One of the first things Jim Mallery did when he became coach of the Placer High School girls basketball team was to purchase a green sport coat to wear during games. That turned out to be the right color at the Oakland Coliseum on St. Patrick's Day, 1990, as he directed the Lady Hillmen to the California state championship.

Not bad for a coach in just his second year coaching a sport he'd never coached before.

For his successful seven-year career at Placer, Mallery will be inducted into the PHS Athletic Hall of Fame on April 25 in a ceremony at the school's iconic Earl Crabbe Gym.

As basketball season approached in 1989, Mallery was told of a coach opening for the girls basketball team at Placer. An experienced coach in several other sports, but not in basketball, he still applied and landed the job.

What he inherited was a team that had slumped through a 2-25 record the year before and no money in the athletic budget to dress the girls properly. The uniforms they had were ill-fitting hand-me-downs, and the team had no socks or sweats.

Mallery convinced Sportsman's in downtown Auburn to donate socks, and a parent of one of the players donated team bags. Other parents chipped in for new uniforms.

He knew several of the girls from Bowman School where his own children attended. So he went to work with them, practicing technique and building confidence.

Excited but nervous at the same time, Mallery did all he could to master the sport. He collected several basketball coaching books, including some by UCLA legend John Wooden. He read them cover to cover and then applied his new-found knowledge.

The result was a phenomenal turnaround for the program. The girls want 26-7, captured the Sierra Foothill League title, the Sac-Joaquin Section title, and ended up ranked No.1 in Northern California. Christa Gannon was named All-Metro, Caree Anderson was honorable mention, and Mallery was the Sacramento Bee All-Metro Coach of the Year.

Player Carla Souza was quoted in the school's yearbook saying, "At the beginning of the season, we didn't even have any coaches, but look how much we progressed —we made it all the way to No. 1!"

The next year, Mallory's team put their name forever in the athletic lore of the school. Built on returning stars Gannon, Anderson, Souza, Trina Haddock, and Kelly Dean, the team won the league and section titles again. They added the Northern California title, and then made it to the state final against undefeated Brea of Los Angeles. In an upset for the ages, the Lady Hillmen came from behind to claim the state championship 54-43.

Mallery would guide the team for five more years, win XX of league titles and XX number of playoff games. In his seven seasons coaching the girls basketball team, his record was XX-XX

Mallery began coaching when he was 17, teaming up with his father in southern California. He coached football, baseball, and boys and girls soccer, but never basketball.

He graduated in 1963 from Rosemead High School where he played football, basketball, and baseball. After graduation, he spent two years at Pasadena Junior College and then joined the U.S. Navy Submarine Force where he served two years of active duty and four in the reserve.

He then attended Cal State Los Angeles, hoping to get into coaching. But in those days, coaches needed to also be teachers, which was not something he really wanted to do.

Instead, he went into law enforcement with the Anaheim Police Department, but later on vacation in Auburn, he found that he loved the town. He went on a ride-along with the Auburn Police Department, applied for a vacant position, and was hired. He served seven years, rising to the rank of sergeant.

But in 1980, Mallery tried his hand at owning his own business, opening up Dunk ’n Run Donuts in Auburn. He also began his own private investigation business. Ten years later he went to work for Placer County as an investigator, retiring in 2005.

While coaching the Placer girls basketball team, Mallory maintained his Placer County job as and was given time off from the Health and Human Services division to run practices and coach games for the Placer girls basketball team.

He is a beloved member of the Auburn 49er Lions and still attends special events like Installation and the Christmas Brunch.

Mallery and his wife Suzanne have been married for 58 years. The couple has three adult children, Jennifer, Brian, and Scott, all of whom were active at Placer High. Jennifer was cheerleader, and the boys played basketball and soccer.

The couple has seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren,

The Athletic Hall of Fame ceremony will be held in the Earl Crabbe Gym on April 25. A reception will begin at 6 pm followed by the induction ceremony at 7 pm.

Tickets for the reception cost $25 until April 15, and $35 after, and are available online at placerathletichalloffame.org.

The 7 pm ceremony is free of charge to the public.