



Keith Smith

Year of Induction: **2019**
Year of Graduation: **1992**

"The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor." -Vince Lombardi

Anyone who has either had the misfortune of competing against him or the pleasure of being his teammate, colleague, or friend knows that Mr. Keith Smith, JCHS Class of 1992, is committed to excellence in every endeavor in his life. Whether on the track, the wrestling mat, or in his technology classroom, Mr. Smith rises to the top because of his determination, hard work, and dedication to giving his all to everything he does.

From the fall of 1988 through the spring of 1992, Keith earned seven varsity letters...five in wrestling and two in track. Although his track career only spanned two seasons, Keith worked hard at an extremely difficult event to become a champion. In his junior season, Keith was the Wildcats' pole vaulter, and he ended up winning the following championships in his event: Parkhurst Invitational, STAC, and Section IV Class B. In addition to winning the sectional championship for Class B, Keith was also the overall state qualifier at the sectional meet. His success in the pole vault was impressive, but Keith's wrestling achievements were even more outstanding.

The Johnson City wrestling program was consistently at the top of the New York state rankings from the late 1980s through the early 2000s, and the list of student athletes who excelled on the mat for the Wildcats is quite lengthy. Mr. Smith definitely earned his place on that list due in large part to his outstanding junior and senior seasons in 1991 and 1992. Overall, Keith earned 70 victories combined in these two seasons. In both years, he was crowned the champion at the STAC meet, the Class A meet, and the Section IV meet. A highlight of that stretch of success was Keith's victory in the 1991 Sectional meet. Coach Rick Gumble recalls Keith's match as one of the most exciting he has ever witnessed. Down with only 15 seconds remaining in the match, Keith quickly earned an escape to tie it up and then pulled off an 'inside trip' to secure a takedown nearly at the buzzer for the victory. Coach Gumble explained that the 'inside trip' is a highly technical move that very few scholastic wrestlers could pull off, but Keith's incomparable preparation for the match allowed him to execute this move at just the right time. As coach Gumble explained, "When Keith won that match, it was the loudest I have ever heard a crowd react at a sectional wrestling meet. Wildcat fans and even fans of our opponents just exploded when they saw what Keith did. It was a true highlight of my coaching career." Keith went on to place both 3rd and 6th, respectively, at the NYS

meets in 1991 and 1992. Coach Gumble also noted Keith's importance on the 1991 wrestling team, which he argues is one of the finest, if not the best, in school history. This team won the sectional meet by 100 points, had two state champions and two 3rd place finishers, and ended up ranking 9th in the country by a scholastic wrestling publication. Keith's success at JCHS provided him with an opportunity to wrestle at the college level, and he was again able to achieve at a high level due to his consistent determination to succeed.

Mr. Smith began his college wrestling career at Broome Community College in 1994, and was a national qualifier for the Hornets in the last year of their wrestling program. Keith continued his career after transferring to SUNY Oswego. He was a three-time NCAA Division III qualifier for the Lakers, and his 8th place finish in 1996 earned him All-American honors. Upon graduation from SUNY Oswego's Technology Education Department, Mr. Smith began his career as a teacher in Johnson City in the fall of 1998.

Continuing the pattern that he established throughout his scholastic and collegiate careers, Keith has approached his career as a teacher with the same passion and work ethic. He was recently named the Regional Teacher of the Year by the New York State Technology and Engineering Educator's Association, and he has been a treasurer and member of the executive board for the last eight years for this organization.

Vince Lombardi recognized that a high quality life couldn't be attained without a commitment to excellence, and based on this premise, Mr. Keith Smith has been an exemplary model of achievement. The Johnson City Athletic Hall of Fame is proud to welcome a student athlete who outworked his competition, who gave 110 percent to every endeavor, and who continues to be a proud Wildcat to this day in his tech classroom, Mr. Keith Smith, JCHS Class of 1992.