

# Evart Middle School Gymnasium Renamed in Honor of Beloved Educator and Coach John 'Coach' Bennett

*The Gym Where Coach Bennett Inspired and Transformed Generations Will Now Carry His Name*

EVART, MI, UNITED STATES, July 9, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Evart Middle School

gymnasium will now officially be named the Coach John Bennett Gym, celebrating the life and legacy of John “Coach” Bennett (1939-2024)—a cherished teacher, mentor, and coach who faithfully served the Evart community for over three decades. The official renaming will take place during a private ceremony on July 12, with an open house from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. at the gym for all who wish to honor his memory.

“

My father didn’t just coach basketball—he coached life. He taught young people to lead with humility, to show up for each other, and to take responsibility—not just on the court, but in how they live.”

*Nicole Bennett*

## A Life Rich in Service, Kindness, and Community

Born on December 15, 1939, in Jonesville, Michigan, John Bennett was the son of Arthur and Alma Bennett and one of six siblings. A 1957 graduate of Mendon High School, he

went on to earn a degree in Education from Western Michigan University in 1963. That same year, he began his long and meaningful career in Evart, teaching and coaching baseball, basketball, and football. Coach Bennett’s impact extended far beyond athletics. He was admired for his kindness, humility, and steady presence. Whether mowing lawns for neighbors, offering a warm smile downtown, or distributing candy at Calvary Baptist Church (earning him the nickname “The Candy Man”), his generosity touched every corner of the community. Even after retiring from the classroom, Coach Bennett continued serving others by working at Corey's Funeral Home, helping families through life’s most difficult moments with quiet compassion and grace.

## A Coach, A Mentor, A Model of Character and Virtue

Coach Bennett, who taught and coached during the era when Evart Middle School was known as Evart High School, is remembered not just for his victories, but for the way he inspired those around him to lead lives grounded in integrity and purpose. He instilled in young people a deep

appreciation for humility, teamwork, and responsibility—values that extended far beyond the court. Among the many virtues he embodied were empathy, compassion, generosity, and kindness

School Board Secretary Mark Moody, who advocated for the renaming, said:

“Coach Bennett gave his whole heart to this school and this town. Now that heart will live on in the very place where he inspired so many. This naming ensures that future generations will know the man who stood for fairness, faith, and community.”

#### A Daughter's Tribute

At a [recent school board meeting](#), Coach Bennett's daughter, Nicole Bennett, offered a moving reflection, reminding the board about his 2023 commencement speech in which the entire stadium stood up when asked how many people had been inspired or taught by her father.

In a later interview, she added, “My father didn't just coach basketball—he coached life. He taught young people to lead with humility, to show up for each other, and to take responsibility—not just on the court, but in how they lived. A relevant quote by Coach John Wooden says, ‘A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life.’ My dad never said that—but he lived it. And that's why this honor means so much to our family.”

#### Dedication & Open House

Private Dedication Ceremony: July 12 (for family and invited guests)

Open House: July 12, 4:00–6:00 p.m. at the newly renamed Coach John Bennett Gym

Community members are invited to view the new signage, reconnect with friends, and celebrate the legacy of a man who helped shape Evart, one student at a time.

Hope Elizabeth May

The Cora di Brazzà Foundation

[email us here](#)



Coach John Bennett (1939-2024)

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