

## What's in a name? A check of Metro stadiums

Written by Mark Dukes

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Big business has its hands all over professional sports stadiums.

In the National Football League, Oakland-Alameda County Coliseum has become O.co (Overstock.com). RFK Stadium in Washington is now FedEx Field.

The same is true in baseball, where Wrigley Field, Fenway Park and Yankee Stadium are among the last to resist the temptation of selling naming rights to dot coms or financial institutions.

Thank goodness high school stadiums, by in large, have remained true to their roots. In the Metro area, stadiums are named after memorable people or areas.

As you go around to prep football games this fall, take a little history with you:

**KINGSTON STADIUM** – This is where Jefferson, Kennedy and Washington play their home games. In the past, Coe College and semi-pro football teams played there.

The stadium, which opened in 1952, is named after a town that was originally known as Kingston. Annexed to Cedar Rapids in 1870, Kingston was the area immediately west of the Cedar River and extending toward where the stadium now sits.

Locker rooms, a press box and storage areas were added to Kingston in 1958. Field turf was installed and other improvements were made in 2007.

Soccer and track meets, and band festivals also are held at Kingston.

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**JOHN W. WALL FIELD** – The Prairie High school field was re-dedicated last week in celebration of the installation of field turf and additional seating.

John W. Wall was a 1963 Prairie graduate who was killed in 1967 while serving in the Vietnam War.

**LINN-MAR STADIUM** – Linn-Mar opened its new stadium last spring to soccer and track teams, and this week the Lions will play their first football game in the new digs.

The old Armstrong Field sat in a flood plane and was overrun by water four times in eight years recently.

Armstrong Field was named after Dr. William Armstrong, a longtime volunteer team physician who was killed in an airplane accident in 1970.

**THOMAS PARK FIELD** – Marion's home stadium is within the confines of Thomas Park, which was purchased by the city in 1920 for \$4,500.

The original owner of the land was Richard Thomas, who lived on the land until his death in 1892 at age 110. Upon his death, Thomas' daughter requested the park be named after her father.

Xavier named its baseball stadium after Ken Charipar, longtime baseball coach whose children excelled at old LaSalle High School. Its football stadium is simply named Saints Field.

*(Mark Dukes is former sports editor of the Cedar Rapid Gazette. He is co-host of The Gym Class radio show weekdays from 3-4 p.m. on KGYM-AM 1600.)*