

## El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame Nomination for Richard Thomas Culler (Posthumous)



### RICHARD THOMAS CULLER

**Family** Married to Brenda Edwards June 1974 (39 years)

**Children** Bobby Joe Culler and Casey Edwards Culler

1967-All Montgomery County and Suburban Maryland. All Metro Trophy Winner

1968- Graduated from Wheaton High School Silver Spring, Maryland after being a letterman in football, basketball and track

1968- Scholarship to play football at Murray State University

1972- B.S Murray State University Murray, Kentucky 4 Year Football Letterman

1972-1975- US Navy Hospital Corps Quantico, Virginia

1974-1975- Hospital Corpsman of the Year

1977- M.S. Indiana State University Terre Haute, Indiana

1977- Begin career at Bel Air High School as Educator/Athletic Trainer

March 1982- Bel Air High School Student Council Teacher of the Month

1984-1986- President Sun City Athletic Trainers Association

1985-1986- Ysleta School District Outstanding Athletic Trainer

1988- Special Olympics Award for Contribution in Sports Medicine

1992-1994- Bel Air High School CEIC Member

January 1994- Bel Air High School Teacher of the Month

1996-1997- Bel Air High School Teacher of the Year

1999- Bel Air High School yearbook dedication

2000- National Athletic Trainers Association 25 year award

2000- SWATTA and SCATA 25 year award

2002- YISD 25 year service award

2004-2005- Bel Air High School Teacher of the Year

2007- Sun City Athletic Trainers Association Hall of Fame Induction

1977-2008- Continuous Active Member of SCATA

2008- Naming of the Rick Culler Fieldhouse at Bel Air High School

2008- Bel Air High School Basketball retires #1 Basketball Jersey

2008- After 31 years at Bel Air High School retires as Athletic Trainer and Educator

2011- Helped during the Texas vs The Nation game

2023- Inducted into the Wheaton High School Athletic Hall of Fame

**It is also noted while at Bel Air Coach Culler had the opportunity to work with  
Austin Burton, Bob Savage (El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame), Tom Work ( El Paso Athletic  
Hall of Fame), Lou James (El Paso Athletic Hall of Fame), Bob Haak (El Paso Athletic Hall  
of Fame), Ralph Reyna, Guy Crenshaw, Jesse Perales(Head Football Coach at Naaman  
Forrest) , Rob Dibler( Head Basketball Coach at Bel Air), Ron Vicencio, Larry Vucan (El  
Paso Baseball Hall of Fame) Head Baseball Coach at Southlake Carroll), Rick Miller (El**

Paso Baseball Hall of Fame), Kristen Schumaker, Roger Velazquez, Louie Calleros and many many more.

"The adage is that bad news comes in pairs. Well, over the past month, that news unfortunately doubled when we lost four exceptional human beings who helped shape the sports landscape in El Paso. I crossed paths with many of them when their children played in El Paso Parks and Recreation sports leagues and through the wider sports community. Even though they were parts of great teams in their careers, perhaps the greatest teams they built were their families.

Richard Culler, longtime athletic trainer and health instructor at Bel Air High School, was always there for student athletes in his 31 years at the Lower Valley school. Its athletic field house was named in his honor several years ago, and he didn't mind the lengthy workdays because he loved healing the injuries and sometimes bruised egos of his athletes. Culler helped the Parks and Recreation Department in the early days of the summer track and field program. He was a role model who cared about both male and female sports -- but most of all he cared about his beloved Bel Air. Culler died in February at age 63.

"Coach Culler epitomizes what Big Red Pride represents," Bel Air basketball coach Rob Dibler said. "He will always be remembered by the thousands of lives he touched as a teacher through athletics at Bel Air High School. He was a dear friend and mentor to me, and I will do my best to continue his legacy and make him proud."

(Excerpt from Wayne Thornton's article Four men who helped shape EP athletics)







**Describe Coach Rick Culler in one sentence.**



"Coach Culler is very hardworking and a dedicated trainer and we fully appreciate everything he does."

Coach Patricia Mullany



"Coach Culler is a very inspiring and understanding teacher."

Gaby Castañeda



"Coach Culler is nice, patient, and respects his students."

Belinda Paz



"A fun teacher who's really into his work and students."

John Priego



"Coach Culler is hard working; dedicated; and here to help the students."

Kama Beaumarchais



"Coach Culler has given a big part of his life to Bel Air as a trainer, educator, friend and much more."

