

## **Art Sadtler League History**

The Art Sadtler League was formed in 1998 as an instructional basketball league focused on teaching our young athletes not only the basic fundamentals of the game, but also important lessons in teamwork, competition and sportsmanship. The primary objective of the league's founders was to create an environment where students could realize the value of participation without over emphasizing the importance of winning. These guiding principles have served as the foundation of the league and are evident in its structure and format.

During the first year of operation, the league was comprised of 18 teams representing the following six charter member schools: Christian Life, Gregory Elementary, Luther Academy at Gloria Dei, Rockford Christian, Spring Creek Elementary and Whitehead Elementary. At that time, the league was limited to 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students with just one division for the boys and likewise for the girls.

In response to the reorganization of Rockford School District 205 to move the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students from the elementary schools to the middle schools, the league was reorganized in 1999 to just 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions. Participation has steadily increased over the years, which allowed the formation of individual 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade divisions for both boys and girls. During the 2003 season, more than 335 students competed on 35 teams representing nine schools. In 2004 the board voted to reinstate the 6<sup>th</sup> grade boys and girls division. Its re-inaugural season was a success and is expected to continue to grow.

During the early years of its existence, the league was organized and operated by volunteers and the same is true today. As participation grew, a Board of Directors was established to address the administrative functions of the league. However, the day-to-day activities are still largely accomplished through the efforts of parent volunteers and coaches. The success of the league is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of all who have been a part of the league. With the continued support of parents and volunteers, the league should continue to provide a wonderful foundation for our young athletes for many years to come!

## **Just Who Was Art Sadtler?**

We have been asked this questions several times so we thought it would be appropriate to answer this question.

Two things fascinated Art – children and sports. His life was spent deeply involved in both. He may be most remembered as the basketball coach from Rockford East High School. As the “Coach” for nine seasons his teams compiled an impressive 159-68 record. But Art was more! In addition to his coaching duties, Art headed the Athletic Department, taught Biology and Physical Education and became the Athletic Director in 1963. Art retired in 1975 after 34 years in the Rockford Public Schools. In 1993, he authored the children's book, “Animal Potluck”. Art spent recent years in Rockford classrooms sharing his book and talking to children.

Art was a coach, educator and inspiration to the lives he touched.