

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 30, 2026

Contact: Pat McKee, 317-403-1665  
IBCA Director of Special Projects

## **Strine, Miles to be recognized by Indiana Basketball Coaches Association**

Former Tri-West boys' coach, Washington girls' coach to receive 2026 IBCA/PGC Transformational Coach awards

Two Indiana high school coaches will receive special awards from the Indiana Basketball Coaches Association in 2026, it was announced Monday (March 30).

Former Tri-West boys' coach Tommy Strine and Washington girls' coach Gretchen Miles each will be recognized with a Point Guard College/Indiana Transformational Coach Award as presented by the IBCA.

This is the 10th year for the IBCA/PGC Transformational Coach Awards, which are presented to coaches who have impacted the lives of their players and fellow coaches at their school and within their community. The recipients are coaches who are respected by their players and fellow coaches for their dedication, positive approach and integrity on and off the court. Point Guard College is a corporate partner of the IBCA.

These awards will be presented during the 2026 IBCA Clinic on April 23-24 at Mt. Vernon High School in Fortville.

Previous PGC/Indiana Transformational Coach Awards have gone to Gary Cook of North Decatur in 2017; Chris Buggs of Gary West and Adam Dennis of Switzerland County in 2018; Travis Hannah of John Glenn in 2019; RaNae Isaak of Columbus North and Jim Merlie of Speedway in 2020; Steve Bradley of Lawrenceburg and Debbie Smiley of Brownsburg in 2021; Kevin Bradshaw of Eminence and Karl Turk of Cloverdale in 2022; Kelsey Block of Madison and Chris Willis of Wapahani in 2023; Nate Blank of Terre Haute North and SJ Houston of Lafayette Jefferson in 2024; and Zac Nero of Evansville North and Rick Gard of Lake Central in 2025.

Information on Strine and Miles, the 2026 honorees, follows.

### **Tommy Strine, former Tri-West boys' head coach**

Tommy Strine recently completed his second season at the varsity boys' basketball head coach at Tri-West, guiding the Bruins to a 14-10 record and second-place finish in the Hoosier Legends Conference. The fact that Strine was able to coach at all during 2025-26, however, in many ways was a miracle.

Over about a four-year period, Strine dealt with various symptoms for what ultimately was diagnosed as Cushing's disease, a condition caused by a pituitary tumor that produced excess ACTH, leading to high cortisol levels in the body. Cortisol is a hormone essential for regulating blood pressure, blood sugar, inflammation and stress response.

Strine ultimately had brain surgery in April 2025 at Community Hospital North in Indianapolis to remove the tumor, and all generally seems well now.

Through it all, he displayed a high level of determination.

"Tommy's leadership extends well beyond the sidelines," Tri-West assistant coach Jaydon Nguyen said in nominating Strine. "When he faced brain surgery in 2025, the Tri-West community witnessed first-hand the resilience and courage that define him. His positivity, his fight and his refusal to let adversity dim his purpose became a source of inspiration for families, students, and staff across the district. His journey unified the community, reminding everyone what strength looks like when lived out with humility and hope.

"When he returned to coaching, the Tri-West team rallied around him, motivated by the example he set and the gratitude they felt for his presence. His story strengthened the bonds within the community and elevated the spirit of the entire program."

Strine stepped down as the Tri-West coach at the end of the 2025-26 season after guiding the program to a 32-17 record in two seasons. He previously was a boys' basketball assistant at Marion in 2012-13 and worked in seven college basketball programs – Concordia University (Mich.) in 2013-14, the University of Richmond in 2014-15, American University from 2015-18, Cleveland State in 2018-19, Lamar University in

2019-20, Chicago State in 2020-21 and IUPUI from 2021-24. He has impacted student-athletes at all those places.

“Tommy consistently has transformed the lives of the young people he coaches,” Ngyyen said. “His influence began at Marion High School, where he became far more than a coach — he became a mentor who saw potential in students long before they saw it in themselves. Tommy created an environment where accountability, confidence and personal growth were the norm. Players who once struggled academically, socially or emotionally found direction through his steady guidance. His ability to connect with students, challenge them and help them believe in their own capabilities has shaped countless athletes into stronger competitors and even stronger individuals.”

A 2009 graduate of Lakewood Park Christian School in Auburn, Ind., Strine totaled 1,601 points over four seasons for teams that went 56-34. He went on to play one season at Anderson University, helping the Ravens qualify for the 2010 NCAA Division III national tournament, before retiring as a player because of injuries.

He started his coaching career from 2010-12 with Spiece travel teams in Fort Wayne before coaching one season at Marion, working 12 seasons in college basketball and coaching the past two seasons at Tri-West. He also worked for part of 2013-14 with the Fort Wayne Mad Ants.

He earned a bachelor’s degree in general studies in 2014 at Indiana-Purdue-Fort Wayne. He currently works for Knowledge Services in Fishers and hopes to continue in coaching at another school.

Nguyen said that Strine embodies the qualities that the Transformation Coach Award seeks to honor.

“Tommy’s dedication is evident in the countless hours he invests in his players’ development — not just as athletes, but as young adults learning to navigate life,” Nguyen said. “His positive approach is unwavering, even in the face of personal hardship. He models resilience, optimism and grace, teaching his players that adversity is not a barrier but an opportunity to grow. Above all, Tommy leads with integrity. He is consistent in his values, honest in his communication and deeply committed to doing what is right for his students and his community. His character sets a standard that others strive to follow.”

