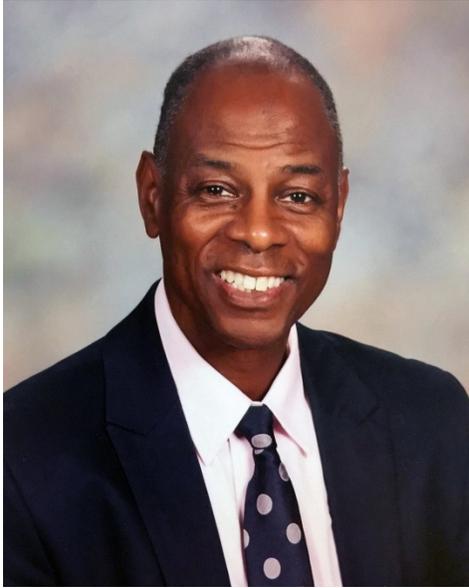


## 2016 Fairmont Farmers Festival Grand Marshal Michael Baker



One of Fairmont's own will serve as Grand Marshal for the 2016 Fairmont Farmer's Festival. Michael D. Baker, known to most as "Coach Baker", graduated from Fairmont High School in 1977. He excelled in both academics and athletics, and went on to attend Roanoke College in Salem, Virginia. He was Virginia's Small College Player of the Year in 1981 in Basketball.

After he completed his education, he returned to Fairmont, where he has spent the past 34 years as an educator. During these 34 years, he has served as a mentor to many young people through his teaching and coaching. He has been a role model to many youth not only through his service as varsity basketball and volleyball coach, but as a friend and confidant to many athletes who looked to him for the excellent example he always lived. He goes over and above to make each player feel like part of a family, not just a player on a team, and it shows in the success his students have gone on to enjoy after leaving Fairmont High School in athletics as well as academics.

He has been the athletic director at Fairmont High School since 1994. His accomplishments include Conference Coach of the Year 13 times, and his 1994 basketball team won the 2A State championship. He has also served as conference President since 2001, served on four athletic boards at the state level, and received the 2004 NCHSAA Athletic director Award for Outstanding Service Region 4. In 2013, He won the Homer Thompson Memorial Award, "Eight Who Make a Difference". He also enjoys working with Special Olympics and has done so for 16 years.

In 1995, he was the head track and field coach for Team North Carolina, where his team competed in the Penn Relays and the World Games. He was recognized in February, 2016 by Sandy Grove Baptist Church for making a difference in the lives of Robeson County Youth as a role model. The Public Schools of Robeson County voted him "Teacher of the Year" in 2007.

Coach Baker's parents are Rufus and Esther Baker. He currently resides in Fairmont with his wife Ellen, of 22 years. They have a son, Jim Rogers, and a special niece, Gini Grimsley.