

# MT. HOPE HOSTS INAUGURAL COACH GENE SPADARO MEMORIAL 5K

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MT. HOPE, W.Va (WOAY) - The family of beloved Mt. Hope High School Coach Gene Spadaro organized a 5K race on Saturday to honor him and his legacy. Spadaro's son-in-law, Todd Conelly, served as the director of the race.

"Gene was all about the kids. He was a National Track Coach of the Year, he was West Virginia's State Track Coach of the Year, multiple Coalfield Conference Coach of the Year. Any time he ever won an award, he stated, 'This isn't about me. It's about the kids.' So we wanted to make something about Coach Gene."

Coach Gene Spadaro coached and taught at Mt. Hope High School for 55 years bringing four state track and field championships back to the small community. On Saturday, that same community came together for the very first 5K organized to honor Spadaro on what would have been his 91st birthday.

"With him being gone now and this being his birthday, it probably couldn't be a better day to have it. For me, I try to be as Mt. Hope as I can, and it will never amount to the time and the energy that he put into this town," David Snyder, one of Coach Spadaro's former athletes, said.

And even those who weren't coached by him still felt his impact.

"I knew about his history, his legacy because I knew people that were coached by him. He was very well-loved. He did a good job at Mt. Hope High School," community member Jean Evansmore said.



The race will now happen every year and the family hopes to eventually create a scholarship from the entry fees. But this year, the money went back to Spadaro's community.

"We're donating all of the entry fees to the Heritage of Hope and Mt. Hope Volunteer Fire Department for their help," Conelly said.