

*Greetings
From the President*

NOVEMBER 8, 2023



Welcome to the 59th *Norwalk Old Timers' Sports Award Dinner*. It has been my distinct honor and privilege to serve as president of the Norwalk Old Timers as this night has become a great tradition for the City of Norwalk. It reunites friends and honors those who have made significant contributions to the Norwalk sports scene. And it's great to have the dinner back in Norwalk this year.

Tonight we honor ten people who have distinguished themselves in sports and beyond.

I want to thank all of you attending this evening, especially those who come every year. Your support has enriched the City of Norwalk with this event and sustained the scholarship fund that has grown to three scholarships each annually for Norwalk and Brien McMahon High Schools.

I must also thank our dedicated Old Timers executive committee, the members of which put in many hours of work to make this a special evening.

Finally, we are grateful also to our many sponsors, patrons, and donors for their vital support.

I hope everyone will enjoy this great Norwalk Old Timers' evening.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pete Tucci". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "P".

Pete Tucci
President

THE HEFFERAN FAMILY
congratulates

CHRIS SANTOPIETRO

*We are all proud of your
accomplishment!*

*You have been like a family
member for a very long time.*

Your induction is well deserved!

Enjoy the evening!

The Hefferan Family



**CONGRATULATIONS
MIKE EPSTEIN!**

and all the
2023 Norwalk
Old Timers' Honorees

**The Norwalk Lacrosse
Association**

**We congratulate
JEN, LAURA, MIKE, DOUG,
JOHN, CHRIS, KEVIN,
and TONY!**



**We thank these 2023 Honorees
for being true athletes
and hope that they remain
true athletes throughout their lives.**



**Stan and Drew Czulewicz
Margie Czulewicz Hingston
Vic Budnik
Stan Koronkiewicz**

CONGRATULATIONS

to

DOUG MARCHETTI

and all the

2023 Norwalk Old Timers' inductees

Enjoy the evening!



The Moffett Family

Frank, Sheila, Patrick, Katelyn,

Brayden, and Connor

THANK YOU
2023 OLD TIMERS' HONOREE
MIKE EPSTEIN
FOR EVERYTHING



JAKE AND CHRIS COUCH
with Kevin Cronin, BMHS Lax 1998, joining in

Congratulations

Jennifer Buonerba Prescott



We are so very proud
of your many
accomplishments

We Love You!
Mom (Miss Penny),
Jon, Nicole and Dan

CONGRATULATIONS, JOHN!

We are all so proud of all
you have done in local sports
and as a coach at Fairfield University.

WELL DESERVED!



Mike DiDio, Sr., Phyllis & Family

CONGRATULATIONS

2023

OLD TIMERS' HONOREES

ESPECIALLY

MIKE EPSTEIN

THE COUCH FAMILY

Jake, Chris, Kiki & Jack

Fairfield County

Interscholastic Athletic Conference

Congratulations to Norwalk HS Athletic Director

DOUG MARCHETTI

as a Norwalk Old Timers Inductee
along with former Norwalk HS athletes and coaches

Mike Epstein

Jennifer Buonerba Prescott

Kevin Stevens

Art Schad

The FCIAC is proud of you!



Coach Ep.

I wanted to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for your incredible impact on my life, both as a coach and as a life mentor. Your selflessness, unwavering support, and willingness to listen and help have left an indelible mark on my journey.

Your dedication to your players and the sport was evident in every practice, game, and everything in between. But what set you apart was your ability to transcend the role of a coach and become a true mentor for so many.

Through all the ups and downs of life, you were always there, providing guidance and wisdom. You've been a constant source of inspiration for me, and I can only hope to positively impact as many lives as you have.

I'm confident that I'm not alone in feeling this way. You've undoubtedly touched the lives of many, both before and after me. Your impact extends far beyond the lacrosse field, and for that, I am truly grateful.

Thank you for being the mentor, role model, and friend that I've been fortunate to have in my life. Your selflessness, support, and humor have made all the difference.

With deep appreciation,

Amit Ghadiyali. Class of 2000

Congratulations 2023 Old Timers Honorees

From the
Norwalk High School
Lacrosse Alumni



George & Louie's
EAST AVENUE PIZZA



OPEN 7 DAYS!

84 Fort Point Street • East Norwalk, CT 06855
Phone: 203-853-9955

CONGRATULATIONS
TO ALL
2023 NORWALK OLD
TIMERS' ATHLETIC
ASSOCIATION
HONOREES

From
George & Louie's
East Avenue Pizza
East Norwalk, CT

CONGRATULATIONS
John Paladino
CCHS Class of '72

PHYL-VIC LLC
proudly endorses the
Old Timers' Athletic Association's
Scholarship Program for Brien McMahon
and Norwalk High School students



SD Auto Repair, LLC
Samuel Garcia and Dulce Estrada
107 Water Street
South Norwalk, CT 06854
(203) 391-4371

Congratulations

MR. Marchetti

Thank you for everything you do!

Norwalk HS Football



CONGRATULATIONS



TO

ALL OF THE **2023 HONOREES**

Richard, Diana

Jason Zakhar & Kimberly (Zakhar) Troccolo



CONGRATULATIONS KEVIN!

*“We wouldn’t have won the
1986 NCAA Division II Men’s
Basketball Championship
without you.”*

—Dave Bike
Former Sacred Heart University
Head Men’s Basketball Coach



*The McMahon Football Family
would like to send out much deserved*
CONGRATULATIONS

*to the
2023 Norwalk Old Timers inductees!
Your impact on student athletes is
immeasurable.*

**GO
McMAHON FOOTBALL!**



CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU, CHRIS!

We are extremely
proud of you!

From
Szilvia, Alex, and Mom

ZACK'S
barbershops

135 Connecticut Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06854
(203) 286-8973



**CONGRATULATIONS
LAURA
FROM THE
CONN COLLEGE
CAMELS!**



CONGRATULATIONS!

to all the
2023 NORWALK OLD TIMERS'
HONOREES

from

Paul Kokias

The Wine Basket

11 Cove Avenue, East Norwalk

(203) 858-0638

www.winebasketCT.com

paul@WineBasket.com





CONGRATULATIONS

JOHN PALADINO

JENNIFER BUONERBA
PRESCOTT

KEVIN STEVENS

*“It was a pleasure and an honor
to have coached all three of you.”*

—Ray Barry



THE FAIRFIELD COUNTY FOOTBALL OFFICIALS ASSOCIATION

*Congratulates all the
Norwalk Old Timers
2023 Honorees!*

President
Kevin Mariconda

1st Vice President
John DeMirjain

2nd Vice President
Tom Sportini

Secretary/Treasurer
Bill Howard

Commissioner
Gerry Costello

CONGRATULATES
TONY WARD (BMHS 1984)
and **ALL 2023 HONOREES**



*The Brien McMahon High School
Alumni Association*



NHS BEARS BASEBALL

On behalf of the
Norwalk High School Baseball team
we want to extend our
congratulations to all the
2023 Honorees.

Through your accomplishments,
you have been and continue to be a
shining example for all of our
current and future players.

On behalf of the BJ Ryan's Group

CONGRATULATIONS!



BJ Ryan's
"The Pub"
57 Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06851
Full kitchen til midnight 365 days!



BanC House
"BBQ & CRAB"
16 River Street
Norwalk, CT 06850
Brunch every Saturday & Sunday!



BJ Ryan's East
"East"
1 Cove Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06855
Proudly serving
the original Partner's Pizza!



The BJ Ryan's Foundation was created in 2010 as a community-driven base for charitable giving.

