



# Rease Binger

JUN 21, 1937 - NOV 16, 2025



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## **Rease Binger**

JUN 21, 1937 - NOV 16, 2025

**R**ease Binger departed this life on Sunday, November 16, 2025 at his home at Primrose Retirement Community in Decatur, Illinois. He was born on June 21, 1937 in Rockford, IL, the son of Rease and Martha Binger. He was 88 years old.

He was married to the love of his life, Bette Grudichek, for forty-two years, a partnership defined by love, devotion and unwavering companionship. A dedicated educator and coach, Rease devoted his career to shaping young minds and young athletes. He taught mathematics for many years at Stephen Decatur High School, influencing generations of students, and he retired from teaching in 1993.

Even after retirement, his passion for education continued—he went on to teach math at St. Teresa High School for seven years, giving students the same patience, clarity, and encouragement he was known for throughout his lifelong career. His coaching career was equally distinguished. He was the Stephen Decatur High School boys' basketball coach and the girls track coach from 1976 through 1993.

Rease led with passion, integrity, and heartfelt commitment. A defining moment of his coaching career came in 1986, when his basketball team made a Sweet 16 appearance, highlighted by a memorable sectional final victory over Quincy. While coaching at South Beloit High School, he mentored standout athlete Perry Range, who went on to play basketball at the University of Illinois, a testament to Rease's lasting impact on his athletes.

His remarkable accomplishments were honored with his induction into the Decatur Public Schools Athletic Hall of Fame in 2019. Earlier in his athletic journey, Rease proudly played on the 1955 Rockford boys' basketball state championship team. Rease was an avid Cubs fan and especially enjoyed attending games with close friends. The Cubs 2016 World Series victory was one of the highlights of his life.



## Obituary

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He also had a lifelong love of playing golf, and he enjoyed many happy hours playing cards with friends. He was preceded in death by his wife Bette Grudichek-Binger; his parents; his brothers Hank and Richard, and his sisters Jean and Joan. Rease is survived by his daughter, Jennifer Pace (Rob), and his cherished granddaughters, Alexandria and Korrina.

Throughout his life, he was also blessed with a circle of long-time friends who became family in every meaningful way: Tim, Wanda, Amber, and Ashley Cruz; and Ken and Mary Handley. Their loyalty, laughter, and many years of friendship were treasures to him. The family extends their deepest appreciation to Erica at Primrose, an employee, former student, and exceptionally kind caregiver.

Her attentiveness, compassion, and dedicated care brought comfort and dignity to Rease during his time at Primrose, and her support is remembered with heartfelt gratitude. Rease leaves behind a legacy of kindness, mentorship, and integrity. His influence will continue to live on in the many lives of those he taught, coached, and touched.

He will be profoundly missed by all who knew him. A memorial service honoring Rease's life will be held at a later date.



# Tribute Wall

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**Joe Hammel** posted:

I always enjoyed seeing Reese at the golf course because I knew he would make me laugh about something. He was a great mentor and a genuinely wonderful person. My sincere condolences to his family. Joe Hammel/Scovill Golf Course

December 8 at 10:40 AM



**Shelita Strong** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

I am just seeing this. My favorite of all track coach. MR. BINGER. Thank you for pushing our girl's track team to doing our absolute best. I will say you were the absolute best track coach out there. Rest in Heaven and I absolutely love you, Mr. Binger. United again with Mrs Binger. #sdhsgirlstrackteam



November 24 at 4:00 PM



**Kevin Mccaster** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

Coach thank you for always pushing us to be better and occasionally meeting with me when I was home to visit as an adult, #50



November 22 at 2:11 PM



**Penny Abbott** lit a candle in honor of Rease.

Penny Abbott lit a candle in memory of Rease Binger



November 22 at 10:44 AM



**Vincent Woods** posted:

Wow, this comes to me saddening however with a smile, great love, admiration and respect for coach! I remember being a slight disappointment to high as a youth (hot head) and later went to him at their home to show him my growth as a man. On that day of the visit, I introduced my family to Coach and Mrs. Binger. As the Bingers welcomed me and my family in their home. I apologized for my youthful behavior, shared my coach my growth, career and aspirations to elevate myself, be a great father, etc. Coach told me how proud of me he was and gave me a hug before leaving on that day. I always think of him from time to time, have used our conversations to fuel me and I always will. Thank you for being one of my inspirations and major influences as a young man and still as an adult. With love, Vincent Woods

