



Statements of Support

DAN FLANNERY POOL

at Ames High School

Dan Flannery Pool

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Long time Ames High swimming and diving coach Dan Flannery passed away unexpectedly in July 2020. His absence was greatly felt across the Ames School District and especially within the vibrant Ames swim community. He left a legacy of success and inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of young athletes to set and achieve lofty goals both in the pool and the classroom.

Dan was a prominent figure in the swimming community, not only in Ames, but across the state. In 1998, he casually agreed to start coaching the boy's program at Ames High but never saw it as a long-term commitment.

Since that time, Flannery led Ames to an unprecedented run of success, especially on the girl's side where they won four-straight titles in 2010-13 and again from 2015-18. Ames also placed second in 2014 and 2019. His eight state titles on the girls' side are tied for the state record. Flannery also led the boy's team to a championship in 2018, further solidifying himself as one of the

top coaches in swimming state history. He effectively prepared Ames High athletes for collegiate swimming, helping many to compete in Division I, II, and III programs. However, if you ask any of his former students or athletes, Coach Flannery's legacy extends far beyond any awards or trophies.

In a letter of support, Ames High swimmer Maddie Bro noted that "he sent all of us out into the world with more confidence, kindness, and compassion than what we had when we first set foot on the pool deck."

He was the epitome of going above and beyond for his entire team. Any Ames High student who wanted to compete on the swimming team had a spot. "It didn't matter if you were a star swimmer, star student, or neither, he gave the same attention and care to everyone," said Bro. He cheered on "our personal victories of all kinds, even after we left the halls of Ames High."

In 2018, when the Ames community approved a bond referendum for



***"Swim with a Purpose. Dive with a Purpose.
Win with a Purpose."***

- Dan Flannery

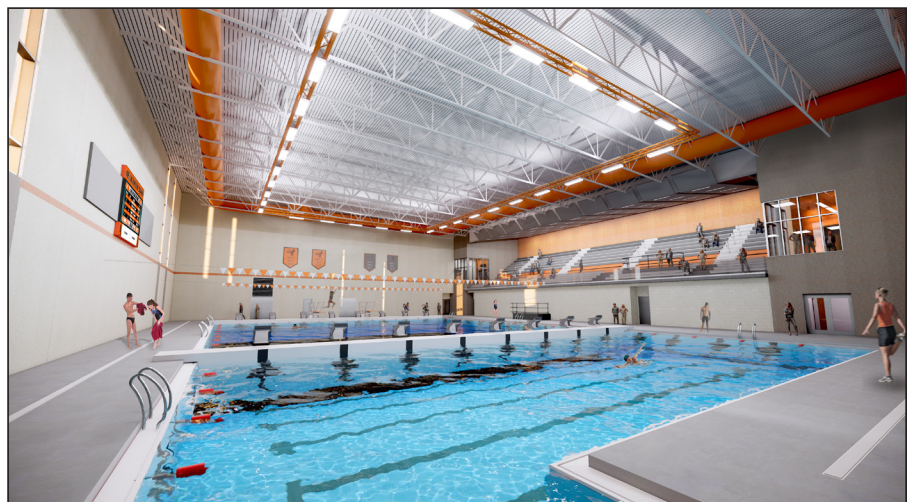


a new high school, Dan was there from the beginning. Through his own swimming career, and that as a coach, he had been in nearly every high school and collegiate pool in Iowa and much of the midwest. During the design phase, he provided input on nearly every aspect of the pool construction prior to his passing away.

Now that it is nearly complete, former Ames High swimmers and those in the community are asking the school board to consider memorializing his legacy by naming the pool in his honor.

In July 2020, a petition on change.org was started. As of May 2022, the petition had over 6,500 signatures of support. In addition to those signatures, this document highlights additional statements of support to name the pool at Ames High School the

Dan Flannery Pool



“While Dan was with us, he accomplished so so much. His record of achievement speaks for itself - multiple girls’ state swimming team championships, a boys’ state team title, numerous state runner-up finishes in both boys’ and girls’ swimming (same with top three finishes), multiple conferences and district team titles. Individually, his swimmers were state champions, state record holders and High School All Americans and many of the top swimmers in the history of Iowa High School Swimming. He also coached several of his girls’ teams to national team titles. In the history of Ames High School Athletics, no coach has accomplished more.

More importantly, Dan was a people person who cared deeply for his students and his student-athletes. The relationships he developed with the students who came in contact with him were simply incredible. I can attest to this personally. My three grandchildren who live in Ames swam for Dan. All three were devastated at his passing. He kept in contact with them after they graduated - especially my grandson who went on to swim one year at Valparaiso. When things weren’t going well for him, Dan was only a phone call away and always had time for him. This isn’t unique to my grandchildren. Best kid in the pool or not Dan had time for everyone.