Donations can be mailed to:
The BJ Ryan's Foundation
57 Main Street
Norwalk, CT 06851

Congratulations to Norwalk's Newest "Old Timers"

Mike Epstein
Laura Brunner Gulden
Doug Marchetti
John Paladino
Jennifer Buonerba Prescott
Chris Santopietro
Kevin Stevens
Tony Ward
Joe Santo, Sr.
(posthumous)
Art Schad
(Mike Errico Award)

from Larry Cafero and



CAFERO
LAW AND STRATEGIES

“50+ YEARS”

THE ACES

(1964 – 2020)

***Salute all the
2023 Old Timers’
Honorees***



***“Not Just Softball,
But a Lifestyle”***

The Tucci family wants to
thank and congratulate
all the 2023 honorees.

**Each of you has helped
to make the
City of Norwalk
the “Sports Capital”
of the state.**

CONGRATULATIONS!

THE HOME OILERS HOCKEY CLUB

and

PETER CORRENTY

Team Founder, General Manager,
Head Coach, and 2010 Old Timers Honoree

salute

The Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association, and all the 2023 honorees

*In 10 years as Norwalk's Semi-Pro Hockey Team,
the Home Oilers compiled a record of 155-31-11
for an .833 winning percentage*



1971-72

HOME OILERS HOCKEY TEAM

*Winners of the First
Canadian-American Hockey League Championship*

FROM: THE NORWALK UMPIRES ASSOCIATION

**Congratulations
to all the
2023
Norwalk Old Timer
Honorees**



MCMAHON



CONGRATULATIONS
to the
2023 Norwak Old Timers' Inductees

McMahon Baseball
GO SENATORS!

Congratulations Laura Brunner Gulden



We are proud to celebrate you today. Both on and off the court, your strength, determination, and commitment are an inspiration. We love you!

- Greg, Kate, & Liz



Laura Brunner Gulden



It was no coincidence that the girls basketball program at Central Catholic High School began to turn the corner in the late 1970s and early '80s.

That's when **LAURA BRUNNER**, a talented 6-foot-2 center, arrived at the private school on West Rocks Road. By the time she was done, the Lady Cavaliers, an under .500 team their first two decades, found themselves playing in the state tournament. Meanwhile, Brunner became the all-time leading scorer in CCHS girls basketball history while being named All-City three straight seasons.

Brunner didn't waste any time making an impact, breaking into the starting lineup as a freshman in the 1977-78 season and averaging 8.3 points per game, second best on the team. As a sophomore, she upped her scoring average to a team-leading 13.2 points while making *The Hour's* second annual All-City Girls Basketball Team.

But it was her junior year, the 1979-80 season, that Brunner established herself as one of the best frontcourt players in the Western Connecticut Conference as she averaged 16.9 points—nearly 40 percent of the Cavaliers' offense—to finish second in the city scoring race while leading the city with 18 rebounds a contest. Those impressive numbers included a career-high 28 points against Joel Barlow and a career-best 26 rebounds versus New Milford. In addition to being named All-City again, Brunner was voted to the All-WCC Briggs Division team.

Something else noteworthy occurred in Brunner's junior season that helped upgrade her game. Tom Kriz took over as the new Central Catholic girls basketball coach and Brunner's play on the court flourished in the Cavaliers' new offense. Another significant piece of the puzzle was the addition of Jeanne Vallerie, a 2022 Norwalk Old Timers honoree, who entered CCHS a year earlier when Brunner was a sophomore. As the starting point guard in her sophomore year, Vallerie led the team in assists and was second to Brunner in scoring.

Then a year later, the 1980-81 season, it all came together for Central Catholic. Behind Brunner's scoring, Vallerie's floor generalship, and Kriz's coaching, the Lady Cavs posted the first winning season in the program's long history, finishing 12-6 in the regular season and making the state tournament for the first time. With more help on offense, Brunner didn't have to carry as much of the scoring load, but still led the team in scoring with 15.3 ppg while grabbing 14 rebounds a game despite playing hurt a good part of the season. She repeated as an All-Briggs Division selection and became the first three-time All-City pick.

And when the team needed her to score, Brunner answered the call, registering 20 or more points six times, and 18 or more in nine games. But no basket was more memorable than the one she scored on Feb. 3, 1981. With 1:17 remaining in the third quarter of Central's second to last regular-season game against Abbott Tech, Brunner hit a short turnaround basket for her 1,000th career point, making her the first player in the school's girls basketball history to reach the coveted mark. She was also only the second female player in Norwalk history to score 1,000 points, joining Margaret Diaz, who graduated from Norwalk High in 1979 with 1,046 points.

Brunner finished with a season-high 25 points in that game, then scored 18 in the regular

continued **BRUNNER GULDEN**, p.54

Congratulations

Jennifer Buonerba Prescott



From the ball field to the heart of our family, you've played an integral role. With your children, their spouses, and grandkids, we've assembled a full roster.

Your love and dedication continue to make us
the strongest team.

We love you!



Jennifer Buonerba Prescott



As a five-time All-FCIAC first-team selection, **JENNIFER BUONERBA PRESCOTT** certainly established herself as one of the city's best all-around athletes—female or male—in the late 1970s.

The 1979 Norwalk High graduate excelled on the field hockey field in the fall and shined on the softball diamond in the spring for the Lady Bears. She even played two years of varsity basketball for NHS in between. In fact, when she arrived at 23 Calvin Murphy Drive as a freshman, Jennifer Buonerba, as she was known then, tried out for all three sports and made the varsity in each.

But there's no question softball was her calling card.

"I was born with a glove in my hand," she claims.

But growing up, there were no youth softball leagues for girls in Norwalk. That was still a couple of years away.

"Tracey School was my backyard, my playground for a long time," she noted. "I had no formal training or lessons. I just loved to play."

By middle school, her talent in softball began to emerge when she joined the Norwalk Debs in the City Recreation League and was the team's second-leading hitter with a .615 batting average. The only Debs player with a higher average was Sue Eskierski, her future Norwalk High teammate and 2019 Norwalk Old Timers honoree, who batted .721. Led by the two future Bears, the first-place Debs finished 14-3 that season and went 39-4 over three seasons.

From there, it was on to Norwalk High where she was a big part of the Bears' softball dynasty, batting leadoff and playing a flawless center field on Norwalk's first two FCIAC championships in 1978 and '79. They would also be the first of Norwalk's four straight conference titles and record 11 FCIAC crowns overall.

Buonerba, a natural speedster on the base paths, was a junior on the first of those title teams and batted .440 with an over .600 on-base percentage.

"She may be small in size, but she plays like a giant," coach Ray Barry was quoted in *The Hour's* All-City article following the season.

Buonerba also covered a lot of ground in the outfield and did not make an error all season.

"Jennifer is the best outfielder in the County," Barry added.

That was the first-ever All-City team in girls softball and besides Buonerba, the all-star squad included her fellow NHS underclassmen Stephanie Seymour, Lynn Luczkoski, Missy Oman, and Eskierski, all five now Norwalk Old Timers honorees.

The Bears finished 20-3 and Class LL state runner-up that season, while in 1979 they won their first 20 games—including another FCIAC title—but were upset by Amity 2-1 in the state semifinals for the only blemish on a 20-1 season. Buonerba was again a key component, batting .433 with an on-base percentage of .604, which included 26 walks.

"Jennifer is the best leadoff batter in Fairfield County," Barry said in that end-of-season

continued **BUONERBA PRESCOTT**, p. 54

Congrats, Mike!!

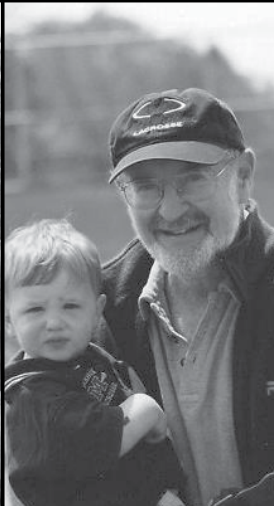
We are so happy
to be celebrating
with you!

