



## **Jake Rantanen**

### **Class of 1994**

My name is Jake Rantanen and I was so fortunate to graduate from Marshall County Central High School in 1994. I can't believe that it's already been almost 30 years. I transferred to MCC as a junior from Middle River. It was at that time that the school was joining the co-op with Greenbush. It was a difficult decision at the time. However, when I look back now, it was probably one of the best decisions that I could have made to attend MCC.

I remember everyone at the school being so welcoming! Plus, there was a lot of excitement about the new school that had been rebuilt after the devastating fire that happened. I was so lucky to meet so many wonderful people and get to share in the tradition of Nordic Pride. MCC has always had a strong basketball tradition. One of the fondest memories of those two years was when we won the 1993 Subsection Championship with HOF (Hall of Fame) coach Ron Ueland. The faculty at MCC was amazing and they really played an important role in my life. At the time, little did I think that one day I would be joining them as an educator and coach at MCC a few years later.

Once I graduated high school, I attended NCTC (Northland Community & Technical College) in Thief River Falls, MN. I enjoyed playing basketball there and getting my AA degree. I also joined the Army National Guard in North Dakota where I spent 7 years of service and became a Sergeant. I enjoyed being a member of the military and helped Grand Forks residents in the terrible flood of 1997.

After graduating NCTC, I enrolled at Mayville State University to earn my Math Education and Coaching degree. Ever since I was young, I always knew I wanted to become a math teacher and coach. However, I took a job as a loan officer at First National Bank in Thief River Falls, MN shortly after graduating college before I had an opportunity to use my degree. Luckily for me, Mr. Ron Paggen stopped into the bank and offered me a teaching position at MCC. I was very excited with the possibility of teaching and coaching at a school that meant so very much to me.

I really enjoyed teaching and coaching at MCC and I had a lot of fun working with everyone at the school. Teaching is such an impactful experience, the student body at MCC was great and the faculty got along so wonderfully. I don't think I could have had a better experience teaching and coaching. I always tried to have fun with my classes while I tried to teach them math concepts even when they probably didn't want to listen to me. I enjoyed the students so much and I hope I made a positive impact on their lives as much as they made a positive impact on mine.

I coached many sports at MCC, but the one that I had dreamed to coach was basketball. I really have a passion for basketball. I was able to take over an incredible program once HOF coach Ron Ueland retired in 2002. I was very excited about having great assistant coaches to work with and we all had a dream of leading the MCC team to State in boys' basketball. We had a lot of talented players in those years and we all worked very hard to compete for a chance to go to state for the first time in school history. In 2005, all of that perseverance made that dream come true for us.

I will never forget how we beat the undefeated and #1 ranked team in the state of MN, in the section championship game at UMC (University of Minnesota-Crookston). The celebration was amazing and I think the pride of MCC showed through during our tournament run. At state, MCC was well-represented as there were so many Nordic fans that attended those games. The student athletes truly gave it their all at the state tournament. We all have great memories of Williams Arena's double overtime win and almost beating the defending state champion at Target Center.

After that year, I made a tough decision to leave education and went to work for Marshall County State Bank (MCSB) in Newfolden as a Vice-President. I had continued to work at a bank every summer while I was teaching at MCC so I stayed familiar with the banking industry. I was fortunate to be able to continue coaching at MCC while working with many great people at MCSB. I stopped coaching in 2010 as I started working on my Graduate School of Banking degree from Colorado, which I completed in 2014. It was hard to quit coaching for the school that meant so much to me. I worked at MCSB until 2015 and now I have been Vice-President at Northern State Bank in Thief River Falls since 2016, where I specialize in Commercial and Ag loans.

I have been married to Lora Rantanen, a wonderful lady, for 20 years. We were married in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico in 2002. Lora is a Districtwide Technology Integrationist for the Thief River Falls School District. We enjoy traveling together and recently celebrated our anniversary in Maui, HI. We have two kids, Kendal (a senior at Lincoln High School) and Lucas (a sophomore at Lincoln High School). Both of my kids are very active in school and extracurricular activities. I have been a member of many boards over the years and I enjoy giving back to the community.

Marshall County Central High School meant so much to me over the years and I am so thankful for the quality of people that I have been able to meet since I transferred to MCC 30 years ago.

The MCC Education Foundation is growing. I truly hope that it continues that trend to help ensure the best possible learning experience for all MCC students in the future.