Coach Rob Dibler



"Coach Culler is always willing to help the counselors with whatever we need and he does it with a smile."

Deborah Black



"He is very understanding and he is very helpful when it comes to taking care of the players."

Valerie Aguirre

**Loyal Forever**

**Veteran Teacher shows his true Cullers**

**F**each year the publications staff dedicates the yearbook to someone who has done a great deal for Bel Air and is a representation of a true Highlander. The 1999 Highlander Yearbook has been dedicated to 21 year veteran Coach, Rick Culler.

Coach Culler is a valuable part to this Bel Airstaff," Dean of Instruction, Sana Gonzalez said. "His patience and optimistic personality help him interact with the students."

As a teacher and athletic trainer, he has shown his compassion to all who come across his path. "He nurses injuries and teaches students, and to me that makes him a pillar of Bel Air," Coach Chris said.

Most would expect a teacher to lose his touch after teaching for several decades, yet Coach Culler shines as if he is a new face to Bel Air's teaching staff. From teachers to students, all seemed to be skillfully pulled toward Coach Culler's unique personality.

"Coach Culler is down to earth, he understands the teenagers of this generation," junior Monica Chavez said.

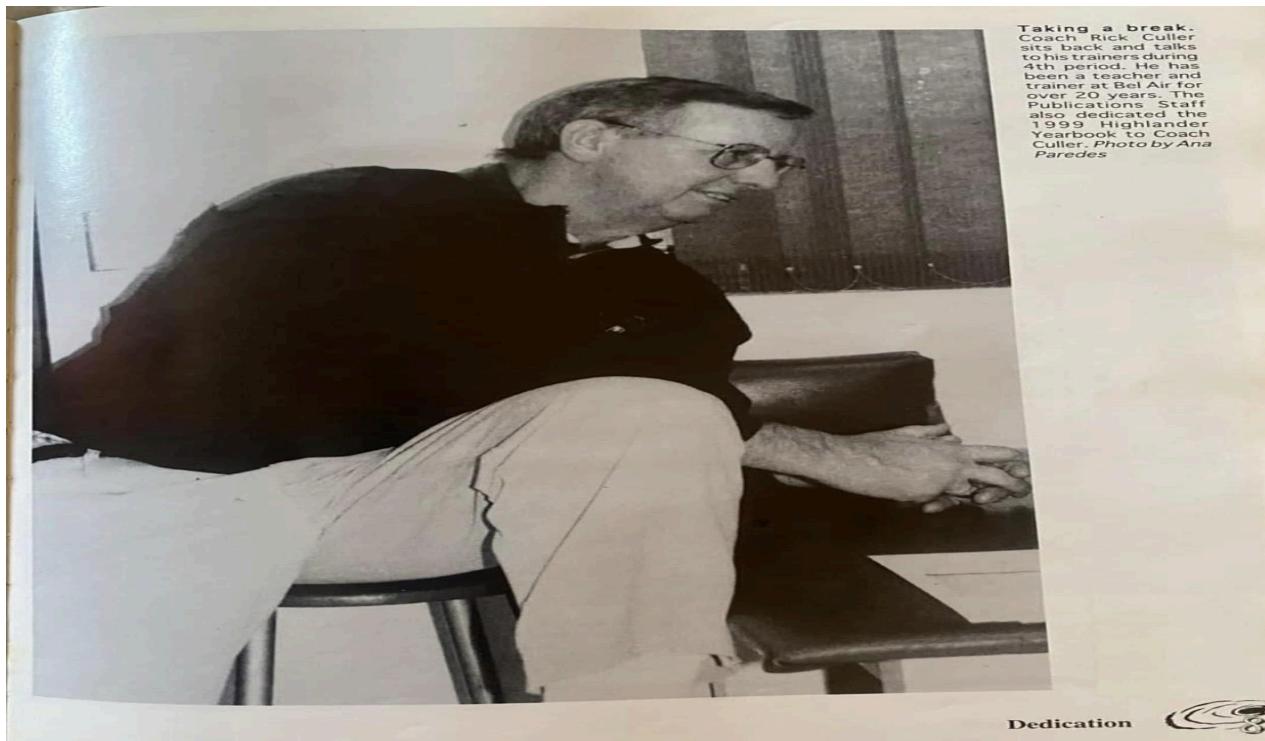
Everyday Coach Culler demonstrates how concerned he is for the athletes, but makes sure never to baby them.

