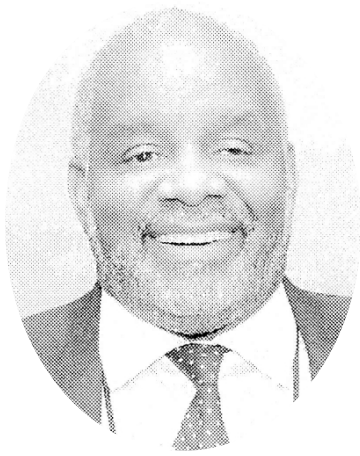


Richard Fuller



Over the years, **Richard Fuller** has always made a habit of being the first to achieve something. Whether it was on the football field, in the classroom, or even at Old Timers dinners, Richard Norman Fuller, Sr., just seems to have a knack for always being the first.

He was a member of the first graduating class at Brien McMahon High School in 1962, as well as the school's first senior class president. In athletics, he played on the first McMahon football team ever as a junior in 1960, and was a senior co-captain on the Senators' first official varsity football team in the fall of '61.

Dick Fuller, as he was known then, even scored the touchdown that gave the new high school in town its first lead ever in a football game and led to the Senators' first win in school history, a 14-8 victory over Andrew Warde.

And perhaps it is only fitting that Richard Fuller achieves another "first" tonight as he joins his father, Lloyd Fuller, Sr., a 1983 honoree, as the first father-son tandem to be honored by the Norwalk Old Timers.

Born in 1944 in New York City, Richard was also the first of five Fuller brothers who would all leave their marks in athletics at Brien McMahon. Along with Lloyd, Terry, Danny, and Jeff, the Fullers became one of Norwalk's all-time great sports families.

Growing up in Colonial Village, Richard Fuller attended J. D. Magrath Elementary school, Center Junior High, Ponus Ridge Junior High, and was the only Fuller to attend both Norwalk High and McMahon.

An outstanding athletic career began to take shape between 1956-'58 when Fuller played soccer, basketball, and baseball at Ponus Ridge for coach Joe Troy. In fact, Fuller was the only seventh grader to play all three varsity sports.

He also played baseball in the local Pony League in 1957 and '58, and was a key member of the Norwalk All-Star team, which won the Connecticut Regional championship. Then in 1959 he played Babe Ruth Baseball as a catcher on the Home Oil team.

It was in the fall of 1959 that Fuller attended Norwalk High School and played fullback and linebacker on the football team where his coaches were Jack Casagrande and Jack Cronin, a pair of future Old Timers recipients themselves.

The following year, Brien McMahon opened on the other side of town and Fuller, a junior at the time and living in the new district, traded his green and white colors for red, white, and blue.

After playing fullback and middle linebacker that 1960 season on an all-underclassmen team, Fuller and the Senators made their varsity debut in 1961 under head coach Frank Morgan and Casagrande, who also came across town as an assistant.

Fuller also played outfield for Morgan on the baseball team, and competed in field events on the track team for Casagrande during his three years at McMahon.

He would go on to play linebacker for an 8-2 Virginia Union University team for one season before transferring to Fairfield University, where he graduated in 1966. The Stags didn't have a football team, but Fuller was able to pick up a new sport — rugby. He did resume his football career as a lineman with the Clark Air Force Base in the Philippines while earning the rank of Staff Sergeant.

When his playing days were over, Fuller turned to coaching, and from 1970-'80 he guided the South Norwalk Spartans of the Norwalk Recreation Junior High Football League to five city championships in 10 years. One season, Fuller's team went unbeaten, untied, and unscored upon, a feat that even earned a mention in *Sports Illustrated*.

During that same period, Fuller also found time to coach football and freshmen baseball at McMahon from 1970-'78. If that wasn't enough, he also coached one year of Pop Warner football with the Norwalk AA, and spent 25 years as a high school and recreation league basketball referee.

With a degree in Education, Fuller returned to his alma mater at Brien McMahon in 1970, where he taught social studies for the next seven years before becoming a guidance counselor at the high school during the 1977-'78 academic year.

Then in 1978, he left the school system to become the executive director of the George Washington Carver Foundation in Norwalk, a position he's held for the past 24 years. Through the local community center, Fuller has helped provide a healthy climate to improve the social and economic development of both the city's youth and its senior citizens.

But that is only one of the ways the 57-year-old Richard Fuller has become a dynamic leader in the Norwalk community. He has also served on the board of directors for the United Way, Vitam, the Seaport Association, Community House, the Human Services Council, and the NAACP. In addition, he was a Norwalk Recreation and Parks commissioner for six years, and since 1985 has served as a member of the Norwalk Board of Education.

Married to the former Carolyn Crocker, an intervention aide at Ponus Ridge Middle School, the Fullers have two sons, Ricky Jr. and Bryan, and one granddaughter, Dominique. Ricky Fuller, Jr., is also a teacher at Norwalk High School and the assistant coach of the Bears' girls basketball team, which has won three straight FCIAC championships and the 2000 Class LL state title. He, too, is a former standout athlete at Brien McMahon and became part of the first father-son combo to play football for the Senators.

Just another "first" for Richard Fuller.