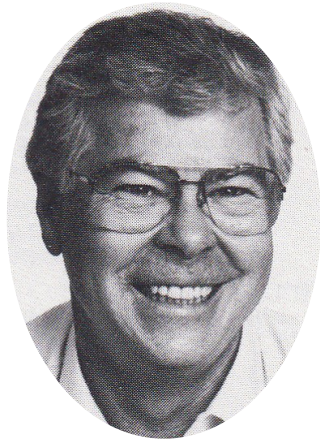


Stew Leonard



Long before Stew Leonard's (the dairy store) came into being, there was a Stew Leonard who put Norwalk on the map as the North American water ski champion. In 1957, Leonard, as a member of the Ascension Beach Water Ski Club, joined the Century Club with his winning jump of 107 feet. Today he will tell you the kids are jumping about twice that distance. In fact, the current world's record is more than 200 feet.

As a youth in his 20s, Stew was active for seven or eight years in water skiing, with the late Tom and Lou Gardella, as well as John and Jim Gardella, Bob Andre, and John Kendi, among others. The association with his former teammates continues today.

To achieve the North American title, which he won in competition at Dart's Lake in the Adirondacks, Stew worked his way through championships in local, state, and regional meets. The ski championships are still sponsored by the American Water Ski Association of Winter Haven, Florida.

When he injured his back later in 1957, Stew retired from active competition, and spent several years teaching the youngsters at Ascension Beach.

Earlier in his athletic career, Stew played football with the Cranbury Panthers, and was a pole vaulter at Norwalk High and the University of Connecticut. His second love, however, was ice hockey, as a goalie, both with Norwalk High and later with the Norwalk Cubs.

Today, Stew is nationally renowned for his famous "Stew Leonard's" on Westport Avenue, regarded as the "Disneyland of Dairy Stores," and the "World's Largest Dairy Store."