



LARRY KANKE

COACH

Larry Kanke began his coaching career in 1968 at Geneseo after finishing his own impressive wrestling career at Eastern Illinois University with a fourth-place finish at Nationals. In 1971, Kanke went to serve his country in Vietnam. Upon his return, it was back to Geneseo as the head varsity wrestling coach. He served as head coach for 32 years, which is the longest any coach has been head coach at Geneseo.

Coach Kanke was full of insight and know-how when it came to wrestling. He put Geneseo on the map by helping to build up the nationally-known wrestling tournament. Some of the Midwest top teams and individuals were drawn to the Bi-State Wrestling Invitational. His teams won eleven conference titles and five regional titles during his tenure. In 1995, the Maple Leafs finished 20-0. They were not given the opportunity to wrestle in the post-season because of the IHSA's decision to cancel the team duals. He had 12 state placewinners while at Geneseo. Kanke served with excellence in other Maple Leaf sports as well. He coached football and boys track at Geneseo. Coach Kanke was also inducted into the Illinois Wrestling Coaches and Officials Hall of Fame. After retiring from Geneseo, Coach Kanke rebuilt the Rock Island High School wrestling program where he coached a state champion.