"Coach Culler is respectful, courteous and has a high degree of attention to detail," Coach Larry Vucetic said. "He works well with coaches and students who speak very well of his communication and people skills."

Coach Culler has witnessed awkward fads, ridiculous haircuts, and lets not forget a different administration and teaching staff throughout his many years at Bel Air.

"I truly enjoy working with the students and athletes here, and really have never thought about leaving," Culler said. "I am very invested in the students and athletes. I am very loyal to Bel Air and enjoy coming to work each and everyday."

By: Javier Huerta



**Taking a break.**  
Coach Rick Culler sits back and talks to his trainers during 4th period. He has been a coach and trainer at Bel Air for over 20 years. The Publications Staff also dedicated the 1995 Highsider Yearbook to Coach Culler. Photo by Ana Paredes

Dedication



Photos courtesy of Bel Air High School

**Bobby Culler**, left, **Rick Culler** and **Brenda Culler**.

## Bel Air's No. 1

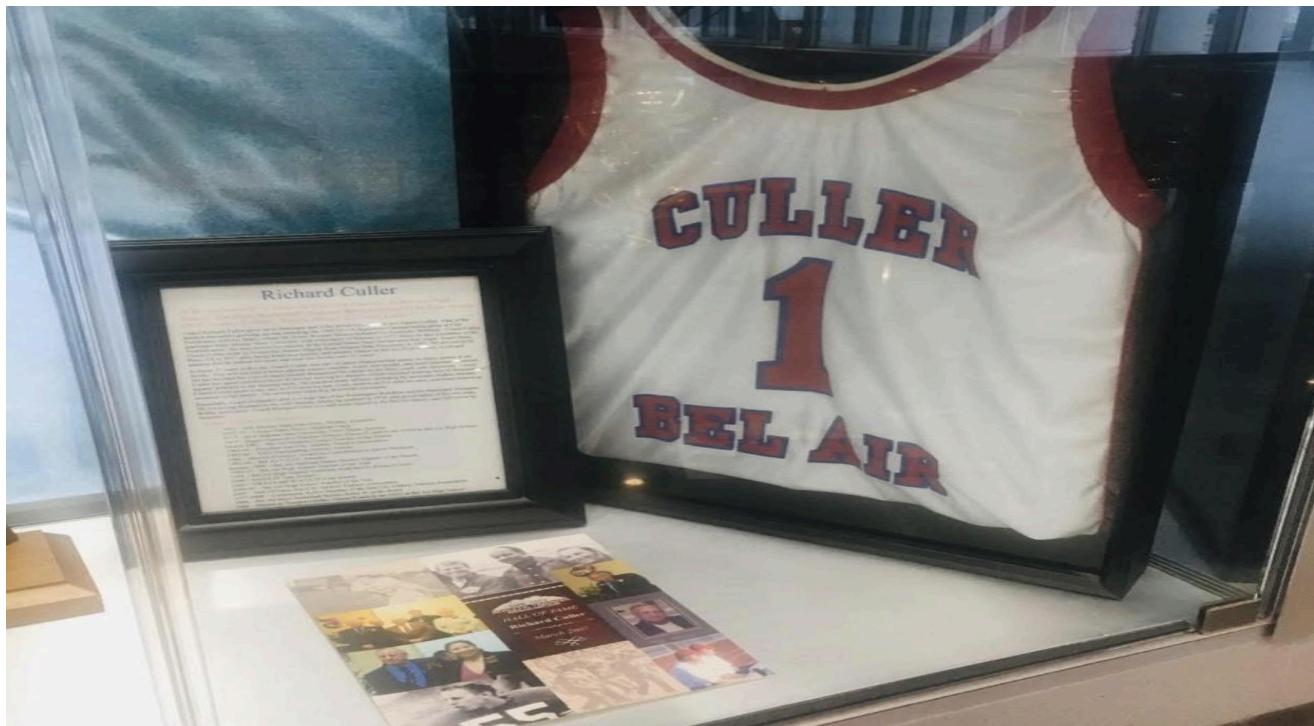
For the first time in Bel Air High School history, the school retired basketball jersey No. 1 in honor of its longtime head trainer.

**Richard "Rick" Culler**, who worked at the school for 31 years and is retiring.

The administration, athletic directors, teachers and students attended the recent event.



**Rick Culler**, left, and Austin Burton.



## Teacher of the day: Richard Culler

# Teacher relates lessons to real world

Monday through Thursday, the El Paso Times profiles an El Paso or Las Cruces teacher who is nominated as Teacher of the Day.

