

RALPH TASKER

Ralph Tasker brought national attention to New Mexico by being one of the winningest coaches in the history of boys basketball in the United States. His coaching record of 1,222 wins and 291 losses included 11 state championships at Hobbs and one at Lovington. He also had 36 seasons where the team won 20 games or more. His 1969-70 Hobbs team set a national high school record by averaging 114.6 points a game. He coached two teams to perfect seasons: 28-0 in 1966 and 26-0 in 1981. His Hobbs HS teams qualified for the state tournament 36 times including 24 consecutive state tournament appearances between 1961 and 1985.

Tasker coached Lovington HS to its first boys state basketball championship in 1949 then moved that summer to Hobbs HS to continue a career that spanned six decades in Lea County. In the mid 1950's, he installed a full court press that would become the trademark of his Hobbs teams. He coached the Hobbs Eagles for 49 years!

More than 100 of Tasker's former players went on to college careers, including Rob Evans, current coach at Arizona State University. Former NBA player Bill Bridges also played for Tasker.

Many honors have been bestowed on Tasker including: National High School Coaches Association National Coach of the Year in 1969; National HS Sports Hall of Fame in 1988; New Mexico AAAA Coach of the Year in 1989; NM High School Coaches Association Hall of Honor in 1989; Teacher of the Year-Hobbs High School in 1976, 1979 and 1987.

Tasker came to NM while serving in the Army during WWII. He was born and raised in West Virginia and was a graduate of Alderson-Broadus College in Philippi, West Virginia. Tasker retired in 1998 and died in 1999 following a brief battle with cancer. At his funeral in the summer of 1999, Tasker was remembered by his former players as a man of dignity, dedication, commitment and sacrifice whose love for basketball was exceeded only by his devotion to this family and his faith.

The basketball gym at Hobbs HS was renamed "Ralph Tasker Arena" in 1970.