Joe Nelson (’71) was a three-sport athlete at Stanley County from 1967-71 who participated in football, wrestling, track, band and choir. As a young Buffalo, Joe learned to play many roles, from the wrestling mat to the stage, which helped him excel as a musician and actor.

Joe’s first taste of varsity athletics was starting on the Stanley County varsity football team in 8th grade. Joe held a starting position for five years at center and middle guard for Buffalo football. He showed his diversity and also excelled in track and field, competing in shot put and as a member of the mile and medley relay teams.

It was on the wrestling mat, however, where Joe shined brightest for the Buffalos. Coached by Sherman Monroe and Darrell Boots, Joe was the first state wrestling champion in school history. He blazed a trail for future Buffalo wrestlers and helped establish a competitive wrestling program. Joe held various records during his career, including the national record for fastest pin. He capped his career with an undefeated senior season and the 1971 State B wrestling championship at 185 pounds. Joe finished his Buffalo wrestling career with a record of 67-3-1.

Joe’s athleticism was matched by his interest in art and performance. As a student, his passion was music and Joe was active in band and choir at Stanley County. He also worked on the movies *Born to Buck* and *Young Rounders*. After graduating from Stanley County and Southern Illinois University, Joe traveled for 20 years as a solo musician, earning the 1984 Governor’s Award for Tourism. Since 1998, he has worked in California as an actor and musician under the stage name Joe Kady.