

All-American record-setter in basketball, state tennis champ newest members of BC3 sports hall

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(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College will induct into its Charles W. Dunaway Pioneer Hall of Fame a shooting guard who set BC3 single-game and single-season scoring records in men's basketball, and a two-sport athlete who won a state championship in singles tennis and starred on the Pioneers' women's basketball squad.

Hal Koenemund – “the best basketball player ever at Butler County Community College,” said BC3 men's and women's basketball coach Dick Hartung, and Tracy Pease – “solid in all of her strokes,” said Dunaway, the college's former longtime athletic director and coach – represent BC3's Class of 2020 in a hall of fame established in 2015.

The 2020 selections will be recognized with 2021 honorees during BC3's 2021 induction ceremony.

Koenemund, a starter on a 1992 Blackhawk High School boys team that finished 32-1 and as the state Class AAA champion, transferred from West Liberty University in West Virginia to BC3, where in the 1993-94 season he scored 55 points in a game and 918 for a Pioneers squad that finished as the state runner-up.

“I had the most fun ever that year playing basketball,” said Koenemund, who was named BC3's first National Junior College Athletic Association Division III All-American in men's basketball. He was the No. 1 scorer in the NJCAA's Division III, and a first-team all-star in the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference, the Pennsylvania Collegiate Athletic Association and in the NJCAA's Division III Region XX.

“I probably played the best basketball in my life that year too.”



Hal Koenemund, left, and Tracy Pease represent Butler County Community College's Class of 2020 in the Charles W. Dunaway Pioneer Hall of Fame. Koenemund, a Blackhawk High School graduate, was a record-setter for BC3's men's basketball team and Pease, a Butler High graduate, won a state title in singles tennis for the Pioneers and starred on BC3's women's basketball squad.

Koenemund began his BC3 career by scoring 41 points against Wayne College, 55 against Niagara Community College – breaking Darren Callihan’s five-year-old BC3 record of 54 points in a game – and sinking the game-winner on a last-second shot in a tournament championship against Cuyahoga Community College.

The “awkward” jump hook from the middle of the lane came against Cuyahoga and “trash-talking” Ben Wallace, Koenemund said of the center chosen 11 years later as an NBA all-star with the Detroit Pistons.

“I still remember that shot,” Koenemund, of Ross Township, said of the attempt that gave the Pioneers a 78-76 victory and earned Koenemund tournament MVP honors.

“I had to lean back a little bit because the defenders were up on me too tight” and with a half-extended right arm “put up a flip hook.”

His ability was rewarded with permission from Hartung to shoot from anywhere and at any time, Koenemund said.

“He gave me the green light,” Koenemund said.

Said Hartung: “I thought he over-passed. There were times in a game, I would say, ‘Quit giving the ball up.’ And he would say, ‘But they’re open.’ And I said, ‘I don’t care if they’re open. You shoot it.’”

Against Penn State-New Kensington, Koenemund helped to lead BC3 to its fifth WPCC – and an appearance in the PCAA championship against the Community College of Philadelphia. He had 28 points in BC3’s 95-74 loss, which ended the Pioneers’ season at 15-13.

He transferred from BC3 to Robert Morris University, where he played in 27 games for the Colonials. He is the owner of Hal’s Bar and Grille, Pittsburgh.

Pease a star on two courts

Two springs after she graduated from Butler High and as a star in girls basketball, track and field and in tennis, Pease found herself in State – 78 feet away from opponent Sue Reese and a Pennsylvania Collegiate Athletic Association state singles tennis title for BC3.

A year earlier, Pease had placed second in the Skyline Athletic Conference’s women’s singles tennis tournament and was named to the SAC’s all-conference squad as a result of her consistency and strong groundstrokes, Dunaway said.

“She had good fundamental skills,” Dunaway said. “She was consistent every time out.”

Reese had beaten Pease in the Western Pennsylvania Collegiate Conference finals, and both earned berths in the PCAA championships.

Pease topped No. 1 seed Mary Ann Fagan, of Montgomery Community College and Reese won her semifinal match to set up the showdown with Pease on that May weekend in 1985.

Pease said she felt both confident, having beaten Reese twice in the regular season, and nervous, having lost to Reese in their most recent match.

“You never know what is going to happen,” Pease said. “It could go either way, just depending on whether I had my stuff or she had her stuff.”

Pease won the first set 6-3.

And the second, 6-3.

“I guess I had my stuff,” Pease – and BC3 had its state singles tennis champion.

Pease also had her stuff in women’s basketball, where she averaged 10 points per game over two seasons as a shooting guard for the Pioneers.

In 1985 she was selected to the WPCC’s all-conference teams in tennis and in women’s basketball.

As a Pioneer, her studies of the game were exceeded only by her studies in the classroom. Pease was selected to the WPCC’s all-academic team in 1985 and earned 4.0-grade point averages in two semesters.

Pease graduated with magna cum laude honors from BC3 and with two associate degrees. She earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Robert Morris University, where she was a three-sport star.

Pease, of Butler, a global product manager in protective and marine coatings for PPG, said “BC3 was an awesome experience. It was a great environment and allowed me to flourish. BC3 was a springboard to other things. I owe a lot to BC3.”

BC3’s Pioneer Hall of Fame includes Michael Cuscino, golf, 2019; Tom McConnell, men’s basketball, 2019; Megan (Smith) Nimmo, volleyball, 2019; Bryant Lewandowski, men’s basketball, 2018; Beckie Jo Higgins-Arey, softball, 2018; Michael Franko, cross-country, baseball and men’s basketball, 2018; Andrew Matonak, baseball, 2017; Missy (Haney) Schnur, volleyball, 2017; Robert Wilson, cross-country, 2017; and Walter Fitzpatrick, contributor, 2017; Thomas Beckett, men’s basketball and baseball coach, 2016; and John Stuper, men’s basketball and baseball, 2016.