**Name:** *Richard Culler*

**Age:** 54.

**School:** Bel Air High School.

**Educational background:** Bachelor of science from Murray State University in Murray, Ky., and master's in science from Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Ind.

**Number of years teaching:** 26.

**Current position:** Health education/sports medicine — athletic training.

**Activities outside of teaching:** Family, yard work and golf.

**The hardest lesson I have**



**Richard Culler**

**learned:** Respect is a two-way street.

**People would be surprised if they knew I:** Played football in division 1-AA at Murray State University.

**If I could change one thing about my job, it would be:** Have more control over time involving athletics.

**Most gratifying experience as an educator:** Have students return to tell me thanks.

**Why I became a teacher:** To help students just like teachers helped me.

**The most challenging aspect of**

## Tononinate

To request to feature a teacher here, write: Teacher Nomination, El Paso Times, P.O. Box 20, El Paso, TX 79999. Or call Lulu Ontiveros at 546-6119. Or fax to 546-6415. Color photos are required. No Polaroids.

**teaching young people today is:** To get them to realize the importance of an education.

**The best teaching tool I have used and would recommend to a colleague is:** To use real-life stories and relate subject matters to the world.

# Bel Air trainer gets retirement sendoff

By Darren Meritz

El Paso Times

A revered Bel Air High School athletic trainer and teacher will be honored at a celebration this week that recognizes his more than three decades of service at the school.

Richard Culler, an athletic trainer and health teacher, is retiring after working for 31 years at the high school — an accomplishment that prompted students and teachers to organize a party Saturday on his behalf.

Culler, 58, said last week that he hopes former students and friends turn out to the celebration. He plans to spend his retirement working around the house, traveling some and playing golf. "Obviously, I've had a lot of great athletes over the years," he said. "I just really enjoy taking care of the kids and being a caretaker, mentally and physically."

A colleague of Culler's described him as a devoted teacher who's always had a great moral character and a desire to be a positive influence on student athletes.

Culler models the lesson that education is important for the students at Bel Air. He earned a bachelor of sci-

## Make plans

- **What:** Party for retiring Coach Richard Culler
- **When, where:** 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Bel Air Field House, 731 Yarbrough.
- **Cost:** Free.

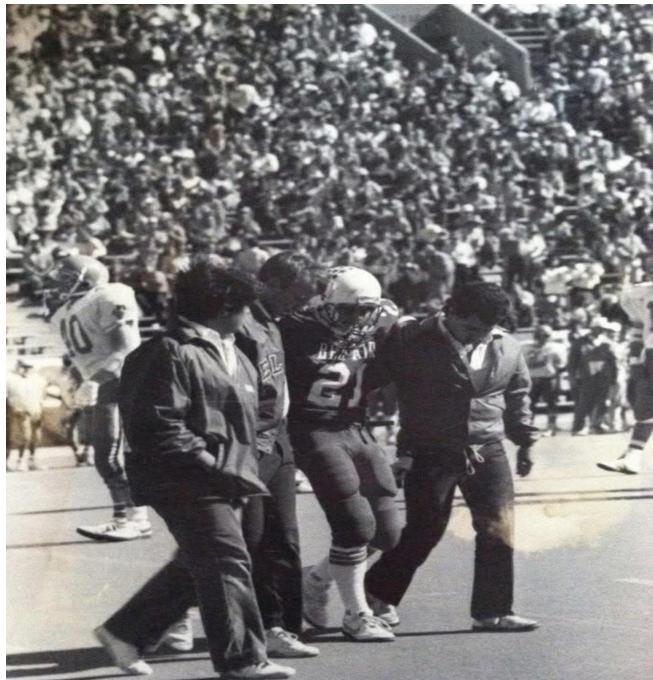
ence degree from Murray State University in Murray, Ky., and a master's in science from Indiana State University in Terre Haute, Ind.

"He's always instilled a positive work ethic in all the athletes, and he really pushes them," said Nancy Vanley, an athletic trainer at Bel Air.

Bel Air High School students and teachers are having a farewell gathering in his honor from 1 to 3 p.m. in the parking lot of the Bel Air Field House, 731 Yarbrough. School officials are awaiting a Board of Trustees ruling on whether to name the field house in Culler's honor.

Last year, Culler was inducted into the Sun City Athletic Trainers Association Hall of Fame.





“I wanted to mix my medical knowledge with my athletic knowledge”  
-Richard Culler