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Bob Seei  
photo by Chris Fritchie

Brown was the head track coach and athletic trainer. The reunion led to a job offer. Mr. Brown asked Mr. Seei to pursue his post-graduate work at ETSU and be a graduate assistant to the track team.

Switching his sights from coaching high school to college track, Mr. Seei graduated from Western Illinois in 1969 and took the job in Commerce. On his way from Illinois to Texas he stopped for a blind date with a girl named Kathy. Now his bride of 37 years, former Frisco Mayor Kathy Seei who served Frisco from 1996 through 2002, is a Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives in Texas Congressional District 4.

Time passed and Mr. Seei decided he wanted to try coaching in a public school. In a prophetic plea Mr. Seei says, "Jesse Hawthorne, A&M-Commerce athletic director from 1953 to 1984 said, 'Don't do that. They'll probably make a principal out of you.'"

Mr. Seei never saw himself as a principal, but his administrators saw potential in him. He taught and coached in Dallas for three years before being asked to join the principal intern program. Then came an opportunity with Plano ISD. After one year teaching and coaching in Plano he became the assistant principal at Wilson Middle School in the mid-1970s under Justin Wakeland, Frisco ISD superintendent from 1978 to 1997. Except for a brief stay in the district's human resources department, Mr. Seei worked with Plano teachers and students for approximately three decades. In addition to Wilson he served as principal of Shepton High School and Jasper High School. During his tenure Mr. Seei found helping students, parents and staff rewarding. He worked hard to instill a philosophy of teamwork and caring and says he was blessed to have teachers who shared his vision and cared about the whole child. "Over the years I've worked with the world's best teachers in Plano," says Mr. Seei. "Wonderful teachers and wonderful students."

Mr. Seei retired from the Plano ISD in 2004 and now consults with school

## Man Behind the Scenes

By Tricia Musslewhite

**FATE. DESTINY. LUCK.** Whatever you call it, serendipity brings about unexpected and fortunate discoveries. One turn of events leads to another and when you sit back to reflect you realize the wonderfulness of it all.

Frisco resident and former Plano Independent School District (PISD) high school principal Bob Seei calls it a blessing. Growing up in Illinois in the 1960s Mr. Seei was involved in basketball, track and football. He planned to become a head coach. He attended Western Illinois University and majored in business education, recreation, health and physical education. But, fate caught

up with him at an Olympic qualifying track meet. He didn't make the Olympic team. Instead he suffered an injury and met Delmer Brown, the head athletic trainer for the U.S. track team in the 1964 Tokyo Olympics.

Mr. Seei didn't give that chance meeting a second thought until his senior year when he traveled with members of the track team to Texas to participate in a few meets. After a long day of travel the team stopped in Commerce for the night. On their way to workout, the team happened upon a meet at East Texas State University (now Texas A&M University-Commerce), where Mr.

districts. He also works part-time for Plano's off-campus physical education program, which enables athletes to earn physical education credit for sports not offered in the schools. Mr. Seei spent one recent weekend monitoring students at a hockey tournament, but these days you can also find him on the campaign trail with Mrs. Seei.

Texas Congressional District 4 includes 16 counties in Northeast Texas. Mr. and Mrs. Seei travel to festivals, parades and just about any community event to meet people. A good sportsman and willing to do whatever needs to be done, Mr. Seei's duties usually keep him behind the scenes, performing such tasks as putting out signs. He prefers providing grassroots support over talking politics and that attitude recently landed this former athlete in one competition he couldn't win.

The Hopkins County Fall Festival and World Champion Hopkins County Stew Cook-off are annual East Texas events. More than 100 teams cook 15 gallons of chicken or beef stew in cast-iron pots over open wood-burning fires to compete for prize money. When Mrs. Seei's campaign manager asked Mr. Seei to participate in the cook-off he, of course, said he would, but added, "I've never cooked stew in my life!" So he turned to a former Plano ISD colleague for a traditional stew recipe. The Seei team didn't win, but at the end of the competition the booth had a long line of people waiting to sample all they could eat and friendships and good memories were made.

Semi-retirement is a busy time for Mr. Seei. The primary election is this month. The Seei's son, Rob, who is an Army Special Forces Medic on his second tour in Iraq, is due home at the end of the month, and their daughter, Erin, will be married in the Seei home in April. Mr. and Mrs. Seei rely on their strong faith to carry them through the busyness and believe God had a hand in their good fortune.

"I've been very blessed for having met Kathy, number one," says Mr. Seei. "And number two, blessed for having my career."

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*Tricia Musslewhite is a freelance writer living in Frisco.*