

## DEREK IRONS

**D**EREK GRADUATED FROM DORA HIGH SCHOOL IN 2000 AND PLAYED BASKETBALL AND

baseball. He was a member of the varsity basketball team that reached the Final Four in 2000, but made his biggest contributions on the baseball diamond. As a freshman, he was awarded the prestigious Raymond May Award as the top scholar-athlete. He was a four year varsity letterman under Coach Michael Bridges and played catcher. Derek received many accolades following his senior year at Dora, including being an All-State selection by the Alabama Sports Writers Association as well as The Birmingham News. He was also selected to The Birmingham News All-Metro Team and All-Academic team. In addition, he was selected the Daily Mountain Eagle player of the year for the 2000 season. He was chosen to the Lions' Club East-West All-Star game. Derek graduated as an honor graduate and was fourth in his class. Derek's most proud moment of his high school career was receiving the Jon Black Memorial Scholarship his senior year, named in memory of his friend Jon Black who passed away in 1998.



Derek's efforts at Bevill earned him a baseball scholarship to Bevill State-Fayette. He was a two year starter at first base for the Bears and in his freshman campaign helped lead the team to the school's first AJCCC Regional Championship and a berth in the JUCO World Series. His play in the AJCCA Regional Tournament earned him a Regional All-Tournament team selection. His sophomore season saw more success both individually and for the Bears. BSCC finished runner-up in the 2002 season in the Regional Tournament. Irons was named a team captain and was also an AJCCC All-Region Team member and was also recognized nationally by the NJCAA as an Academic All-American, carrying a 3.87 GPA during his two years in Fayette.

Following his time at Bevill, Derek completed his academic career by earning his undergraduate degree in Secondary Education from The University of Alabama with a 3.65 GPA. He went on to complete the Master's Degree program in Sports Management from Alabama as well with a GPA of 3.9.

Derek has spent his professional career as a high school teacher and baseball coach. At the time of his induction in 2021, he has won over 400 games as a head coach and won back-to-back state titles in 2013 and 2014 at Charles Henderson High School. He has been chosen Coach of the Year on twelve occasions by outlets such as the National Federation of High School Coaches, the Alabama Sports Writers Association, the Alabama Baseball Coaches Association, and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

Derek's family is the primary reason for his success in life. His father Mike pastored in Walker County for ten years and his mother, Pam, was an educator in Walker County for thirteen years. His younger brothers, Deron and Daryl, both had outstanding athletic careers at Sumiton Christian. Derek and his wife Leslie were married in July of 2007 and have three children: Luke, Alex, and Kate.