Love,
Your biggest fans,
*Terri, Cassi, and
Blake Epstein*



Mike Epstein of Norwalk celebrates a first half goal yesterday. Epstein went on to score eight goals in Norwalk's 14-13 win. STAFF PHOTO

MIKE EPSTEIN



Mike Epstein



MIKE EPSTEIN left his mark on the sport of lacrosse in Norwalk on both sides of town, one on the field and the other off.

As a player at Norwalk High School, the three-year attackman had a record-breaking career, graduating in 1985 as the city's all-time leader in goals. A decade later, the former Bear was named the new head lacrosse coach at Brien McMahon and over the next 18 seasons transformed the Senators into a perennial FCIAC and state championship contender.

Epstein's lacrosse journey began as a freshman at NHS in the spring of 1982 and a year later he made the varsity roster. His breakout season, however, would come as a junior in 1984 when he scored 43 goals to set a new school and city single-season record. He also recorded 23 assists to finish

with a team-leading 66 points.

He was even better as a senior captain in 1985, breaking his own record with 64 goals while adding 29 assists for 93 points, another school and city record. Those impressive numbers included Epstein scoring a record eight goals (and adding one assist) in the Bears' exciting 14-13 overtime win against perennial power New Canaan.

In addition, Epstein's 113 career goals were also a city record while his 54 career assists gave him a total of 167 points, tying the city's all-time record set by former teammate and 1982 NHS grad Eric Prescott, who was a senior when Epstein broke in as a freshman.

Norwalk would finish 15-4 and reach the FCIAC championship game and state semifinals in Epstein's final season. Besides being voted team MVP, first-team All-FCIAC, and first-team all-state, Epstein capped off his outstanding career by being named a high school All-American by U.S. Lacrosse.

Following a successful career at Division I University of Vermont, Epstein returned to NHS as an assistant coach under his former mentor Randy McCue, a 2013 Norwalk Old Timers honoree. After five years in that role, Epstein was ready to run his own program and when a position opened up on the other side of town, he traded his green and white colors for red, white, and blue as he was named the new head lacrosse coach at Brien McMahon.

It didn't take him long to bring respectability to the Senators' program, leading the team to an 8-8 regular-season record in 1998 and its first state tournament berth in just his third season at the helm. McMahon then won its first postseason game in program history, upsetting No. 3 Guilford to reach the Division II semifinals before losing a 9-7 heartbreaker to No. 2 and eventual state champion Fairfield High.

The Senators returned to the D-II state semis in 1999 while posting a winning record (10-9) for the first time. Then in 2000, in only his fifth season as head coach, Epstein guided No. 1 seed McMahon to the CIAC Division II state championship with a thrilling 12-11 victory over No. 3 Guilford to finish with a 15-5 record. McMahon moved up to Division I the following season

continued **EPSTEIN**, p.55



DOUG MARCHETTI

To the best Husband and Dad!

**Congratulations on this special honor!
We are so proud of you!**

Love, Sheila, Alyssa, Kyle and Jessie



Doug Marchetti



D OUG MARCHETTI has been an integral part of the local high school sports scene for the past two decades, first as the head coach of the Norwalk-Brien McMahon co-op boys swim team and for the last nine years as the athletic director at NHS.

Under his leadership, the Bears have celebrated success in several sports, including winning state championships in girls basketball and baseball. They've also captured FCIAC titles in boys soccer and girls basketball in addition to a pair of conference runner-up finishes and a trio of division crowns under his watch.

Marchetti's involvement with the city of Norwalk goes back even further. From 1993 to 2001, he taught physical education and health at Rowayton Elementary School while also implementing several school and district-wide events. It was also during this time Marchetti received his Master's Degree in Physical Education in 1994 and his Sixth Year Professional Diploma in 1999 from Southern Connecticut State University.

Then in the summer of 2001, Marchetti moved crosstown to Norwalk High School where he was named the Health and Physical Education Department chairman. In addition to teaching health and PE in grades 9-12, Marchetti served as a liaison between the district department faculty and the central office. In 2009 he added the title of Region II Director of the Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

It was with the move to NHS that Marchetti became head coach of a high school varsity sport for the first time when in 2002 he took over the Norwalk-McMahon boys co-op swim team. Over the next 13 years his program produced numerous All-FCIAC and all-state swimmers as well as four Academic All-Americans.

He stepped down as head coach when he was named the Director of Athletics at Norwalk High in 2014. His new responsibilities included overseeing 28 varsity sports with over 800 student athletes participating and a support staff of 85. All while continuing to teach Health and Phys Ed.

In addition, Marchetti has hosted numerous FCIAC and CIAC postseason tournaments at his NHS facilities, in which he served as the site director. He has also been a member of the FCIAC Board of Directors since 2006, serving as president of the conference from 2019-2021, and he continues to sit on a number of state committees.

One of Marchetti's proudest accomplishments as athletic director was beginning the Unified Sports Program at Norwalk High in 2015. As a parent of a special needs child, Marchetti has witnessed firsthand the positive impact both Unified Sports and Special Olympics has had on the NHS community.

NHS isn't the only school at which Marchetti has coached. From 1991-2014 he also served as an assistant football coach at Trumbull High School, his alma mater, where the 1981

