

By Jan Rahn

Tribune Staff

A special high school coach's career award was presented this summer to Grant resident Larry Pritchett.

Pritchett's coaching career spans 45 years, with many achievement awards to his credit—the most recent being the 2013 Ed Johnson Award presented at the Nebraska Coaches Association's 46th annual banquet in Lincoln in July.



The NCA presented 14 high school coaches with the honor of Nebraska High School Coach of the Year for the 2012-13 season.

Pritchett was among eight coaches receiving career awards.

Each coach was selected by their coaching peers in the sport for their success and contributions within the given sport.

Pritchett said his award is especially meaningful because he once had the privilege of meeting Coach Ed Johnson. In 1968, Pritchett sat beside him at a banquet honoring state championships. Pritchett's team had won state his first year as head coach of the Plainsmen and Johnson's Lincoln Northeast team had taken state the same year.

The honor banquet was held in conjunction with the annual multi-sports clinic where coaches of the year, milestone and service award winners and the 2012-13 state champion coaches were also recognized.

About the Award

The Nebraska Coaches Association established the award to honor an individual making lasting contributions to Nebraska high schools in boys basketball.

The inscription on the plaque Pritchett received reads:

Ed Johnson coached at Lincoln Northeast High School for 37 years and retired at the end of the 1985-86 school year. During his tenure, Northeast's record was 505-202 and qualified for the state tournament 18 times.

His teams won state championships in 1950 (his first season at Northeast), 1962, 1967, 1968, 1970, 1973 and 1982. He was honored as the Journal-Star prep coach of the year twice.

Ed was named regional coach of the year by the National Coaches Association three times and was named the National Boys Basketball Coach of the Year posthumously in 1987. A native of Missouri, Johnson began his coaching career at Lewis, Missouri in 1946. He also coached at the University of Missouri and Corning, Iowa before coming to Lincoln Northeast.

Ed was revered by his fellow coaches and former players not only because of his success on the court, but because he was an outstanding human being.