

Special Award
Rev. John S. Livingston



The Rev. John S. Livingston, who will receive a special award from the Norwalk Old Timers at tonight's Sports Awards Dinner, has been a friend of the sports community ever since he arrived at the United Church of Rowayton almost 10 years ago.

But perhaps he's best known for his work and close relationship with the successful Brien McMahon High School football program. For the past several seasons, Livingston has been a familiar figure on the Senators' sidelines, offering inspiration to players and coaches alike.

"He's been a big help," head coach Rob Trifone said in a recent interview. "He helps us from the emotional and psychological side. A head coach and his assistants try to do it all, but you can't and John helps us with that facet of coaching. No doubt, it takes a load off my shoulders."

"When I address the team at Saturday morning breakfasts or Friday evening pizza parties, I just try to offer spiritual insight and motivational talks," Livingston, a key part of last year's state championship BMHS club, explained. "The team has been extremely prepared physically and prepared mentally. I try to prepare them spiritually. Then you're prepared with body, mind, and soul, and you need all three to be a unit. That's what I try to provide.

"You get to know the players and their joys and struggles," Livingston, a former high school football player himself in Long Island, added. Football parallels life some days and I want to be there to get them through."

And according to Trifone, he does exactly that.

"He lets the kids know he's with them no matter what," the coach said. "I know I've always found comfort in what John says. He puts things in perspective. We love having him around and the kids love him.

"Plus he gets by to practice two or three times a week, sometimes for five minutes, sometimes maybe longer. But if you ask him to talk to someone on the team about a problem, he will. He doesn't just talk about wins and losses. He spends a lot of time with kids."

Livingston was no stranger to sports even before he arrived in Norwalk. Born in Queens Village, Long Island, he was an all-county defensive end at St. Paul's Prep in Garden City, leading his team in prayer even back then. He also played basketball and was a member of the track team.

He later attended C.W. Post/Long Island University where he majored in music. In fact, John and his wife, Judi, have performed together at many local functions.

John also attended Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan, graduating in 1981. He served as an associate pastor at the Garden City Community Church from 1982-'86 before coming to Norwalk as only the second pastor at the United Church of Rowayton in the spring of '86.

An avid sports fan, Livingston has also coached in the Rowayton Little League and Rowayton Youth Soccer League. In addition, his support of high school sports is not limited to just football. It's not unusual to see John at other McMahon athletic events.

"I've always tried to support the young people of our church whether it's field hockey, soccer, or basketball, he said.

John is also not the only one in his family associated with the local sports scene. His brother, Sky Livingston, is currently an assistant coach with the McMahon girls' basketball team, a position he also held for several years with the Norwalk High girls' basketball team, winning state championships at both local high schools.

John and Judi, who have been married 17 years, reside in Rowayton with their three children, Kelly, 13, Samantha, 10, and Michael, 5.