continued **MARCHETTI**, p.55

Norwalk Old Timers Association Past Sports Award Recipients

1963 John J. McGarrie John McGrath Arthur Olson	1977 Joe Kulscar Joe Lonchak Lou Nazzaro Tom Price Louis (Duke) Yoczik	Norm Donnelly Bill Dudas John Dwyer Mike Lombardi	1992 Art Bobrowsky Guido Bossone Lou Bredice Dick Buonerba Ed Cerulli John A. Mendence Nick Santaniello, DDS Wayne Shadbolt	Stan Poremba Robert "Bobby" Ryan Anthony "Bobby" Santo Earl Stabell
1964 Joseph Beres Harold Cutbill Russell Day	1978 Lou Bardani Chick Ciccarelli Eugene "Ike" Kern Benny Mason Fred Palumbo Williard Williams	1985 Dom Christopher "Mickey" Connolly John D'Amato Jim Ellis Irv "Lefty" Geddes Joe Lemetta Frank Lippolis Nick Melfi Sal Spinola	1993 Jimmy Beau Romas Bossone Dick Cross Nick Garfield Ferd Gottscham Jack Redway Jim Romanello Gene Seymour	2000 Ray Barry Fred Bondi Mary Combis Roger Devine Robert Dowling Roger Gendron Edward McSally Jack Ryan
1965 Snow Keene Frank Riley Charles Volk Benjamin Whone	1979 Alva "Al" Cocchia Bob Edge Mike Errico Clyde Joyal Willis Overton Bob Smith Naomi Wargo	1986 Anso Belardinelli Fred Belinsky Bob Callahan Jay Callahan Lee Corbo Ernie Imri Norm Sculley Vinnie Vellotti	1994 Robert Colbert James Creagh Joseph Cusack, Sr. Fred DeFinis Allen Helfant Joseph Marchese Joseph Morrison Alan Seymour	2001 Rollie D'Avanzo Richard Fuller Lee Johnson Nicholas Mastolillo Roger Shoals Jerry McGee Alan Staack Merv Tarlov
1966 Louis J. Gardella Herbert Herring Louis Tarlov	1980 Edward Bonello George H. Bredice Vic D'Amato Frank Gaudiano Frank J. Impy Eric C. Malmquist Francis D. Martin William J. Miller Leo P. Skidd	1987 Joseph A. Bellantoni Otto Buchholz William D. Ireland William J. Kish, Sr. George "Mimi" Lawrence Michael Marucci Sylvio "Babe" Spinola Frances "Frank" Troy	1995 Jack Casagrande Ralph DiMeglio Don Gustafson Don LaJoie Ed Luczkowski Edward Raymond Art Reale Mary Roman	2002 Bob Avery Al Boczer Quinto Christopher Bill Connery Jack Devine Mike Santa Lucia Reggie Spears Jack Weisheit
1967 Phil Baker Leo Frank Thomas Ireland	1981 Ralph Caruso David Fromer Robert Hunt John Johns Chris Lysobey Vincent "Peck" O'Brien Angelo Radano Edgar Raymond Dean Russell Jack Squires Jack Staff	1988 Thomas R. Corbo Frederick J. Foldeak Douglas Morrison William O'Malley Louis Renzulli, Sr. William A. Ripley William Rogowski Sergio "Abbie" Spinola	1996 Sal Canal Mike DiDio Don Gynor Vinny Grillo Ralph King Marie Corridon Mortell Charlie Provenzano Mario Salomone	2003 Mike Barbarula Ed Fahan Joe Iannacone Joe Magyar Otto Makowsky Calvin Murphy Bob Schaefer
1968 Dr. Harry H. Hefferan Joseph Kerekes Andrew Richards	1982 Dennis Callahan Americo Christopher William J. Cibere Louis J. D'Orso William F. Gonch Eleanor Davenport Hart Frederick M. Janci Joseph Janci William Lauder, Jr. Dave Ragaini Carmine A. Santarella	1989 George C. Arseniadis Karl J. Bassone Walter F. Court Dominick A. Cundari Walter F. Dudding Basil Marella Rocco "Rocky" Marucci Nicholas J. Santo	1997 John "Jr." Bieling Al Canevari Joe DeFlorio John Harris Lou Mola Vin Santagata Pat Spinola Ralph Tavella	2004 Dennis D'Amato Russ Dennis Vincent DePanfilis Jerry Fishman Bill Granata John Huminski Bill Krause Elaine Woodward Setapen Charlie "Bud" Smith
1969 Donald N. Bredice James J. Paul Horace McMahan	1983 Louis J. Bottone Nicholas J. Bredice Lloyd Fuller Herbert Launiere Al Palumbo Frank Palumbo Joseph P. Sheehan	1990 Mauro (Mac) Bossone Jerry Courville, Sr. George Herman Elsie Testa Imri John Krysluk Bob "Rivets" Miller Ted Tedesco George Weed	1998 Jim Deering Arnie Evans Frank Fay Mary Kehoe Tom Kelly Tom O'Connor Ladislaw Rastocky Lee Seymour	2005 Pete Barrella Lou Cundari Steve Guback Bucky Iannacone Frank Lapak Lew Marino Dave Mills Charlie Mitchell
1970 George B. Buschbaum Joseph Marino James F. Sutton, Sr.	1984 Larry J. Anastasia Earl "Lala" Bellia Robert A. Corbo Jack Cronin	1991 Eugene Callahan Charles Cundari Leo Fagan Stew Leonard, Sr. Ted Lowry Frank Morgan Bernard Nowak Leroy Vaughn	1999 Thomas Horton Fred "Moose" Miller George "Bud" Moseley Richard M. O'Grady	2006 Terry Blitz Dennis Christopher Ted Fecenko Phil Kydes Gary Liberatoro Milt Peckham John Peters Jeff Rousseau
1971 James Bellantoni Norman Flewellyn Donald Shufelt				
1972 Everett S. Bulkley Patrick J. Davey Edward Herring				
1973 John Ingram Alfred Middleton John Miller John Rogers				
1974 Rudy Costa Len Fanning Steve Kravarik John McGuirk Bill Meehan Betty Philcox				
1975 Jerry Epstein Len Harris Frank Lombardi Al Naggie Ralph Venezia				
1976 Joe Buschbaum John Buschbaum Guy Cocchia Harry Combis Clarence Fanning George Fuller Tony Reda Jimmy Sutton				

Norwalk Old Timers Association Past Sports Award Recipients

2007 Bob Barate Al Buchta Connie Carpenter Steve Gulyas Billy Howard Joe Liberatore Harvey Melzer Pete Tucci	Jack Couch Don Foust Gary Lawrence Jerry McDougall Lynn Spagnesi Pat Vigilio, Sr. John Zeoli	Drew Czulewicz Art Kadish Joe Madaffari Randy McCue Franklin Melzer	Maryann Wehrheim 2016 Paul Atkins Jerry Courville, Jr. Tom Delmoor Margaret Diaz* Bruce Kirby Jim Matregrano* Phil "Skipper" Matregrano* Gary O'Malley Jerry Tavella Joe Troy* Kevin Welch Mike Wrinn	Gerald Anastasia Don Christopher Rocco Cundari, Jr.* Sue Eskierski Randy LaJoie Jim Lyons Jerome Maultsby Carl Paight* Steph Seymour 2019 Steve Annunziato Lou Eletto* Bob Kramer Maria Marino Missy Oman Felix Rodriguez Fred Santarella* Jeff Spahr Tim Wagner Harry Welfare
2008 Ed Faulkner John Kuczo Pete Lopusznicz James McLean Ralph Tucci Frank Vigilante Don Wilson Dick Zakhar	2011 George Albano Stan Czulewicz Paul Krasnawage Mark Kurimai John Newton Doug Peoples Dave Raila Dr. John Santorella	2014 Joe Andrews* Lorin Beresnyak* Tim Bishop Kevin Connolly Fred DeFinis Alvin Faust Rudy Gisolfi Paul Jacoby Eric Lund* Sam Miller Cleve Penberthy Sam Testa*	2017 Angelo Bruno Mary Buschbaum* Walt Czekaj* Tim Eagen Michael Herring Hector Huertas Lynn Luczkowski Kelly Myrick Greg Pritchett Mike Siganos* Edward Zamm	2022 John Davis Janine DeLise Deering Jeanne Vallerie DeRosa Dan Hughes Calvin Jordan* Kern Jordan* Mark Kreymborg Patti Richmond Al Tortorella
2009 Dan Letizia Rich MacDonald Bob Mendence Dick Packer Fred Petrin Don Quinn Dan Santarella Phil Tegan	2012 Ron Dominici Paul Gerken Bobby Miller Frank Moffett Wayne Mones Leo Motyka Andrea Seger Tom Shostak	2015 Willie Brooks John Eagen Lloyd Fuller John Keogh Sheila Moffett Dewey Raymond Sal Nuzzo Tom Scarso* Marvin Spencer* Sandy Weed Austin*	2018 Jeff Allen	
2010 Pete Correnty	2013 Mike Angione Celia Bobrowsky David Coyne			

**honored posthumously*

Past Presidents

1963–Thomas P. Skidd
1964–John C. Miller
1965–John D'Amato
1966–William Lauder, Jr.
1967–Andy Richards
1968–Don Shufelt
1969–Anthony Reda
1970–John McGuiirk
1971–John McGuiirk
1972–Edward J. Bonello, Sr.
1973–Robert J. Smith
1974–Robert J. Smith
1975–John McGuiirk
1976–Eugene Kimmel
1977–Robert J. Smith
1978–Robert J. Smith
1979–James Ellis
1980–James Ellis
1981–Robert A. Corbo
1982–Robert A. Corbo
1983–Edward J. Bonello, Sr.
1984–David J. Ragaini
1985–David J. Ragaini
1986–Michael E. Errico
1987–Michael E. Errico
1988–Edward J. Bonello Sr.
1989–Al Palumbo
1990–Al Palumbo
1991–Stanley Poremba
1992–Stanley Poremba
1993–John V. D'Amato

