Ron Schmidt

Holdingford Class of 1966

Ron Schmidt was born January 23, 1948, in Melrose, MN to Elmer and Armella Schmidt. Ron lived in Elrosa, MN, for four years and when his father, a depot agent for the Soo Line Railroad, was trans-ferred to Dresser, Wisconsin the family moved as well. The family grew to include brothers Richard, Robert, Randy, and sister Renee. Ron fondly remembers his first day of school in Holdingford when, as a “new kid on the block” halfway through his first grade, he got into a fight on the playground and whipped the second grade bully. So much for introducing one’s self to the faculty!

Ron credits his dad for introducing him to the physical side of sports. The boys in the family were continually involved in wrestling matches and backyard football games with the neighbor kids; full contact, no pads. Ron and next oldest brother, Richard would both take on their dad and then each other. “For some reason I loved the physical contact” said Ron and “that is why I enjoyed the defensive aspect of the game of football.”

As time went on Ron was encouraged by former Husker coaches such as Joe Burns, Joe Donnelly and Bill Huls to get involved in other sports as well, so track, basketball, and baseball became part of the athletic smorgasbord Ron enjoyed throughout high school.

By his freshman year, Ron was participating in all four of the major sports. “The gift that I was given was that I could run. My speed enabled me to compete from my freshman year on at the varsity level, plus the fact that I never had a serious injury. I guess you could call me the ‘Forest Gump of Holdingford’”.

As Ron’s High School years came to an end, he could look back with some degree of pride at his accomplishments; three time conference champion in high and low hurdles, two times all conference in football, all district team in basketball and played all nine positions in baseball, earning sixteen varsity letters. Ron gives credit to a close friend and Husker Hall of Famer, Chet Blascziek. “From seventh grade on, I watched Chet perform as an athlete and decided that he would be someone I could try to emulate in my athletic career. For his example I am forever grateful.”

Ron was recruited by several colleges and Joe Donnelly recommended to Ron that he strongly consider the University of North Dakota. Marv Helling, the head coach at UND, was a good friend of Joe Donnelly so that clinched it. Ron was a Fighting Sioux for the next four years. His freshman year the team ended up ranked third in the nation in Division Two and won the Camelia Bowl. Ron has one record still standing in the UND record book which he shares with several other players. On October 15, 1969 he intercepted 3 passes, running one back for a touchdown in a UND victory over Augustana and was named most valuable Defensive Player.

After graduating from UND Ron was drafted into the army and spent two years serving in Okinawa and Korea. Upon returning home he was hired by Northwestern Mutual Financial and spent the next

43 ½ years working out of his office in St. Cloud. He retired January 23, 2016.

Along the way he married the love of his life, Irene Thull, and they were blessed with four children, Lucas, Kary, Amanda (deceased), and Lindsey. They have five grandchildren. Ron’s community involvements include serving 20 years on the Holdingford School Board, Parish Council, Charter Member of Holdingford Lions, President Central Minnesota Life Underwriters, President Central MN Estate Planning Council, and Board member Central MN Boy Scout Council.

Ron feels the most important thing he has learned from participating in athletics is that no matter what, you never quit. When the contest is over and you know you’ve done your best, you can move on to the next challenge with a renewed sense of purpose and hope.