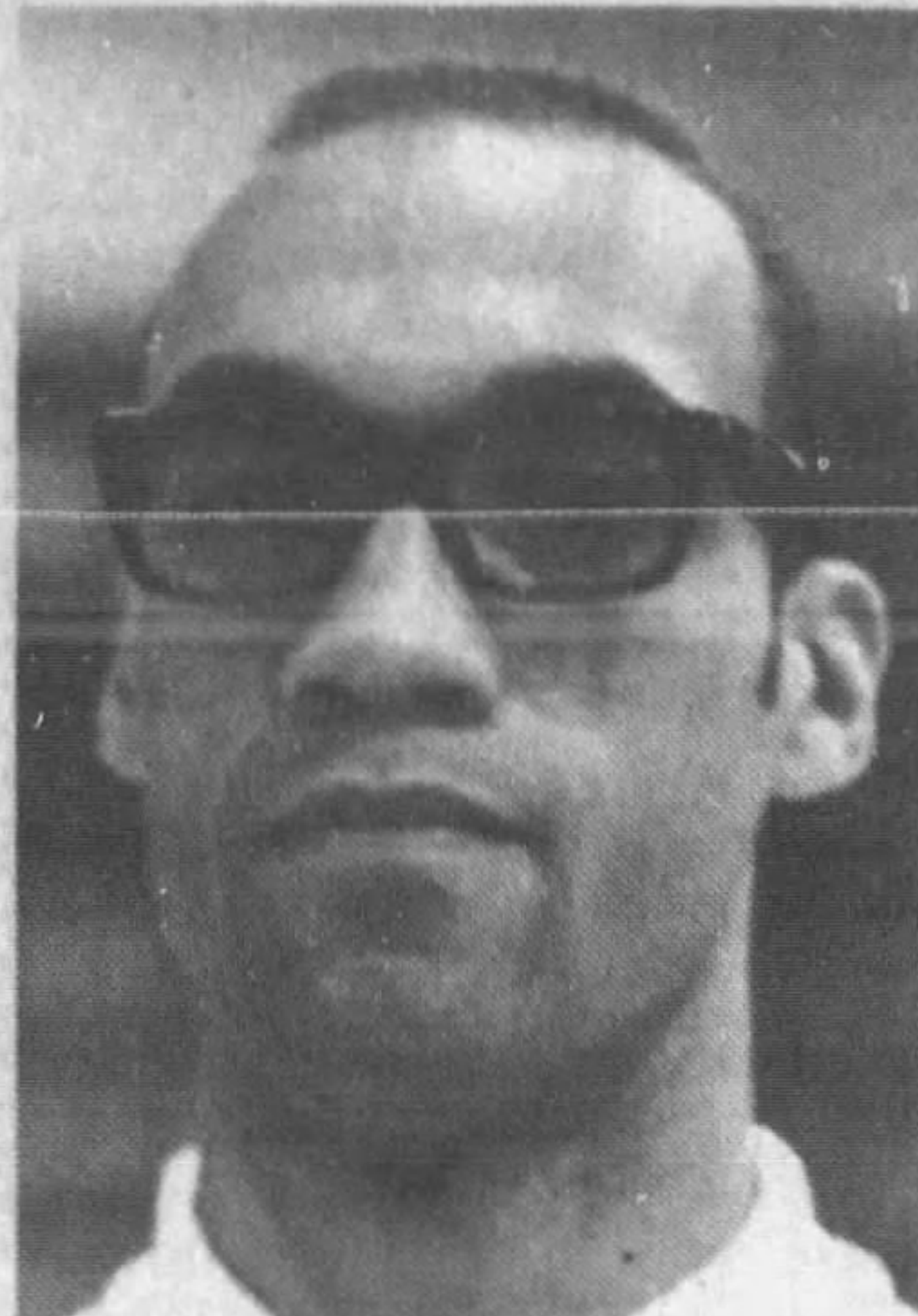


# Clark Resigning As Ross Basketball Pilot



ALEX CLARK

Alex Clark, pilot of the Ross basketball program for the last three seasons, has submitted his resignation.

Clark, who guided the Little Giants to a 15-44 record over the last three campaigns, presented the resignation to John Evanoff, superintendent of schools, last week. The Board of Education meets tonight and is expected to accept the resignation.

The Bluffton College graduate reviews reasons for his resignation in a three-page letter to school board members.

"This past season was very frustrating for my team as well as for myself," Clark wrote in the second paragraph. "As individuals and athletes I feel that Fremont has a great group of dedicated young men. I feel, however, that these young men and myself were asked to perform under conditions which are not conducive to promoting a winning basketball program. There is evidence of this in the past basketball records here in Fremont. What is even more frustrating is that neither the athletes nor myself have had any control over these circumstances.

"It is my hope, and the reason for my resignation, that under the direction of a new coach from outside the

community that these adverse conditions might be improved if not eliminated."

Obstacles listed by Clark included: scheduling, facilities, injury, football, stress and staff.

Concerning scheduling, Clark wrote the following:

"On every practice day there have been between seven and 12 activities in the gym after school between 3 and 7 p.m. These activities include: varsity and reserve basketball, varsity and reserve wrestling, GAA basketball and deck tennis intramurals, GAA beginning and advanced tumbling, GAA beginning and advanced modern dance, GAA fencing, girls' basketball, cheerleading practice, seventh grade basketball, winter baseball fitness, winter track fitness, winter football fitness as well as wrestling meets.

"I consider the practice floor a classroom. It is impossible to operate efficiently when there are this many distractions. Number-wise we are talking of between 200 and 300 people using the senior high gym almost every afternoon."

The Little Giant cage program operated with only two coaches this season although most of the schools in the

Buckeye Conference have at least three assistants and some have four at the varsity and reserve level.

"... during this past season we had a vacancy in our varsity coaching staff after you failed to rehire one of my assistants last spring," Clark wrote. "Thus, with my lone assistant working in football, for the first two weeks of practice, I had both varsity and reserve players by myself. Not having the third coach makes practices longer and does not allow as much personal attention for fundamentals as should be given."

Despite the obstacles, Clark still believes the Ross cage program can become a Buckeye Conference contender.

"The chances of winning are as great as they were when Tim Thomas played here," Clark said this morning. "I've been real pleased with the kids that are coming back and the fellows in the junior high program.

"From this year's varsity team there will be a number of established players returning next year. This season we didn't have an established scorer or rebounder and then the two fellows I was depending on most (Bob Brudzinski and Chuck Celek) were injured in the first week of practice.

"I don't think people realized how serious these injuries were. Those boys couldn't have been expected to play to their full capabilities the first time they got on the floor. And, I wasn't going to push either of those fellows so they might have further injuries that might hamper the rest of their athletic careers. Both young men are fine athletes.

"Of the kids coming back, there are only three football players. They have good size and are very dedicated young men. A new coach can begin working with them now and can go through the summer and fall which should provide the base for a fine team next year."

Clark, who was graduated from Bluffton in 1966 and is a native of Ridgeway, hopes to stay in coaching.

"I definitely plan to stay in coaching at the high school level for a while longer," Clark said. "Hopefully, some day, I'll be able to move up to the college level as either a freshman coach or varsity assistant."

Clark has been with the Ross cage program for six years. He served one season as freshman coach before moving to the reserve level for two seasons. He took over the varsity program for the 1969-70 season after the resignation of Don Purvis.