1994–John V. D'Amato
1995–Lawrence Anastasia
1996–Lawrence Anastasia
1997–Arthur W. Bobrowsky
1998–Arthur W. Bobrowsky
1999–Ferdinand Gottscham
2000–Ferdinand Gottscham
2001–George Albano
2002–George Albano
2003–Thomas R. Corbo
2004–Thomas R. Corbo
2005–Patrick D. Spinola
2006–Patrick D. Spinola
2007–Jim Deering
2008–Jim Deering
2009–Lewis J. Marino
2010–John Peters
2011–John Peters
2012–Dennis D'Amato
2013–Dennis D'Amato
2014–Dennis D'Amato
2015–Jack Couch
2016–Jack Couch
2017–Jack Couch
2018–Jack Couch
2019–Jack Couch
2020–Pete Tucci
2021–Pete Tucci
2022–Pete Tucci
2023–Pete Tucci

Past Mike Errico Award Recipients

1974–Tom Skidd
1975–Nick Santaniello
1976–Nash Engineering Co., Inc.
1977–Bill Walden
1978–Norwalk Family YMCA
1979–Harry "Mickey" Connolly
1980–Germain G. Glidden
1982–Vincent G. Ryan
1983–Laurel Athletic Club
1985–Russell A. Kelly
1987–American Legion Post 12
1990–Lou Brodersen
1991–Mace Norwood
1993–Pete Tucci, Sr.
1994–Jeff Smith
1995–Rev. John Livingston
1996–Ray Barry, Rob Trifone
1999–Mark Lambert
2000–Norwalk Babe Ruth
(14/15) All Stars
2000–NHS Girls Basketball
Team
2002–Ben Whone National
Little League, 1952 Little
League World Champions
2003–American Legion Post
12 Baseball Team Craig
Katz, Coach

2008–Norwalk Babe Ruth
14 Year Old World Series
Champions
2009–Partners Cafe
2010–Cranbury Baseball League
2011–The Aces Softball Team
2012–Art Bobrowsky
2013–Al Palumbo
2014–Conn. State Representa-
tive Larry Cafero
2015–The Kinlock Family
2016–Steve Bruski
2017–Norwalk Cal Ripken
11-Year-Old All Stars
2018–Michael Moccia
2019–Laurel Athletic Club
2022–Ray Berry, Ralph King

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Program design & layout by Judie Szuets, advanced business support
Cover design by Heide Follin, Creative Advertising

PROGRAM

Master of Ceremonies..... George Albano

Welcome..... President, Pete Tucci

Greetings from the State of Connecticut..... State Senator Bob Duff

DINNER

* * * * *

TONIGHT'S HONOREES

Presentation of Sport Awards

Laura Brunner Gulden

Jennifer Buonerba Prescott

Mike Epstein

Doug Marchetti

John Paladino

Chris Santopietro

Kevin Stevens

Tony Ward

Posthumous Honorees

Joe Santo, Sr.

Mike Errico Award

Art Schad



CONGRATULATIONS DAD/PAL!

*As an outstanding athlete, inspirational coach,
and dedicated husband and father, we could not
be prouder of all you've accomplished!*



Remember kid, there's
heroes and there's
legends. Heroes get
remembered but
legends never die.
Follow your heart kid,
and you'll never go
wrong.

~The Sandlot



Love You!

Betty, Lauren, and Allison

*Thank you to the Norwalk Old Timers' Athletic Association
for this well-earned recognition.
Congratulations to all this year's honorees!*

John Paladino



During its proud three decade-long existence in Norwalk, Central Catholic High School produced its share of outstanding athletes. Somewhere near the top of that list is the name **JOHN PALADINO**.

The 1972 CCHS graduate was a two-sport star for the Cavaliers, making his mark in basketball and baseball. In fact, the Norwalk native made some local history during his days on the hill at West Rocks Road as the first athlete from the city's three high schools to be selected to three All-City teams. In 1971 Paladino was named to *The Hour's* first-ever All-City baseball team as a junior. Then as a senior the following school year, he made the 1972 All-City basketball team while a few months later he repeated as an All-City selection in baseball.

Paladino's athletic journey began a few years earlier as a 10 year-old in the Norwalk National Little League, where he was a two-time all-star, and from there went on to become an all-star in the local Babe Ruth League.

His next stop was Central Catholic, where Paladino played JV basketball as a sophomore for a young and up-and-coming coach named Ray Barry, then a varsity assistant and head JV coach. Paladino also saw some varsity action for head coach Lou Orlando.

As a junior, Paladino was the Cavaliers' sixth man off the bench, mostly because of his versatility and ability to play four positions as needed. He was on the court at the end of every game and it was his buzzer-beating basket in the state tournament that gave Central a dramatic upset win over Masuk as the Norwalkers rallied from seven points down in the final minute. The following season Paladino was named a senior captain and starter as he led that 1971-72 team in scoring with 19.1 points a game, finishing second in the city scoring race behind only All-City MVP and future Old Timers honoree Sammy Miller of Norwalk High. Paladino, who joined Miller on the five-man All-City team, was the only CCHS selection.

In the spring, Paladino was a two-year captain on the baseball team for coach Lorin Beresnyak, who, like Ray Barry, has been honored by the Norwalk Old Timers. Paladino shined on the diamond for the Cavs as both a junior and senior, earning All-City honors both years. In the spring of 1971, the junior shortstop and pitcher finished second in the city with a .385 batting average, while as a senior in '72 he led city pitchers with a 2.32 ERA and was in the top three in strikeouts and innings pitched. Paladino capped off his impressive high school career by being named Central Catholic's 'Best Male Athlete.'

After graduation, Paladino took his basketball talents to Storrs where he was the starting point guard for the Huskies' sub-varsity team in 1973-74. He would later serve as a Graduate Student assistant coach for the UConn women's basketball team in 1977-78 and a fulltime assistant the following season under head coach Wanda Flora.

Then after a 13-yr hiatus, Paladino returned to the hardwood as an assistant coach and later associate head coach with the Fairfield University women's basketball program from 1993 to 2007. He was the associate head coach of the 2000-01 Lady Stags, who went 26-5 and received the program's first-ever NCAA at-large bid. That team, including Paladino and the rest of the

continued **PALADINO**, p.55

THANK YOU

to the Norwalk Old Timers
Athletic Association Committee



CONGRATULATIONS

to all the 2023 Honorees!

CHRIS SANTOPIETRO

CCHS '83

Chris Santopietro



In a city which has produced its share of elite running backs over the years at three high schools, **CHRIS SANTOPIETRO** took his rightful place among the very best in the fall of 1982.

The 6-foot-1, 210-pound bruising fullback definitely shot to the top of the list at Central Catholic with a record-breaking senior season that saw him become the all-time leading scorer and rusher in Cavaliers football history.

Santopietro scored a city-leading 14 touchdowns that season, finding the end zone at least once in seven of the Central's 10 games. That included a 7-0 win over Masuk in which he scored the game's only touchdown to break a scoreless deadlock with 1:59 left to play.

No. 87 also had a pair of two-touchdown games that season, another with three TDs, and one with four. And in one of the three games where Santopietro didn't score a TD,

he ran for a two-point conversion with 1:09 left to play to give the Cavs a dramatic 8-7 victory over defending Class L state champion Newtown in Week 2.

That would be his only conversion run of the season, and combined with the 14 touchdowns, Santopietro finished with 86 points to win the city scoring championship. He also rushed for at least 100 yards in six games, including three with over 200 yards, and he gained 99 and 93 yards in two of the four contests, which he fell short of the century mark.

