

2015 AAU Wrestling Hall of Fame Inductees

Rodney & Darlene Grainger

Rodney Grainger first wrestled in his hometown of Virginia Beach Virginia at Virginia Beach Middle school in 1978 and then at First Colonial High School as a freshman and from that year on at Cox High School, where he met his future wife Darlene. Rodney was also an accomplished football player and briefly played at the University of Maryland before an injury ended his college career. However, Rodney and Darlene had married shortly after high school and a family was on the way.

During the early years of their marriage the young couple worked for Rodney's father at Grainger's Automotive Repair as their family grew. Sons William, Rodney II (also known as "2") followed by daughter Amanda, and lastly Joey.

As the children grew they took up sports, all excelled at baseball, but it was wrestling that drew the family into a whole new world of weekly competitions and travel. The Great Neck Wrestling Club was vibrant club with multiple past state champions working out with the young Grainger clan weekly. This is when Rodney and Darlene picked up where the club needed them the most, organizing and running tournaments. Rodney "2" became a varsity wrestler at Cox while Rodney and Darlene assisted then State Chairman Mike Newbern in running tournaments at all levels across the state of Virginia.

Rodney ran the Great Bridge wrestling club for 4 years and that provided 6 state champions for the high school program. Rodney has been an official since 2003 of all three styles of wrestling .And has officiated all over the country for AAU and other groups.

After "2" graduated from high school, Joey was entering middle school. The Grainger's had moved to Norfolk, however the middle school that served their neighborhood did not have a wrestling coach. Rod stepped in and the couple's work with amateur wrestling would continue to grow. Soon they would find themselves not only working Virginia's expanding program, along with the AAU

Middle School Nationals, the AAU Grand Nationals, the Ohio Tournament of Champions and beyond. Rodney was the 2nd Lt. Governor for Virginia for over 12 years and has been the wrestling sports chairman from 2003 and still is. He is an Executive board member since 2003. Rodney and Darlene has been involved with wrestling for over 25 years and 20 years with AAU.

As Joey prepared to enter Great Bridge High School where he would become an outstanding three time medalist, Rodney took the reigns as 2004 Virginia AAU Wrestling Chairman. The Grainger's tireless efforts resulted in the growth of AAU Wrestling membership in Virginia to reach 4000 members! They have since continued their work to include tournament management of the AAU's Disney Duals in Orlando, numerous AAU Junior Olympic Games across the United States, as well as notable tournaments like the Beast of the East and The War at the Shore and the Virginia Duals for the last 12 years.

Rodney has also served on the AAU Wrestling Executive Committee the past ten years. Although the children are all grown, they continue to assist Rodney and Darlene throughout the year to make Virginia AAU Wrestling a vital and important opportunity for the youth of Virginia to compete at home and across America.