November 21 at 12:07 PM



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**Nick Mcnamara** posted:

Mr. Binger taught algebra, and he also instilled the idea of gumption. He "coached" each student in the classroom. It was a true pleasure to have Mr. Binger's guidance. Nick McNamara, St. Teresa '03

November 21 at 10:04 AM



**Julie Foertsch** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.



November 20 at 9:15 PM



**Julie Foertsch** posted:

Rease was exactly the coach I needed when I ran track in high school. Such an attentive, even-tempered mentor and a great human being! He will be missed throughout our community, in which he was widely known and loved.-Julie Foertsch, Running Reds 1983-86

November 20 at 9:14 PM



**Matt Cushing** posted:

Rease had a legacy of helping and mentoring others. I grew up with an absent father and always appreciated Rease's guidance as a strong male role model. He was the perfect mentor for me as I began my coaching and teaching career. Many times I looked to him for advice and support as I navigated through those early years as a coach and teacher. Through those years, Rease demonstrated a compassionate, generous and dedicated attitude in his teaching/coaching that I couldn't help but admire and respect. Those years at Stephen Decatur H.S. with Rease as the head coach and Tim Cruz as the J.V. coach were some of the best years of my life. We were more than a coaching staff, we were family.

November 20 at 7:18 PM



**Vincent Woods** November 21 at 12:11 PM

Indeed Coach



## Tribute Wall

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**John Garner** posted:

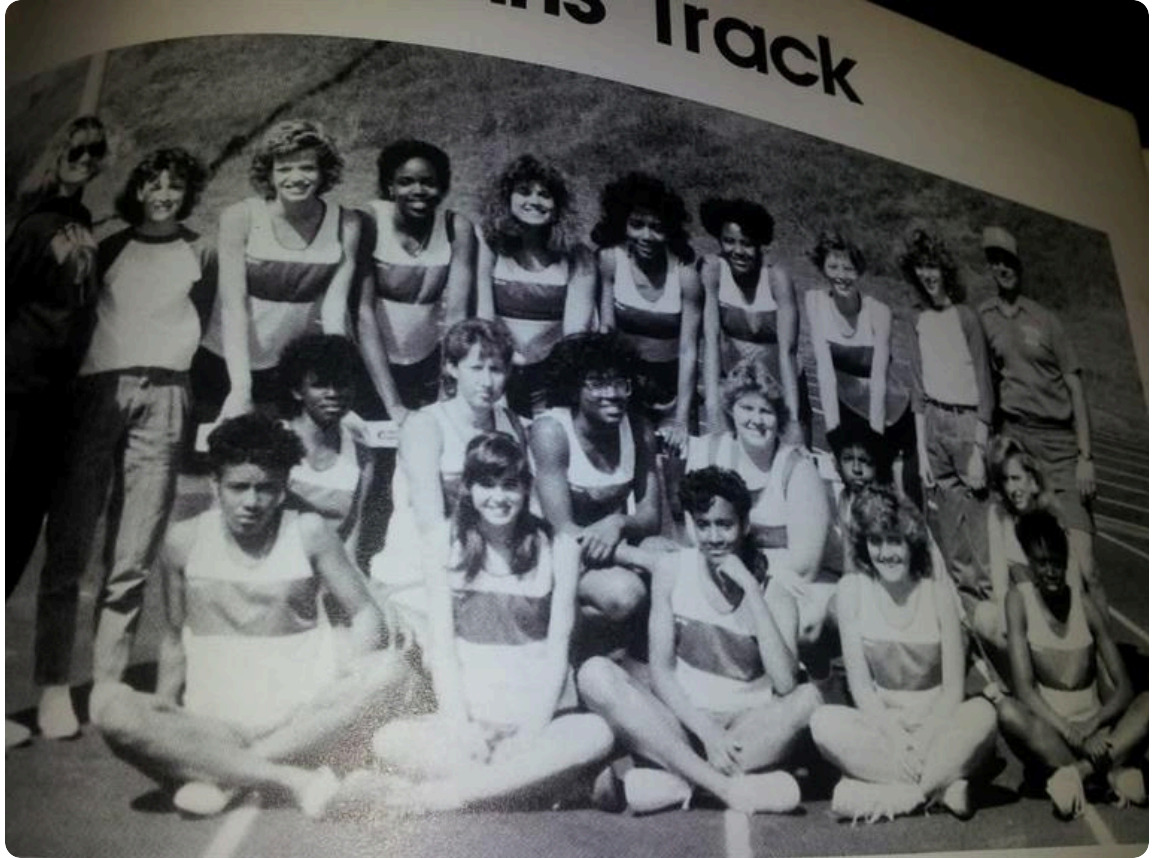
Coach was there for me during a very challenging time in my life. I'm grateful for his support and insight during a challenging time. I think about this often and try to be there for my students- like he was there for me. Dr John