Santopietro's final season in a CCHS uniform included several memorable performances. Like the three-touchdown, 206-yard rushing effort he put together playing just three quarters in a 27-6 win over Immaculate. Or the game in which the workhorse running back carried the ball an amazing 38 times for 135 yards and scored the only two TDs in a 14-0 win over Norwalk High, undoubtedly one of the sweetest victories of his career. Even more amazing was the fact Santopietro dislocated his finger just four minutes into the game and yet played the rest of the way.

But Chris Santopietro was never better than he was on Thanksgiving morning 1982 when, in his final high school game, he scored four touchdowns and rushed for 232 yards in Central

continued **SANTOPIETRO**, p.56

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHRIS SANTOPIETRO!

Continue being a great role model.

I cherish your lifelong friendship.

2023 Norwalk Old Timers Honorees

Tom Gaal, CCHS '83

Kevin,

“We are so proud of what you accomplished on the court; more importantly, we are so thankful for the man you are each and every day!

We love you!”

Stacy, Kiera, & Aidan

“Every team needs a
Kevin Stevens!”

-Dick Vitale

1986 National
Championship
Game



“Kevin always dreamed of being successful in sports & winning championships.

I was proud & honored to enjoy it all with him. I taught him everything he knows; in spite of that, he still succeeded!”

Andy Stevens

**CONGRATS TO
KEVIN
STEVENS**

THE ICE MAN...

“Kevin’s success was due to determination, hard work, and toughness.

Nothing came easy; he earned his way every step. Great player- even better brother and person!”

John Stevens

Kevin Stevens



Championship basketball games certainly brought out the best in **KEVIN STEVENS**. That was certainly the case twice during his outstanding playing career as the talented 6-foot-5 forward helped lift two different teams to the promised land in the 1980s.

The first came in 1982 when the Norwalk High School senior captain put the Bears on his back and carried them to the Class LL state championship with a brilliant MVP performance in the finals.

Then in 1986 as a junior at Sacred Heart University, an injured Stevens turned in one gutsy, gritty effort after another in the NCAA Division II tournament as his inspirational play sparked the Pioneers to an improbable national championship.

Stevens' basketball journey, however, may have taken a whole different path had he and his family not moved from Boston to Norwalk in 1975. In fifth grade at the time, he attended St. Thomas School and played on the school's basketball team in the Norwalk Parochial League as a seventh and eighth grader.

All roads led to Norwalk High where Stevens was part of the Bears' 1980 and '81 FCIAC championship teams. That 1981 team went 25-1, its only loss coming in the Class LL state semifinals to eventual champion Wilbur Cross. Four of the five starters from that team graduated (including Kevin's older brother John), but coach Ray Barry built his team around the younger Stevens and the Bears put together another stellar season.

NHS returned to the FCIAC final, but fell short in their bid to three-peat, losing to Trumbull. That stinging loss, however, served as motivation for Stevens as he led the third-seeded Bears to six straight victories in the 1982 Class LL state tournament, culminating with an 85-76 win over Holy Cross of Waterbury in the final before nearly 4,000 fans at Central Connecticut State University. Stevens culminated his outstanding scholastic career with one of his best games ever, finishing with 32 points on 14-for-17 shooting, 16 rebounds, and seven assists to earn Finals MVP honors.

Stevens' knack to shine in the biggest moments wasn't limited to just championship games, however. He scored a game-high 23 points and handed out six assists in the Bears' 82-57 quarterfinal win against Hamden, and four nights later netted a game-high 22 points in a 68-59 triumph over Lee on the Sacred Heart University court he would later call home. The win set the stage for Norwalk High School to win its second-ever state title in boys basketball and first since the Calvin Murphy-led 1966 team.

Stevens led the 23-3 Bears in scoring that season with 17.9 points a game while being named All-FCIAC First-Team as well as MVP of *The Hour's* 1982 All-City Team to cap off his scholastic career.

"He was a coach's dream," Ray Barry said.

After one season at the University of Hartford, Stevens transferred to Sacred Heart where his reputation as a big-time, big-game performer grew even more. That was never more evident than his junior season of 1985-86 when he helped the Pioneers reach the NCAA Division II mountaintop.

As he did at Norwalk High four years earlier, Stevens was at his best in the biggest games. He had 14 points, 11 rebounds, and keyed a second-half surge in a quarterfinal upset of

continued **STEVENS**, p.56



"To have such a good player and such a good person is something special. Players like Tony come along very seldom." –Ralph King, 1984

Congratulations

Former Brien McMahon High School
Basketball Captain, All-FCIAC & All-State Player
Two-time All-City MVP & Class LL State Finals MVP
Honor Student
and now
2023 Norwalk Old Timers Honoree

TONY WARD

from Ralph and Joan King
and
The McMahon Athletic Family

Tony Ward



In what many local sports fans agree was the biggest high school basketball game in Norwalk history, **TONY WARD** cemented his place as one of the city's all-time greats when he led Brien McMahon over rival Norwalk High to claim the 1983 Class LL state championship.

This year marked the 40th anniversary of that historic all-city state final on March 26, 1983 when the Senators beat the Bears 73-65 before an overflow bi-partisan crowd of proud Norwalkers who made the 60-mile drive to Central Connecticut State University in New Britain.

And it was Tony Ward, McMahon's talented junior guard, who led the newly crowned state champs with a team-high 17 points and was a unanimous choice as the game's Most Valuable Player.

That clutch championship game performance was the culmination of a sparkling state tournament run by the 6-foot-1 Ward, who led the No. 3 seeded Senators in scoring in all five of their Class LL tourney victories en route to McMahon's second state title in boys basketball. Ward scored 22 points in an opening-round victory against Rippowam, followed that with 23 versus Danbury a few nights later, and then fired in 27 points, including 10 in overtime in the Senators' dramatic quarterfinal win over perennial power Wilbur Cross.

The red-hot Ward would throw in another 24 points in the state semifinals to lead BMHS to a 63-49 victory over No. 2 Simsbury (22-1 coming in) as the Senators punched their ticket to the 1983 Class LL state championship game against their neighbors from the other side of town.

Then in the final game of his high school career, Ward scored 11 of his 17 points in the second half as McMahon pulled away to win by eight points. The Class LL finals MVP also finished with a game-high six assists, meaning he had a hand in 29 of the Senators' 73 points in addition to his usual excellent defensive play. In true MVP fashion, Ward saved his best for last with 113 points in those five state victories, an average of 23 points per win.

For the season, Ward averaged a team-leading 17 points a game for the 22-4 state champs. He also led the Senators in steals with three a game and was second in assists with just under five per contest. He capped off his outstanding junior season by being named the Most Valuable Player of *The Hour's* 1983 All-City Boys Basketball Team, becoming the first underclassman to garner the award. He was also named to the All-FCIAC West Division team.

Ward followed that season up with an even better senior campaign for the 18-6 Senators. He captured both the FCIAC and city scoring championships with a 22.5 average while being named first-team All-FCIAC, first-team All-State, and becoming the first two-time All-City MVP. He was also the *Connecticut Co-Player of the Year* as well as being nominated for the 1984 High School All-American Team.

But one of Brien McMahon's all-time great basketball players didn't play his entire four-year high school career on Highland Avenue. Ward transferred after his freshman year to Central Catholic and led the Cavaliers in scoring as a sophomore with 17.5 points a game. He was

continued **WARD**, p.57

*Posthumous Honoree
Joe Santo Sr.*



JOE SANTO SR., a name synonymous with baseball and championships in Norwalk for more than three decades before, during, and after The Great Depression, is being honored posthumously by the Norwalk Old Timers for his past contributions to the local sports community.

Santo was a fixture on Norwalk baseball diamonds during a bygone era as a player, manager, and coach. It was the latter, however, where he made his biggest impact, coaching 11 different teams and winning league championships with six of those clubs, in some cases multiple titles. His resume includes coaching stints with local powerhouses like the Strawberry Hill Athletic Club, the Pastimes AC, Norwalk Tire, and the Connecticut Potato Chips.