On a much more personal note, Dan was my successor. In 1982, when I was coaching, Ames High won its first, and at that time, only boys’ state team championship. In 2018, Ames High, under Dan’s direction, won its second boys’ title. My grandson was part of that championship team. During the trophy presentation, Dan made sure I was not only part of the celebration but later presented me with a poster sized picture of myself with the team and my grandson on the podium holding the team trophy with his teammates. That picture is one of my most prized momentos. It was and is an incredible gesture that he was willing to let me share the celebration with both him and my grandson.”

- Mike Wittmer,

Former Ames High Swimming Coach



“Tradition never graduates.”

- Dan Flannery





“It is with great admiration and enthusiasm that I recommend naming the new Ames High School pool in honor of Dan Flannery. As someone who interacted with Dan in so many avenues of swimming over fifteen years including Ames Golf & Country Club, Ames Cyclone Aquatics Club, and Ames High Swimming & Diving, I can without hesitation say Dan Flannery was the “Face of Ames Swimming” for the 20 years prior to his death!

Dan was a statewide ambassador for swimming and Ames High at the same time. He brought a great energy to swimming in Ames that was contagious and no doubt drove the tremendous growth and success in the sport that we have seen over the last 20 years. His passion for the sport and the Ames community he represented were unmatched. Dan touched so many lives with his excitement, compassion, humor, and true love of those he coached and taught. He made everyone around him feel special like they were part of something bigger than themselves. In the individual athlete focused sport of swimming, he had the ability to get a group of individuals moving toward a common goal by believing that TEAM meant more than anything else.

Dan Flannery’s impact on the Ames swimming community through his teaching, mentoring, friendships, and unprecedented success in the pool is impossible to quantify.

For nearly ten years, Dan dreamed of and collaborated with so many people to help make this new pool a reality. The completion of this facility is truly the culmination of his dream. He would be so thrilled with the finished product; a state-of-the-art pool that will represent Ames swimming for future generations to come.”

*- Jason Horras,
President, Ames Cyclone Aquatics Club*



“Over the years, Dan was known for creating a lane for everyone. From the beginner JV swimmer to the top varsity swimmer that would go on to the semifinals at Olympic Trials. He found a way to get all the kids in the pool and provide the best experience possible for everyone. Dan was very aware that kids all mature at different times and this sense of allowing kids their time to develop into the people they were and have fun along the way is part of what was so inviting about him and the programs. His vision ran deeper than most high school coaches. He knew that youth development was part of the fun and excitement of high school swimming and Dan worked for years to bring lesson swimmers, precompetitive swimmers, club swimmers, and country club kids time and space to grow and develop. High school swimming is a lump sum of all of those different pieces and he wanted all of those parts to flourish. He unified people and their approaches into one cause that made the last 20 years so special because they saw the bigger picture of what Ames Swimming was.”

Dan’s convictions, morals, and most of all, his strong Faith, led him to be strong in knowing what he was doing and why he was doing it. It was not just for team titles. Dan had a bigger calling and so did Ames Swimming. It was for the smile of every swimmer and parent regardless of the success, a warm feeling of the memories we all spent together. He was such a rich and warm person that others wanted to be around. Dan led by example and shared his pursuits, dreams, and goals. Most of all, he allowed kids to take their time maturing along the journey. With his guidance and direction, so many of his athletes would not be where they are today without him. His legacy lives on in the individuals he worked with, and Dan would be the first to admit that the facility is not what makes the program. It’s the people within in it. His hope and dream for all of us would be to lead others to go down a special path of a sense of belonging to a bigger community of Ames Swimming as he did for so many of us along the way. Protect the dream, protect the mission, and protect the story that we all want said about our swim program. Remember ‘Green Means Go.’”

- Michael Peterson,

Head Coach, Ames Cyclones Acquatics Club



“Dan Flannery was the epitome of a great coach and more importantly a coach of character who was compassionate and a true mentor who cared deeply about all of his athletes. It did not matter if you were the star swimmer or the last athlete on his roster, he truly cared and supported all of his athletes in the pool and hallways of Ames High. Dan had a magnetism to him that resonated not only through Ames High but the entire Ames swim community. He was loved by all and made me a better Athletics Director. I continually used Dan’s coaching methods and the quality relationships he built with his athletes as examples when mentoring young AHS coaches. To this day, I am still amazed that Dan ran a gold medal program in an antiquated pool facility. I let him take the lead in designing this beautiful new facility and am saddened that he could not continue impacting young lives coaching in now the best pool facility in Iowa. Let’s all make this naming event happen in his honor.”

