



Favor Hamilton first Wisconsin woman to enter national prep Hall of Fame

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Suzy Favor Hamilton, who won 11 WIAA state titles, nine NCAA titles and participated in three Olympics, will enter the NFHS Hall of Fame this summer.

Associated Press



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Suzy Favor Hamilton, a Stevens Point native who became one of the greatest distance runners in U.S. history, will be inducted into the National Federation of State High School Associations Hall of Fame.

Favor Hamilton, who won 11 WIAA state titles in cross country and track and field, is the first female athlete from Wisconsin to enter the Hall.

She is only the third individual from the state among the 374 members. Alan Ameche of Kenosha was inducted in 1986 and Elroy Hirsch of Wausau followed in 1988.

In all, five athletes will enter the Hall this year as part of a 12-member class that will be honored July 10 at the NFHS summer meeting in San Diego, Calif.

Favor Hamilton went on to win nine NCAA individual titles at the University of Wisconsin -- still the record -- and also claimed 23 Big Ten Conference titles and 14 All-American honors. She was named Big Ten Athlete of the Decade for the 1990s.

Upon graduation, she quickly became an international sensation. She participated in three Olympics, the last of which came in 2000, when she

held the No. 1 ranking in the world at 1,500 meters in 2000 (3 minutes, 57.40 seconds) and was named USA Track and Field Athlete of the Year.

Since her retirement from competitive running, Favor Hamilton has worked in real estate, served as a motivational speaker, conducted youth running camps and coached women through her running and walking club.

Her induction to the NFHS Hall of Fame, however, is based on her achievements at Stevens Point Area High School.

She won four WIAA state cross country championships, and still holds the state record for fastest time on a 3,200-meter course.

In track, she won the 1,600 run at the state meet four consecutive years, and she also claimed titles in the 800 run, 1,600 relay and 3,200 relay. Her state 800-meter record has stood for 24 years.

The other former athletes to be inducted into the Hall are Michael Carter, a football and track and field athlete from Dallas Thomas Jefferson High School in Texas; Janet Evans, a swimmer from Placentia El Dorado High School in California; John Godina, a football and track and field athlete from Cheyenne Central High School in Wyoming; and Katrina McClain, a basketball player from Charleston St. Andrews Parrish High School in South Carolina.

The National High School Hall of Fame was started in 1982 by the NFHS to honor high school athletes, coaches, contest officials, administrators, fine arts coaches/directors and others for their extraordinary achievements and accomplishments in high school sports and activity programs.

This year's class was chosen after a two-level selection process involving a screening committee composed of active high school state association administrators, coaches and officials, and a final selection committee composed of coaches, former athletes, state association officials, media representatives and educational leaders. Nominations were made through NFHS member associations.

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