Santo was also well known in baseball circles throughout Fairfield County and beyond. In fact, he served as a scout with the New York Yankees and was able to get a number of his players minor league tryouts with several professional teams.

But coaching is what Joe Santo enjoyed most. His legendary coaching career began near the end of World War I when, at the age of 19, he guided the Firestone team in 1917 and '18, winning the first of his many championships. After a brief hiatus, Santo returned to the coaching sidelines with the Harris Glass Company from 1922 to '24, and then hooked up with Rex AC from 1925-29.

After one season coaching Texas Lunch in 1930, Santo made out the lineup card for the Robins AC in 1931 and '32, before taking over Strawberry Hill in 1933 and then Colonial AC in 1934 and '35. After World War II ended, Santo spent the 1945 and '46 seasons coaching the Potato Chips and adding another league crown to his collection. After one season with Sirois AA in 1947, Santo ended his coaching career winning championships with Norwalk Tire in 1948 and the Pastimes in 1949.

All told, Santo won championships with Firestone, Rex AC, the Robins AC, Potato Chips, Norwalk Tire, and the Pastimes. His great 1948 Norwalk Tire team was regarded as one of the best clubs Santo coached. One of the best hitters on the team was Tom Scarso while the team captain was Phil Matregrano, both of whom were honored posthumously by the Norwalk Old Timers in 2015 and 2016, respectively. Matregrano, who had a longtime association with Santo, would become a local legendary coach himself years later and became known to many as 'Skipper.' One can't help but think Santo was a big influence along the way.

Santo impacted a lot of people in and out of baseball, and on Sept. 19, 1953, the city of Norwalk honored him with "Joe Santo Day" at Duffy Field. As part of the tribute, Santo was presented with a beautiful engraved trophy from his former players, including Matregrano, who made the presentation.

Following the ceremony, an exhibition game was played between the "All Stars," a team made up of former players who played for Santo, and the younger "Norwalks," comprised of active players. Fittingly, Santo's 'old timers' presented their former coach a 9-3 victory.

Some 20 years later, in 1973, Joe Santo Sr. passed away at the age of 72, but 50 years after his passing, his legacy is remembered and honored by the Norwalk Old Timers.



Joe Santo Sr. (left), a 2023 Norwalk Old Timers posthumous honoree, accepts the trophy that his former players presented to him on “Joe Santo Day” in 1953 at Duffy Field for his over three decades of coaching local baseball teams. Making the presentation is Phil Matregrano (right), one of his former players, while local sportsman ‘Chick’ Ciccarelli (center) also took part in the ceremony. Matregrano and Ciccarelli are both Old Timers honorees.



The trophy Joe Santo Sr. received on “Joe Santo Day” in 1953.



Congratulations and thank you to

COACH ART SCHAD

for all your contributions to the
sport of wrestling in Norwalk!

GO BEARS!

Love,

The NHS Wrestling Program



Mike Errico Award Art Schad



ART SCHAD, who introduced young boys and girls in Norwalk to the sport of wrestling when he helped start the city's first official youth program, is this year's *Mike Errico Award* recipient.

The Norwalk Old Timers' *Mike Errico Award* is presented to an individual, team, or organization for the positive impact, influence, and contribution they made to the local sports scene.

Schad certainly transcended all those qualities through his work with the Norwalk Youth Mad Bulls Wrestling program, an all-volunteer non-profit organization established in 2010.

A former New York State high school wrestler and later a collegiate wrestler at Southern Connecticut State University, Schad was the Mad Bulls' first and only head coach. Along with program director Randy Haus, another wrestling enthusiast from Minnesota, they not only made the Mad Bulls a reality, but changed the wrestling culture in Norwalk

with a much-needed youth program for kids in kindergarten through eighth grade.

And while the Mad Bulls impacted the local wrestling community, particularly the Norwalk High and Brien McMahon programs, their influence was also felt by young wrestlers in several surrounding towns it drew from.

All told, in its proud and successful 13-year existence, the Mad Bulls program has developed 58 individual state champions, 10 New England champs, and 15 National All-Americans. With the help of a dedicated group of assistant coaches—most of them parents—the Mad Bulls travel team wrestled at regional tournaments all around New England as well as in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, Iowa, Texas, California, Florida, and Nevada in order to seek out the best competition. Through that kind of head-to-head competition, many individual wrestlers on the Mad Bulls have been nationally ranked, placing high and



Art Schad, the Norwalk Old Timers' 2023 Mike Errico Award recipient, proudly displays the trophy his Mad Bulls youth wrestling team brought back to Norwalk after winning the 2019 New England Team Championship.

continued **SCHAD**, p.57

Norwalk Old Timers Scholarships

The Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association also honors “Young Timers” with six high school scholarships.

The 2022–23 school year marked the 32nd year of the *Eugene ‘Ike’ and Alberta Kern Scholarship Award*, which is named after the late legendary Norwalk High School football coach and his wife, and is presented annually to an NHS senior football player. Presented in the spring, the 2023 recipient was **BRENDAN GILCHRIST**.

Since 1993, the Old Timers have presented the Williard R. Williams Scholarship Award in memory of the longtime Norwalk Hour sports editor who covered local sports for more than half a century. The scholarship recognizes a male student-athlete at Norwalk and Brien McMahon high schools. This year’s recipients were **BENJAMIN BRADLEY** of NHS and **ZAVIER HERNANDEZ** of McMahon.

The *Thomas C. O’Connor Scholarship Award* was created in 2001 and recognizes a female student-athlete at each high school. O’Connor, the former Mayor of Norwalk, was a big fan of girls sports and this scholarship was started shortly after his passing. The 2023 recipients were **JADE MARIN** of Brien McMahon and **CASEY DONNELLY** of Norwalk High.

The Norwalk Old Timers also created a new scholarship in 2011 in the memory of Jack Casagrande, the former coaching legend at Brien McMahon who passed away in December 2010. It recognizes a senior football player for the Senators, and the 2023 recipient was **LOGAN SCHLEGEL**.

All six high school scholarship winners were awarded \$1,000.

In addition, the Old Timers periodically award scholarships to players in youth sports programs. Now in its 23rd year, the *‘Chick’ Ciccarelli Memorial Scholarship* is named after our longtime Executive Board member who passed away in 2001. Ciccarelli was instrumental in starting Norwalk’s first Little League in 1951 and in his memory the scholarship makes it possible for a youngster to attend the Norwalk Board of Education Baseball Camp during the summer.

Then in 2009, the *Bob and Tom Corbo Scholarship* was established to honor two more longtime Executive Board members who coached in the Norwalk Bidy Basketball League for many years. Their scholarship enables someone from the local Bidy League to attend the Norwalk Board of Ed Basketball Camp in the summer.

‘Ike’ Kern, Williard Williams, Tommy O’Connor, and Jack Casagrande are all past Old Timers honorees, as are ‘Chick’ Ciccarelli and Bob and Tom Corbo.

Patrons

Kevin Connolly

Jack Couch

Freddy DeFinis

John Eagen

Franklin Melzer



Be sure to visit the website often as photos of the 2023 Awards Dinner and this year's Honorees, as well as all Honoree bios, will be posted.

www.norwalkoldtimers.org

Congratulations to 2023 Honorees Kevin Stevens & Chris Santopietro

and to all the Norwalk Old Timer Inductees

Chris & Chris Ippolito, Jr.

Chris-to-Go Catering

To receive our changing weekly menus by email or text, please contact cipp23@hotmail.com or text (203) 216-6808. Weekly menus go out each Saturday; orders must be in by 12 noon the following Tuesday for Thursday night pickups or delivery.

Chris was formerly at Laurel Athletic Club.