- Judge Johnston,

Former Ames High Athletic Director



Alumni from the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s share their experience competing under Coach Flannery:

“Coach Flannery was the epitome of a great coach – passionate, compassionate, and an amazing mentor that always saw best in his student athletes. I’ll never forget all he did to ensure I achieved my goals.”

- Kaye Strohbehn, 1998-2002

“Dan Flannery was one of the biggest reasons I stayed in the sport of swimming and helped bring back the love I had for it when I was discouraged. He could be your coach, mentor, friend, whatever you needed at the time. I treasure the 4 years I had under Dan, and the values and life lessons he taught me over 20 years ago are still used in my everyday life.”

- Andrew VanMeter, 1999-2003



"Whether you were a varsity swimmer or were only able to swim exhibition events, Dan had the unique ability to make every swimmer feel like they were an asset to the team."

- Anja (Dekkers) Doolittle, 2003-2006

"It was truly an honor to be able to swim for Dan. He wore his heart on his sleeve and was so passionate about the sport and every single one of his swimmers. He made a huge impact on my life and taught me so much about myself as an athlete and as a person."

- Stephanie (Koch) Thieben, 2005-2009

"Dan gave every ounce of his being to those around him – his swimmers, his students, his family, his community. Outside of my family, no one has had a greater impact on my life."

- Steve Stark, 2005-2009

"Dan's gift was so much more than as a swim coach – he taught life lessons. He taught me teamwork, how to accomplish a goal, and leadership. These are skills I use every day."

- Adam Shaul, 1998-2001

"Dan pushed me further as a swimmer, a teammate, and as a person than I ever thought possible for myself. He made every person he came across feel like they matter, and to this day his presence in my life reminds me to be the light in others' lives."

- Amber Duden, 2009-2011

"As a pool-rat looking for belonging, Dan treated me and everyone else as equals giving us all the opportunity to develop and compete. Dan's enthusiasm and focus was never negative or intimidating. It was always positive and trained on the task at hand to reach the goal in mind."

- Carmi Spicer, 2002-2005

“Dan was inclusive to every swimmer, at every level. Dan always made room at the table and welcomed anyone who wanted to show up and work. I miss Dan every day and his impact on my life is eternal.”

- Erin Gilligan, 2008-2012

“Coach Flannery was the most motivational coach I worked with in my 13-year competitive swimming career. He instilled in me and other athletes an unwavering confidence that we can achieve anything that we set our minds to.”

- Maddie Bro, 2008-2012

“Dan was, and still is, one of the most impactful people I have had in my life. From learning to swim as a young kid at the country club, to winning state championships with him at Ames High, he instilled many values in every person he spent time with. We learned how to be good teammates, great leaders, and stand-up citizens from Dan.”

- Sara Bentley, 2010-2014

“Showing us how to be good teammates and leaders was very important to him, and he modeled that 100%. Coach Dan went out of his way to help us reach our goals in the pool and in our lives.”

- Jessica [Walker] Cook, 2008-2012

“I remember slacking off one day my senior year, and Dan took me aside and said to me, ‘These girls look up to you. Set a good example.’ I was never the best swimmer on the team, but those words made me realize that I didn’t have to be the best at something to be a leader – and that being a leader also comes with the responsibility to be a good role model for others.”

- Cheryl [Tebben] Fritz, 2001-2005





Swimming and Diving Statistics and Accomplishments

Flannery's resume as a swimming and diving coach is unrivaled in the state of Iowa. Flannery was the head girls swimming and diving coach at Ames High from 2002 - 2020 and led the boys' program from 1998 - 2020.

Under his tenure as head girls coach, Ames' varsity dual meet record was 140-11-1. In his last ten years as the girls coach, the Little Cyclones won eight team state championships, which ranks second on Iowa's all-time list. Over his last 11 years, 121 of his swimmers have earned NISCA All-American honors, 19 swimmers have won an individual state title, and 18 state records were broken by an Ames swimmer. Ames became only the third school in Iowa history to win the girls swimming and boys swimming team titles in the same academic year (2018) when Flannery guided Ames High to their first boys championship since 1982.

In 2018, Flannery was named the recipient of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union's Golden Plaque of Distinction Award. In November 2021, he was inducted into the Iowa High School Swim Coaches Association Hall of Fame at the IGHSAU championships.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS: 2010 • 2011 • 2012 • 2013 • 2015 • 2016 • 2017 • 2018 [X2]