Strine and his wife, Sarah, are parents to a daughter – Abigail, 6.

## **Gretchen Miles, Washington girls' head coach**

You might say that Gretchen Miles has given her heart and soul to the Washington High School girls’ basketball program and to the Washington community as a whole.

A former Lady Hatchets’ player, Miles recently completed her 18th season as the program’s varsity coach and 24th season as a coach in the program. Testimonials come from a variety of sources with a singular theme of how much she helps the players achieve both short-term and long-term goals. Thus, Miles has been named a winner the 2026 IBCA/PGC Transformational Coach Award.

“Coach Miles has had a life-changing impact on the lives of her players far beyond anything that can be measured on a scoreboard,” Barr-Reeve coach Lacey Higgins said in nominating Miles, who has posted a 299-117 record with five sectional titles, one regional crown and five 20-win seasons during her tenure as head coach.

“She develops young women, not just basketball players. Every athlete who comes through her program leaves with a deeper sense of discipline, confidence, respect and purpose. Coach Miles teaches life lessons daily — how to work hard, serve others, lead with integrity and carry oneself the right way in every setting.

Her players know she genuinely cares about them as people first. In moments of crisis, she is the first person they turn to. When one of her players experienced a devastating family tragedy, the first call was not to a teammate or friend, it was to Coach Miles. That speaks volumes about the trust and security she builds.”

Speaking of adversity, it was Miles herself who faced a huge challenge in September 2023 when she was diagnosed with Stage 1 breast cancer. After losing her mother, Phyllis, to breast cancer in 2022, Miles knew she would fight the disease as best she could – with the help of her 2023-24 team that wore “We Fight Together” shirts as she went through radiation treatments.

“Things get thrown at you every day,” Miles said when she was going through treatment. “You just have to put one foot in front of the other, and, just like everything else, there’s a plan.”

Miles’ team went 22-5 and won sectional that season. They followed by going 23-3 with another sectional title in 2024-25 and 22-5 with sectional and regional trophies this past season.

“Even while facing her own personal health challenges, Coach Miles never allowed it to overshadow her athletes or the mission of the program,” Higgins said. “Her focus remained on her girls, their growth and the culture she has built. That level of selflessness and strength is rare.”

Washington athletic director Larry Cochren noted that Miles’ impact goes beyond basketball and into the community. Each year, she leads her team with meaningful community service efforts, including a Christmas service project that places the players in leadership roles and another called “3-Pointers for Scholarships” where players call and collect donations that support scholarship foundations.

Perhaps Miles’ most significant community contribution was prompted through a discussion at a local Rotary Club meeting. From that meeting, Miles – a member of the Daviess County Community Foundation board – helped start the Disability Services Incorporated “Disability Awareness basketball games” in Washington in 2023. Through these games, funds were raised to build an outdoor basketball court, a seating area and a fence around it all for disabled players of all ages in the community. For their efforts, Miles and her Lady Hatchets were recognized at the state level of DSI with the 2025 Volunteer of the Year Award and the 2025 Young Advocates of the Year Award.

“Coach Miles said we should do a fund-raiser, and she wasn’t wrong,” DSI Director of Development Sherry Treadway said. “We really owe her a lot of thanks for that. She was great for getting her team involved and getting the sponsors to join in.”

A 1997 Washington High graduate, Miles set school records for career 3-pointers (223), career free throw accuracy (.793) and season 3-pointers (86) while playing for teams that went 89-9 and won four sectionals, four regionals and one semi-state as a player. She averaged 21.7 points and 5.4 assists as a junior as well as 20.7 points and 7.2 assists as a senior. She was a 1996 Junior All-Star, 1997 AP third-team All-State, 1997 Evansville Courier & Press Area Player of the Year and two-time ICGSA second-team All-State. She also was selected to the 2022 Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame women’s Silver Anniversary Team.

Miles matriculated to the University of Southern Indiana, playing two seasons of basketball as well as tennis and earning a degree in elementary education in 2001. She later earned a master’s degree in education from Olivet Nazarene University in 2007.

She started her coaching career as a Washington junior high coach for two seasons, then was a high school assistant coach for four seasons before being named the Washington head coach in 2008. As a coach, she has been named an HBCA District 1 Coach of the Year four times, an IBCA District 3 Coach of the Year in 2014 and served as an assistant coach for the 2014 Indiana All-Stars.

“Coach Miles runs a tight, disciplined program built on accountability, but it is that structure and consistency that changes lives,” Higgins said. “Her athletes become stronger, more resilient and prepared for adulthood because of the standards she sets and the love behind them.”

Higgins summarized Miles’ overall contributions to her community.

“Coach Miles has built a program that represents excellence, service and pride in Indiana girls’ basketball,” she said. “She has created a culture where giving back is not optional, it is foundational. Her athletes learn what it means to contribute, to care and to make an impact beyond themselves. She has made her school and town better through her leadership, vision and commitment to something bigger than basketball. She not only is an outstanding coach, she is a transformational leader who shapes lifelong women through basketball, service, discipline and heart.”