



CLASS OF 2021 INDUCTEE



NICK PINO JR.

The 7-foot, 1-inch basketball sensation was known for a few nicknames, including "Nick The Stick" and "The Gentle Giant."

His family closest friends might best remember him as "The Dash," for his philosophical nature, as well as his talents and good-hearted nature.

Nick often talked about the "dash" being so important. "You're given a birth date, and upon death you are given a death date," he said. Therefore, you must fill your dash in between your birth date and your death date with as many positive life events (as possible), doing the best in all that you do."

Nick had plenty of positives during his dash; Nov. 3, 1944 – Nov. 3, 2019.

As a sophomore at Santa Fe St. Michael's High School, basketball coach Dick Shelley realized Nick's basketball potential and began working on his individual skills. Nick developed into one of the most prolific prep players in the country, garnering high school All-American honors and receiving more than 100 college scholarship offers.

In his senior year (1962-1963), he broke the state's



record for points in a game with 80 against El Rito High School. He still holds the state record for made free throws in a game with 26 against Espanola Valley.

He held the state record for most points in a season for 50 years (1,033 points) until it was broken by Bryce Alford at La Cueva (1,050) in 2013. At the State Farm Insurance Metro Banquet honoring Albuquerque area basketball players in 2013, Nick presented Alford the basketball that he was given in 1963 when he set the previous record.

In college, Nick became one of the most successful players in Kansas State history, developing an unstoppable sky hook while playing post in the famous Tex Winter "Triangle Offense."

In 1968, Kansas State won the Big 8 Conference championship and went to the NCAA Tournament where it finished in fourth place in the Midwest Regional. Nick was drafted by the Los Angeles Lakers and had a tryout with the 1968 USA Olympic Team, but an unfortunate knee injury in the Lakers' preseason brought a temporary halt to Nick's career.

In 1971- 72, Nick played professionally in Mexico for the Santo de San Luis Basketball Organization, which won the Mexico National Title. Nick called his professional career in Mexico one of the most rewarding times in his career.

Upon retiring from basketball, Nick opened an insurance agency in Manhattan, Kan., that turned out to be highly successful.

In 1985, Nick returned to Santa Fe to care for his parents and be closer to the rest of his family. He is continued in the insurance business.

Nick Pino, without a doubt, filled in his dash positively throughout his wonderful life!

