According to her coach, Jody Schwartz Longballa was the quintessential “gamer” – the bigger the game, the more she thrived on the competition.

“She was one of the most intense competitive players ever to don a Creighton softball uniform,” says former softball coach Mary Higgins. “It was through Jody’s skill and leadership that Creighton was able to be as nationally competitive as we were during the years she was here. She led us to the NCAA Tournament.”

Longballa may be remembered best as a first-team All-American in 1988, the year the senior first baseman led the team with a .340 average, 10 doubles, four home runs and 36 RBI, while also posting a .989 fielding percentage. In the circle, she was 10-5 with a 1.14 ERA in 17 starts which included 12 complete games.

Longballa was one of a small number of Creighton athletes to hail from California, where Higgins spent considerable time watching the potential recruit play on one of the most nationally competitive ASA teams within her age bracket. Higgins felt it fortuitous that the Schwartz family had ties to Nebraska that helped influence Jody’s selection of Creighton for an undergraduate education. The family admired Creighton’s values and the Midwestern atmosphere. They believed Creighton would be a supportive environment for Jody. As it turned out, Jody was supportive of Creighton as well.

As a freshman in 1985, Jody topped the team with 52 hits. As a senior, she again led the team with 51 hits. Her 11 doubles as a sophomore set a school record, and in the same year she added a career-best six home runs. She twice led the team in home runs and slugging percentages, and in total bases, three times. She was Creighton’s RBI leader in 1986, 1987 and 1988, en route to setting a Creighton career record with 113 RBI, a record that now ranks fifth. “She was a scary, intimidating hitter for opposing teams to face,” says Higgins.

Jody finished her career as the Bluejays’ career leader with 36 doubles and 78 walks in a school-record 222 games played, all of which still rank in the Bluejay top-10. “Jody was very vocal on the field and Creighton players looked up to her for her leadership and ability as a player. She was fun to travel with because of her sense of humor and very outgoing personality.”

Creighton University is pleased to name Jody Schwartz Longballa to the Athletic Hall of Fame.