Mike Nelson and Dennis Smith.

A week later, they took the court against the Area Coaches All-Stars team, comprised of coaches from eight area high schools who donated their time and travel expense to participate. The coaches included Stan Breidinger, of Greenville; Frank Fedewa, of Montabellla; Don Gorsuch, of Ionia; Dick Groff, of Greenville; Tom Matchett, of Belding; Norm Miller, of Montabellla; Don Rasmussen, of Central Montcalm; Stan Stolz, of Central Montcalm; Larry Taylor, of Greenville; Frank Ciangi, of Ionia; Bill Burns, of Carson City; Tom Coss, of Belding; and Mike Holdship, of Carson City. MCC ended up losing their first home game to the Area Coaches All-Stars, 95-66. Overall, the MCC Centurions ended the season with six wins and 11 losses.

By fall semester 1969, a survey of the college's 230 students showed that 50 percent of the full-time enrollment had taken advantage of the wide range of activities offered by the two-year college. The intramural athletics program, which was offered on a voluntary basis and led by Petersen, was most popular with the Drama Club and Choir being second. The intramural program, provided for both boys and girls, had attracted 90 students in the various sports.

Frank Fedewa took over as head coach for the boys basketball team at the start of the 1969-70 season, after a successful tenure at Montabellla and Edmore high schools. He led the team to a 17-10 record. The team averaged 90.2 points per game for their 27-game season.



# MONTCALM COMMUNITY COLLEGE

As of 1970, there were also active cross country, baseball and golf teams at the college. Don Mullens, a counselor at MCC, coached the second season of golf, while Larry Petersen coached the baseball team from the beginning.

Kim Duflo, of Stanton, was a member of the 1971-1972 basketball team. He played point guard. He said he was recruited by Coach Fedewa, and the team practiced at Montabella High School in Edmore.

"It was a lot of fun," he said. "I played with a lot of guys I played against in high school!"

Duflo studied architectural drafting and construction during his time at MCC. He worked in construction for a few years and then went to work at Oldsmobile. He returned to MCC to take classes through Oldsmobile's Employee In Training program. He and his wife, Barb, live on Clifford Lake. They have six children, three boys and three girls, along with eight grandchildren. Two of his children were named to all-state teams in basketball, and he said he is in the gym about two or three nights a week watching his grandkids play basketball.

In November 1972, the basketball season was canceled because there weren't enough players for a team. However, the team was back in action for the 1973-74 season.

In March 1974, women's basketball and volleyball were added to MCC's schedule, and Pat Marston, of Sheridan, was hired to coach both teams. The women's basketball team started its first season on the right foot, beating West Shore Community College 39-14 during its first game on Jan. 11, 1975. High scorers on the Centurion team were Debbie Kipp with 17 points and Pam Miller, who scored 8. The lady Centurions went on to play Alma College, Delta College, Ferris State College, Grand Rapids Bible College, Grand Valley State College, Kellogg Community College, Lansing Community College, and Muskegon Community College that season.

The opening of MCC's Activities Building in 1976 changed the playing field for Centurion athletics with the opening of the college's gymnasium. This allowed home games to move to the new facility.

By 1979, Centurion Athletics had run its course and league play ceased. The college, however, continued to grow its offerings in recreational opportunities for the community with its Activities Building, featuring the gymnasium and NCAA-sized pool, as well as outdoor activities including tennis courts. The college also increased credit and noncredit course offerings in recreational activities, with offerings in gymnastics, swimming, handball and more. ■