

600 WINS: Coach Blade's mom and dad beam with pride about successful daughter

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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BELLEVILLE - For **Don and Karen Blade**, Thursday night is one they will never forget. The proud parents sat courtside as their daughter, **Lori**, coached her Edwardsville basketball girls to her 600th career win.

Lori Blade has a remarkable 600-82 career coaching record with 22 years at Edwardsville and Carrollton High School girls' basketball programs.

Blade becomes the first in **IHSA** history to win 600 games as a head coach in both girls' basketball and softball. She also won her 600th game in softball last spring.

Lori's mother beamed with pride when she spoke of her legendary daughter.

"Words can't even express how proud I am of her," her mother said. "I followed her all the way through T-ball to now and coached her. Her girls just all excel after she has them and go on to play in college if they can."

"We live 100-some odd miles away in Greenup, Illinois, and are glad to be here. She had a great softball and basketball coach in Denny Throneburg in Casey. She always wanted to be like him as a coach."

Coach Throneburg was always a coach she looked up to and tried to model herself after, Lori said.

“He is one of the most successful softball coaches ever in the nation,” she said.

Her father, **Don Blade**, was as proud as a father could be on Thursday night, watching his daughter take her 600th career win.

“We never dreamed anything like this would ever happen,” he said. “She has great kids and they believe in what she is trying to do. She is always ahead of the game and thinking ahead in the game. We are really proud of her. I think she really works with the kids and prepares them for life.”

After the press conference and all the fans had vacated the facility, Lori’s family remained and wanted to take a group photo, something that will be treasured for the future. It was evident watching Lori’s interaction with her mother and father how much it meant to them they came to watch the 600th time she walked off the court with a girls’ high school basketball victory. Lori said her mom and dad and family in general have been supportive of her through her entire rise to coaching success.



Lori, never one to take all the credit for her winning ways, thanked her assistant coaches, the kids and parents through all her years that made Thursday night's celebration possible.

"I have been blessed with excellent assistant coaches," she said. "I couldn't have asked for more throughout. Without all of it, my job wouldn't have been as long on the longevity side of it."

Coach Donna Farley has been on the hardwood with Blade through every step of the way except her first year as coach in Carrollton.

"Coach Farley could have been a head coach, but she didn't want to do that," Lori said. "She is an outstanding coach. We see the game from two different perspectives and that has worked out for the kids and the program."

During the game, Lori likely flashed back to the very beginning when she first wanted to be a coach. She said she also reflected during the day of her very first win, although she smiled and didn't want to elaborate on it.

"I wanted to be a coach from the time I was a little girl," she said. "It is something I always wanted to do. I was born and raised to be competitive; it doesn't matter what it is. When I was done playing, I knew this was what I wanted to do."