November 17 at 5:36 PM



Shelita Strong shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

November 24 at 4:00 PM





Kevin Mccaster shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

November 22 at 2:11 PM





## Media

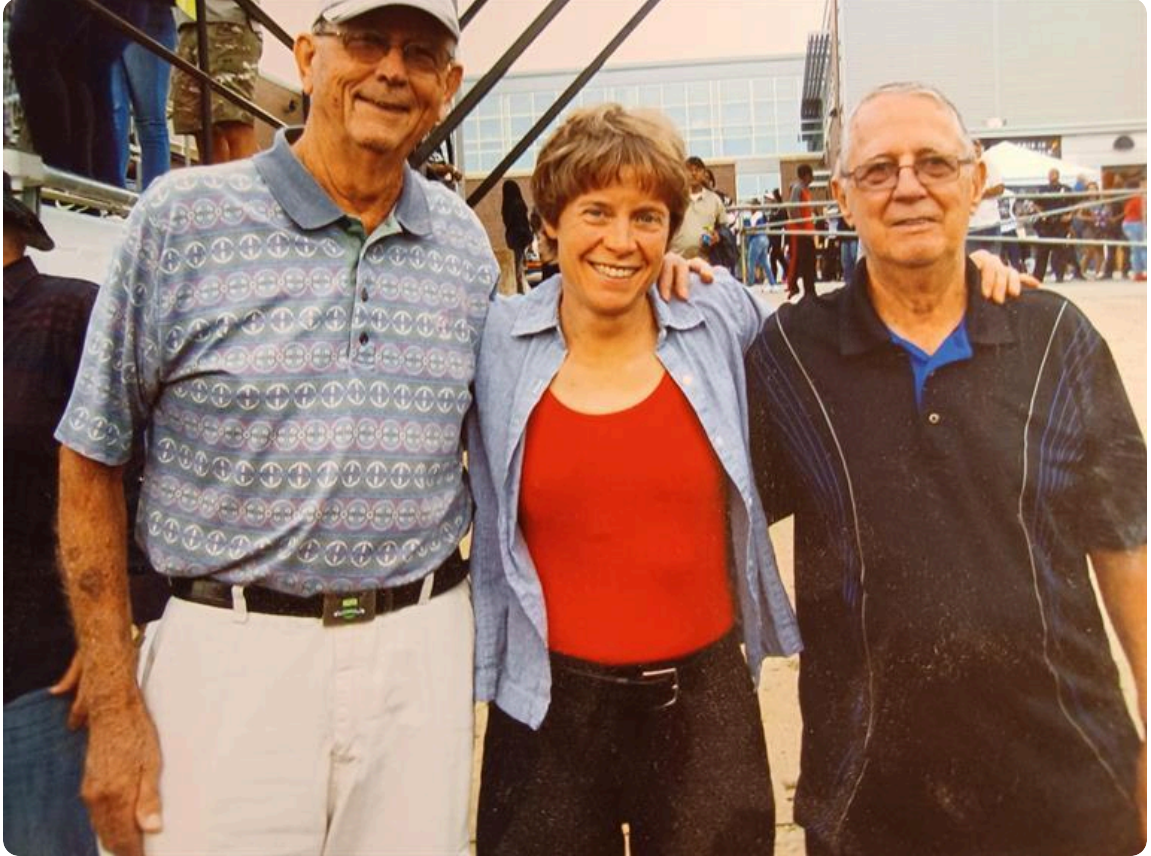
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**Julie Foertsch** shared a photo to the **Tribute Wall** album.

November 20 at 9:15 PM





# Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Rease by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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