

# WCHS

## The Time Machine's "Legends of the Games"

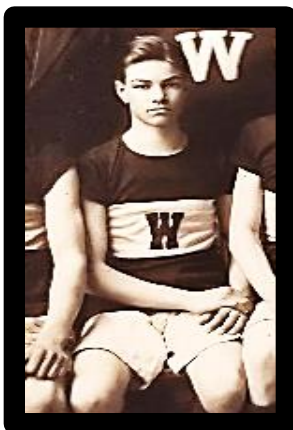
Basketball pre-1920's  
Induction #1

Time traveling brothers and sisters, we are about to embark on a new journey. Recently I promised/threatened that I would begin recognizing WHS teams, coaches, players and others, for their contributions not only to their alma-mater, but also to their community, state and country. Those contributions relate to WHS sports history, mostly. This "Legends of the Games" recognition has been festering in my head for some time. I have delayed moving forward with this idea because I have not nailed down the details. On occasion I have a plan but then I lack confidence that it is the best plan.

Years ago, I heard one of those very short, but clever, snippets of advice that has stuck with me ever since. "Never let perfect get in the way of good." "Paralysis by analysis," is another one. Therefore, I have stopped analyzing and will not seek the perfect process. However, I am optimistic this will be good, and it is long overdue. I have explained the general format that I will start out with and that things are subject to change. "Launch and learn." Ain't I full of 'em, right? Careful.

One requirement to be inducted is that if you are an athlete, or a team, you must have graduated at least 50 years ago. Also, inductions are done by sport. I have researched and documented football and basketball. The other sports are waiting and will be researched and documented when my schedule allows.

Let us get started with "**Induction #1**" for WHS basketball. The time period reviewed was pre-1920. I discovered that Aitkin, Little Falls, and Staples had boys' and girls' basketball as early as 1905. As for WHS, the earliest evidence I have is that of a boys' team picture from 1911 and a girls team picture from 1912. My guess is that WHS basketball started a few years before, perhaps around 1905. The 1911 team consisted of Loyal Zimmerman, Harold Parker, Fen Burch, Bob Langenbacher, and one unknown player.

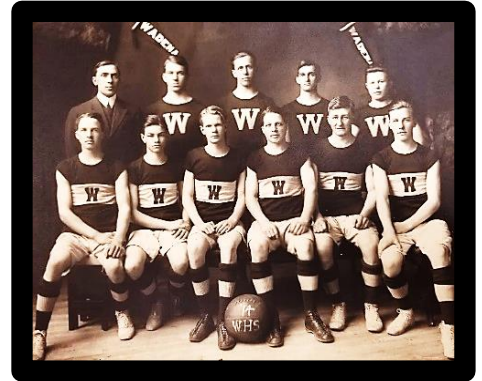


The 1914 team made it to the District 6 title game against Aitkin, losing 39-8. That roster included Elmer and Albin Lund, Carroll and Everett Kingsley, Hutchins, Kennedy, Stevens, Ioset, and Wayne Zimmerman. While Wayne Zimmerman was not singled out by the media in the 1914 season, he was singled out in a January 9, 1915, article in the Brainerd Daily Dispatch, stating that "Zimmerman starred for Wadena," in Wadena's 24-20 loss to the Warriors. One year later, in another loss to Brainerd (35-27), Wayne Zimmerman led Wadena with 10 points. Wadena went on to win in 1916, Wadena's first District 6 title. With the regular season over, District 6 member Bemidji challenged Wadena to a game on a neutral floor. That challenge was in response to Wadena's home court which was small and had a 12-foot ceiling, making longer shots impossible. The unofficial

rematch was held in St. Cloud on March 13, 1916. Bemidji won 63-59 in spite of Zimmerman's 20-point performance.

Based on the limited information that I have; it is apparent to me that Wayne Zimmerman was the star of the 1910's. A District 6 runner-up in 1914 and the championship in 1916 seals the deal.

These kids and their coaches are the pioneers of Wadena High School basketball. Wayne Zimmerman was at least a three-year starter and was often called out by the media for his outstanding play. For this reason, Mr. Wayne Zimmerman is our inaugural inductee into the WCHS Time Machine "WHS Legends of the Games!" Wait now. There is more, much more.



In May of 1943 Lt. Colonel Wayne Clifton Zimmerman was stationed on Attu Island, the Territory of Alaska. He was the Commanding Officer, 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 7<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in action against enemy forces from May 16<sup>th</sup> to June 2<sup>nd</sup>. Zimmerman assumed command of the Infantry Division when the former CO was killed in action. For Lt. Colonel Zimmerman's bravery, heroism, and leadership he was awarded, by The President of the United States, the Distinguished Service Cross. At retirement Zimmerman had ascended to the rank of Major General.

Along the way Zimmerman married Ruth Irene Zosel. They had one child, Bette Jean Zimmerman Cross. Ruth passed away in 1953. Later, Zimmerman married Ruby May Zosel, Ruth Zosel's sister. Ruby May passed away in 1971. Ruth and Ruby Zosel were aunts of our beloved Wadena historian, Bob Campbell Zosel (1924-2011). I think that makes the Major General an uncle<sup>2</sup> for Bob C. Zosel.

On December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1983, The Major General passed away in Clearwater, Pinellas Co., Florida. He is buried in the Arlington National Cemetery (Plot: Sec 6, Site 9547-4). He was survived by his wife, Selma Thomas Zimmerman (1912-1999).



Wayne Clifton Zimmerman is the perfect pick for our "Legends of the Games" inductee #1, WHS basketball.