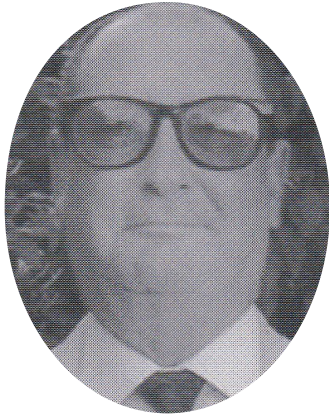


Tom Kelly



Tom Kelly was the consummate company man, both professionally and when it came to athletics.

Kelly was a staple at the Nash Engineering Company for 41 years, most of that time in Norwalk, before retiring in 1996 as employment manager in the Human Resources department.

It was also during that time Kelly carved out a pretty impressive athletic career playing for many of the great sports teams at Nash. In fact, Kelly played parts of four different decades, starting in the 1950s and '60s, and continued to play right through the 1970s and '80s.

The 66-year-old Kelly was a pitcher on the Nash softball team and a key member of the company's bowling team, which won several Norwalk Industrial League championships.

But the versatile Kelly really made his mark on the hardwood as a center for the Nash Engineering basketball teams, another perennial Dusty League power. One of his best seasons came in 1955-'56 when he helped lead Nash to the City League championship and Kelly was named MVP of the league.

Over the years, some of Kelly's teammates with all three teams included softball Hall of Famer Art Reale, a 1995 Old Timers honoree, Bob Nestor, Jack McLaughlin, and 1986 Old Timers honoree Ernie Imri.

But Kelly's success in sports wasn't limited solely to his days at Nash. Raised in South Norwalk where he attended Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin schools, Kelly played center for the Norwalk High School basketball team under coach Walter Dudding in 1949 and '50.

Following his graduation from NHS in 1950, Kelly remained very active in local sports circles. He played basketball for the O'Brien Emeralds during the 1950s, teaming up with players such as Joe Lametta, Bill O'Malley, Bill Zakhar, Bob Rudner, Jim McNut, Bill Rogowski, and Dick White to win several tournaments.

Kelly was also a big favorite in Westport, pitching with some of the great Wee Tavern softball teams in the 1950s and '60s, and playing center on the Westport YMCA basketball teams during the 1960s. One of Kelly's teammates on both teams was Junior Bieling, another softball Hall of Famer and a Norwalk Old Timers honoree last year.

In addition, the talented Kelly played softball in Norwalk with the great Pote Builders teams of the '60s, and was a teammate of two more Hall of Famers — Johnny Buschbaum and Rocky Marucci — when they won the state championship.

Kelly was also active outside the playing field. He served as president of the Norwalk Industrial League, and was also involved with the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Directors at STAR, and is a former president of the Nash Engineering Federal Credit Union.

The father of two now resides in Danbury with his wife, the former Frances Pascarelli. And even though his playing, and working, days are over, Tom Kelly, the company man, remains active playing golf and babysitting his seven grandchildren.