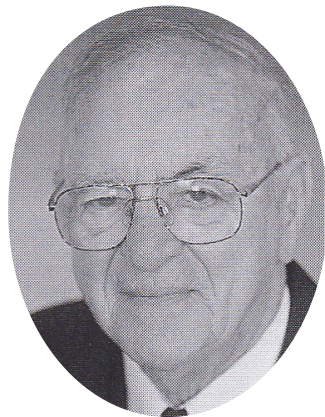


Richard O'Grady



Not many people can claim they were a big part of two varsity sports teams at each of the city's two high schools. **Richard O'Grady** is one who can.

O'Grady was a reserve running back on the Norwalk High School football team in 1942 and '43, and a starting outfielder on the 1944 NHS baseball team. A quarter of a century later, he was the head coach of the Brien McMahon High School cross country team and a few years after that he coached the Senators' indoor track team.

And in between his stints at both local high schools, O'Grady played with a number of other city sports teams. Born and raised in Norwalk, O'Grady graduated from Norwalk High in 1944, and that summer played center field and batted clean up for the Shorefront Park baseball team in the Norwalk Senior Recreation baseball league.

He would spend the next two years serving in the U.S. Navy, during which time he played baseball for the U.S. Naval Ammunition Depot team stationed in Earle, Colts Neck, NJ.

Upon returning home, O'Grady was back on the local baseball circuit, playing outfield and third base for the Auto Wreckers in 1946 and '47, and for the Spring Hill Tigers in 1948. He was also back on

the football field during the fall of those three years, playing as a running back on the Pastimes team in 1946 and on the 1947 team which captured the city championship. Then in 1948, he joined the Spring Hill football team, which won the Rotary League championship and the last of their many city titles. In fact, one of O'Grady's teammates on that club was fellow 1999 Old Timers honoree Fred 'Moose' Miller.

But O'Grady's athletic career also ventured outside of baseball and football. He played softball for the Norwalk Police team in 1950 and '51, and fast pitch softball for Burndy Corporation in the Norwalk Industrial League in 1956. He had also played softball previously for the 1944 All-Stars. In addition, O'Grady played basketball on the Norwalk Police team in 1951.

Twenty-five years after playing his last game for Norwalk High, O'Grady was named the head coach of the Brien McMahon High School cross country team and coached the Senators for the next six seasons from 1969 to 1974. During that stretch, he added the head coaching duties of the BMHS indoor track team from 1971-'73.

O'Grady's coaching career actually began even earlier than that. During the early 1960s, he coached the basketball program at both Rowayton and Tracey elementary schools.

That was early in his teaching career, a career that would span a total of 33 years, all in the Norwalk school system. He started at Rowayton School, moved to West Rocks Jr. High, and in 1969 joined the staff at Brien McMahon where he taught world geography, U.S. history, and civics. He was the team leader in 1971 and the faculty advisor in 1973.

O'Grady spent eight years at McMahon before returning to his alma mater at the new Norwalk High School in 1976 where he was the Social Studies Department chairperson. O'Grady would spend the next 20 years at NHS before retiring in 1995. He still does some teaching however, through Norwalk's continuing education/adult education night programs as well as being a volunteer substitute teacher at Norwalk High.

Throughout his career in education, Richard O'Grady was responsible for some very MVP-like accomplishments. He was the founder and first president of the Norwalk Federation of Teachers from 1968-'70, and its first vice president from 1970-'75. In addition, he was a member of the NFT Executive Committee from 1968-'85, and the negotiating committee from 1973-'95. He also served on both the Connecticut and National Council of Social Studies, and was very active with the Connecticut and American Federation of Teachers.

Even when he wasn't playing or coaching, O'Grady always managed to stay close to high school athletics. From 1973-'76, he worked 'spectator control' at all McMahon football and basketball games, an activity he continued during his many years at Norwalk High.

Retirement hasn't slowed the 73-year-old O'Grady up either. He continues to work the 'chains' at all NHS home football games, and right up until Ray Barry retired as boys basketball coach after the 1998 season, O'Grady was always part of his support staff, traveling with the team and providing players with juice drinks after each game.

O'Grady now resides in Wilton with his wife, the former Jennie Wasilewski, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren.