



Brian Roberts, Vernon Patrick, David Yancey, Kelly Willis, Patrick Fleming, Mark Mansfield, Sammy Gibson, Tim Williams, Kevin Jones, Gary McKeel, Rodney Chambers, Win Neagle

## Congratulations, Coach Billy Widgeon

"Your accomplishment was a very deserved one, and it has been earned through your many years of directing a 'class' program in a highly professional manner. Your success has not only brought honor to your team and to your school but to the Coastal 3A Conference as well. All of us are proud to be associated with you through that means."

That was an excerpt from a letter to the man who has given Carteret County basketball a good name for more than 30 years. It was one of many letters, mailgrams, postcards, certificates, phone calls and other memorabilia received by West Carteret High School head basketball coach Billy Widgeon and his wife after the Patriots won the State 3A Basketball Championship in 1985.

That first letter was from O.K. Gainey, Havelock High School principal, and it showed the magnitude of what Coach Widgeon had done with one of his many basketball teams.

Havelock and West Carteret are bitter rivals throughout each school year in whatever they do, so when Mr. Gainey went out of his way to recognize Coach Widgeon for his accomplishments, it was something very special.

Many took time out of busy schedules to congratulate the coach, the teacher and the man for his fine efforts over the past quarter century. The underlying theme of each was that a more deserving individual could not have won the state title.

Of course, Coach Widgeon would be the first to say that his players won the title, not him. But, the players would say otherwise.

A letter that summed up the feelings of many West Carteret and Coach Widgeon fans came from Beaufort lawyer Jeff Newton: "Please accept my sincerest congratulations for your team's recent victory in the state 3A basketball championship game.

"Having watched your teams for many years, I feel certain that in the past you have suited up squads with more individual talent. Therefore, this team's success must be in no small amount attributable to your

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