

# Bilderback Named to IMLCA's Inaugural Hall of Fame Class

**Willis Bilderback guided the Mids to eight consecutive USILA national championship titles, including outright crowns in 1960, '62 '63,' 64, '65, and '66.**

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**ANNAPOLIS, Md.** — Former Navy men's lacrosse coach Willis Bilderback, the winningest Div. I coach (pct.) in NCAA history, has been selected for induction into the Intercollegiate Men's Lacrosse Coaches Association (IMLCA) inaugural Hall of Fame it was announced on Tuesday by the organization. Bilderback is among 11 men who will be honored in the inaugural IMLCA Hall of Fame Induction Celebration on Saturday, May 28 in Philadelphia as part of the weekend-long festivities surrounding the 2016 NCAA Men's Lacrosse Championships. Ticket and location information will be released later this month.

The inductees were selected by the IMLCA Hall of Fame Committee comprised of Tom Gill, U.S. Merchant Marine Academy (chair), Fred Acee (Air Force), Guy Van Arsdale (Jacksonville), Mike Murphy (Colgate), Dan Sheehan (LeMoyne) and Tom Leanos (Drew).

"The IMLCA Hall of Fame will be the most important program the IMLCA has initiated as we honor those men who paved the way for all the current coaches to enjoy the game as we do," said **Richie Meade**, chair of the IMLCA Hall of Fame Ceremony Committee and head coach at Furman. "This will be an event that the lacrosse community and many former players of these outstanding men will come together to honor them as coaches, mentors and educators."

A member of the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame and the winningest Div. I coach (pct) in NCAA history, Willis Bilderback, more affectionately known by his pupils as Bilty, took over reins at the Naval Academy in 1959 and guided the program to what has long been known as the Decade of Dominance. The Midshipmen won eight consecutive USILA national championship titles, including outright crowns in 1960, '62 '63,'64, '65, and '66. The streak of five outright titles between 1962-66 is an accomplishment matched by no other team in the history of the sport. Meanwhile, in 1961 the Mids shared the championship with arch rival Army and in 1967, Navy stood alongside Johns Hopkins and Maryland as the tri-champions. During that eight-year span, Navy produced a 79-8 (.908) record and a decade mark of 96-14-1 (.869). The Mids won 25 consecutive games beginning with a season-opening victory over Rutgers on March 28, 1964, and ending four games into the 1966 campaign season. Bilderback also was at the helm when the NCAA adopted lacrosse as one of its sponsored sports, leading the Midshipmen to back-to-back tournament appearances (1971 and '72) in the first two years the tournament was held.

He coached 92 All-Americans between 1959-1972, including four Kelly Award winners, five Schmeisser Award recipients and four Turnbull Award honorees. Among the Turnbull Award winners was future National Hall of Fame member Jimmy Lewis, who was the first player to win the Turnbull Award three times and one of three all-time to win it three or more times. While the award for the nation's top midfielder did not exist during Bilderback's tenure, it was one of his pupils for which the the future award would be named, the late Lt. j.g. Donald MacLaughlin Jr., who starred on three of Bilty's national championship teams.



This statue depicting Willis Bilderback being carried off the field by 1965 team captain Brian Lantier is part of the Bilderback-Moore Navy Lacrosse Hall of Fame at Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium.

Bilderback was the recipient of the Morris Touchstone Memorial Award, the National Coach of the Year, in just his second year as Navy's head coach and was inducted into the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1973. He amassed a 131-26-2 (.830) record over his 14-year head coaching career at the Academy.