

# Q&A with DEBBIE DECKER

By Mary Hogan | Photography by Jason Lehecka

*As Katy ISD's new executive director of athletics, Debbie Decker leads a team of talented professionals who oversee the athletic programs at all Katy ISD high schools and junior high schools. She first joined Katy ISD in 2005 as an assistant athletic director and was recently promoted to her current position earlier this year. With a strong background in both education and sports, she looks forward to continuing the tradition of excellence within Katy ISD athletics.*

## Meet Katy ISD's new executive director of athletics

### **What do you enjoy most about working in Katy ISD?**

I have enjoyed working with our coaches and watching them do what they do best, which is working with our athletes.

### **What do you like about living in Katy?**

I love the small-town feel of the community. I grew up in Allen, TX, when it had only one blinking stop light in the middle of town. I also appreciate the fact that the community and our administration team support and believe in all of our athletic programs and the positive impact that they have on all of our students.

### **What is the most rewarding part about your career?**

Knowing that our coaches and athletic programs in Katy ISD have a positive impact on our students and athletes.

### **What challenges have you faced and how have you overcome them?**

The most immediate challenge was the hiring of new staff in the athletic office. This challenge will dissolve as soon as we are back to being a full staff in June.

### **How did you get started in educational athletics?**

My first job was in a small district, named Quinlan-Ford, where I spent one year coaching middle school basketball and track. Then I was hired by McKinney ISD as an assistant volleyball and basketball coach for McKinney High School, eventually starting the softball program. I was a teacher and coach for eight years in McKinney and then I was promoted to the assistant athletic director and held that position for five years before moving to Katy ISD.

### **Growing up, did you play sports?**

Yes, I played volleyball, basketball, softball, and on occasion was a sub-varsity distance runner. My coaches would have to run me out of the gym at the end of the day!

### **What sparked your interest in this field?**

Truthfully, I knew in eighth grade that I wanted to be a teacher and a coach. Once in high school, I knew that being involved in athletic administration would be my career path. My teachers, coaches, and high school athletic director inspired me. They were all great role models and motivators. They showed me how to set goals and how to work hard to achieve them.

### **What is your typical day like?**

It really varies depending on the time of the year. I attend and host quite a few meetings, whether it is within our department, at the campus level, or with other departments such as maintenance. In the evenings, I attend the many different campus athletic events occurring throughout the school year. Currently, we are wrapping up this school year and we have started revising manuals and schedules for the 2012-2013 school year.

### **What are your short-term goals for Katy ISD athletics?**

For our athletic programs to be successful on and off the field, court, mat, pool, and track. However, the primary goal of the athletic department is to provide all support that is necessary to maximize our coaches' time with their athletes. Most importantly, we want to make sure that all levels of communication are being utilized on a regular basis.

### **What are your long-term goals for Katy ISD athletics?**

To provide athletic programs that promote and support academic, athletic, and personal achievement.

### **What motivates you professionally?**

As a former athlete and coach, I always strive to be at the top of my game, no matter what role – whether it's participating in sports or working as the executive director of athletics.

### **Tell us about your family.**

Most of my family lives in the north Texas area. My 92-year-old grandmother Dorothy Decker is the anchor in my family. She and my mother Bess Bond have always been my number one supporters. I have one sister, Connie Goldsberry, a brother, DJ and sister-in-law Karla Decker. Between both siblings, I have four awesome nephews who are all involved in sports. I am fortunate to have my cousin and her family living in the Katy area.

### **Do you have any hobbies?**

I fly fish in the summer, snow ski in the winter, and exercise on a daily basis.

### **What is something that would surprise people to know about you?**

Probably that I don't like to eat vegetables. I am a meat and potatoes kind of person.

### **Who has been influential in your life?**

My entire family and then professionally, I would have to say Rusty Dowling, my mentor in athletic administration.

### **How have family and friends supported you along the way?**

My family and friends are so good about working around my busy schedule in order to spend time or to vacation together. I try to keep in touch by phone or email, especially with my friends in the north Texas area.

### **What adjectives best describe you?**

Blessed, goal- and detail-oriented, patient, and fair. **KM**

*MARY HOGAN loves being the associate editor of Katy Magazine and sharing the amazing stories of Katy's many inspirational people.*



Decker with Katy ISD Assistant Athletic Directors Todd McVey, Pat Dowling, and Charlie Stevens



## Get to Know **DEBBIE DECKER**

- A member of the Texas High School Athletic Director's Association, the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, the Texas High School Coaches Association, and the Texas Girls Coaches Association.
- Has a Bachelor of Science from East Texas State University, a Master of Education from Tarleton State University, and a principal certificate.
- Became a Certified Athletic Administrator through the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association.
- She loves life in Katy and working with Katy ISD! "I am so appreciative of the athletic department team consisting of our coaches, athletic trainers, assistant campus athletic coordinators, campus athletic coordinators, assistant athletic directors, and office staff."

Inspired by her teachers and coaches, Decker knew she wanted to pursue a career in school athletics from an early age



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