

## Former Kennedy coach Harold Wilkinson dies

Written by Jim Ecker

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Former Cedar Rapids Kennedy coach [Harold Wilkinson](#) died Thursday morning at St. Luke's Hospital in Cedar Rapids.

Wilkinson, 74, had been hospitalized several days with pneumonia.

Wilkinson coached girls track, girls basketball and cross country during his career at Kennedy. His girls track teams had an impressive six-year run at the state track meet from 1977 to 1982 when they finished in the top-4 all six years, including two second-place showings and three third-place finishes.

Kennedy named its girls track meet after its Hall of Fame coach.

"He was a very beloved man by anybody who knew him," said Kennedy's athletic director, Aaron Stecker.

Wilkinson coached girls track at Kennedy from 1971 to 1994. He coached girls basketball from 1972 to 1982, compiling a 181-74 record and placing second at the state tournament during the 1976-77 campaign with a 29-2 mark.

"You couldn't find a nicer person," said Dennis Roloff, Kennedy's girls basketball coach. "Just a tremendous, tremendous person."

"He was a very caring coach who got his kids to perform at the highest level. He communicated very well. The kids understood where he was coming from. A lot of enthusiasm."

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Wilkinson coached boys and girls cross country from 1986 to 1995. He was a physical education instructor and counselor at Kennedy, retiring approximately 12 years ago.

"He was a Kennedy man all the way. The players just worshipped him," said Bill Herkelman, a Kennedy teacher and coach who worked with Wilkinson for nearly 30 years.

Wilkinson would congratulate Kennedy coaches and athletes on their triumphs, and console them on their disappointments. "When anything happened, he always had a little note for you, whether it was good or bad," Herkelman said.

Wilkinson is survived by his wife, Peg, and three children.