BRUNNER GULDEN, from p.29

season finale and another 18 in a first-round loss in the Class S state tournament as the Cavaliers finished 12-7 overall. She finished her standout four-year career with 1,036 points, just 10 points behind all-time leader Diaz. Brunner is also one of only three basketball players in the 30-year history of CCHS to score 1,000 career points with the other two from the boys program.

Central Catholic High School sadly closed its doors in June 1990, meaning Brunner's all-time girls scoring record will never be broken. And while no "official" rebounding stats are on record, it's a pretty safe assumption she was also the CCHS career leader in that department.

Brunner received a scholarship to play at Iona College in New Rochelle, but a medical condition wiped out her freshman year and she returned home. She took advantage of the time off to return to her alma mater and serve as a varsity assistant and JV coach for one season at Central Catholic under Kriz.

The following year Brunner transferred to Connecticut College in New London and became a four-year standout for the Division III Camels.

Like the girls basketball program at Central Catholic, the Connecticut College women never had a winning season before Brunner arrived. They were only 5-13 her freshman year, but went 58-10 her final three seasons, including back-to-back Northeast Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships in 1985 and '86.

Brunner graduated in 1986 second all-time in both points (1,484) and rebounds (1,009) while averaging 17.5 points and 11.9 rebounds per game during her career. She also set the school record for points in a game with 37.

The former Cavalier was named to the American Women's Sports Federation All-America team all four years and was selected a New England Women's Basketball Association all-star as a senior. Her biggest honor, however, came in October 1998 when she was inducted into the Connecticut College Athletic Hall of Fame.

Now married and a mother of two, Laura Gulden makes her home in basketball crazed Raleigh, NC, right smack in the middle of ACC country.

BUONERBA PRESCOTT, from p.31

All-City article. "She's the one who gets our offense going and she's usually on base when Steph (Seymour) and Sue (Eskierski) come up. Other girls get the home runs and RBIs, but Jennifer does the little things that go unnoticed."

Buonerba started every game her last three seasons—61 games in all—and made only one error.

"She's one of the best defensive center fielders in the state," Barry said.

She not only made the second annual All-City team, but was named All-FCIAC for a third straight year. Buonerba was also selected to the first two All-FCIAC teams in field hockey, which began recognizing the conference's best players in the fall of her junior year. Like softball, there were no formal youth leagues for field hockey, but Buonerba was introduced to the sport in middle school and fell in love with it.

After high school, she played one year of varsity softball at Southern Connecticut State University, while during the summer she played with the newly formed Norwalk Mariners for a few seasons before hanging up her spikes to start her family. She and her husband Ed Prescott, a former standout lacrosse player at Norwalk High, raised five children, all of whom also played sports at NHS.

And Jennifer is the latest 'Father-Daughter' tandem to be honored by the Norwalk Old Timers. Her father Dick Buonerba, for many years a familiar voice to Norwalkers from his time at local radio station WNLK, was an accomplished athlete who was an Old Timers honoree in 1992.

"Obviously," his daughter said, "I inherited some of his genes."

EPSTEIN, from p.33

and in 2005 the Senators reeled off three straight state tourney wins to advance to the D-I state championship game, where it lost to perennial national power Darien.

Epstein would coach McMahon 18 seasons, stepping down after the 2013 season with a 192-135 record and a .846 winning percentage. In addition, he coached 11 high school All-Americans, two Academic All-Americans, numerous All-FCIAC and All-State selections, and had over 70 players play collegiately, including over 20 at the Division I level.

The Senators' all-time winningest coach also collected his share of coaching honors during his career, including being named FCIAC Coach of the Year in 2007 and 2011, the Connecticut High School Lacrosse Coaches Association Coach of the Year in 1997, 2000, 2005 and 2011, and the US Lacrosse State Coach of the Year in 2011.

One of the biggest honors Epstein received came in 2008 when he received the *National Frank McGuire Award*, which honors coaches who “exemplify integrity, achievement and a continued quest for excellence from themselves and their athletes.”

Epstein remained close to the sport as a volunteer coach in the Fairfield Youth Lacrosse program, and would eventually return to the high school scene in 2019 as part of the Fairfield Prep coaching staff. He is currently the offensive coordinator for the Jesuits, who have won four Southern Connecticut Conference championships and were Class L state runner-up in 2021 during Epstein's time with the team. He previously served as an assistant coach in the Stamford High girls volleyball program from 1992-95 and was an assistant field hockey coach at McMahon from 1996-2005.

MARCHETTI, from p.35

graduate lettered in swimming and baseball. After graduating from Slippery Rock University with a degree in Health and Physical Education, Marchetti began his career in education at the Cardinal Sheehan Center in Bridgeport teaching Phys Ed for grades 1-8 as well as all aquatic programs. He later taught at the Hillcrest School in Trumbull and then at Greenwich Catholic School, where he also coached baseball and girls basketball. His next stop was Rowayton School and after that Norwalk High School.

Marchetti has been recognized for his work several times during his career. In 1996 he was named the Elementary Physical Education Teacher of the Year by the Connecticut Association of Health, Physical Education,

Recreation and Dance, while in the 2000 he received the *Norwalk Board of Education Fund for Excellence Award*.

In fact, the 2023 Norwalk Old Timers dinner is the second time in the last nine months Marchetti has been honored. In March, he received the *Robert Duncanson Meritorious Service Award* from the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors. The award is presented annually to an individual who has served as an athletic administrator for a number of years and has demonstrated the highest ideals of sportsmanship, integrity, and leadership in the performance of their duties. It also considers the nominees' record of service and contributions to high school athletics.

PALADINO, from p.41

coaching staff, was inducted into the Fairfield University Hall of Fame in 2018. During Paladino's time on the coaching staff, Fairfield also went to the NCAA tourney in 1998.

Following his coaching stint, Paladino continued his involvement in the Fairfield University Department of Athletics as first

the associate director and later Director of Recreation from 2007-2019. He retired in 2019 after a 25-year association with the Stags as a coach and athletic administrator. He was honored by the Friends of Fairfield Rugby Alumni Association with a dedicated lifetime locker in the university's recreation complex.

SANTOPIETRO, from p.43

Catholic's 41-20 win against longtime rival St. Mary's of Greenwich to wrap up a successful 7-3 season.

Santopietro also rewrote the CCHS record book as his fourth and final touchdown with 3:22 left enabled him to become the Cavaliers' all-time leading scorer with 128 career points. Meanwhile, his big game on the ground made him the school's all-time rushing leader with 1,325 yards.

Yes, Santopietro definitely saved his best for last.

And as dominating as he was on offense, Santopietro also shined on defense as one of the top linebackers in the Western Connecticut Conference. His play on both sides of the ball not only earned him a spot on the All-WCC team, but Santopietro was a unanimous choice as MVP of the *The Hour's* 1982 All-City Football Team.

Football wasn't the only sport Santopietro excelled in, either. He was also a standout basketball player for the Cavaliers and not

long after he closed out his scholastic career on the gridiron, the two-sport captain captured his second city scoring title in four months by averaging 18.5 points a game. He became only the fourth CCHS basketball player to lead the city in scoring and the first in seven seasons. He had finished fourth as a junior with 16.5 ppg.

Santopietro continued his football career at the University of Rhode Island and later, upon returning to Norwalk, was active in local youth sports. Together with good friend Matt Hefferan, they started the Norwalk Grizzlies football team for players in second-through-eighth grades and competed against other Fairfield County teams in a PAL-sponsored instructional tackle football league. Several players from the Grizzlies went on to play at the two local high schools.

The former city basketball scoring champ also became a volunteer coach in the Norwalk Jr. Basketball program while finding time to be an active volunteer in local Special Olympics.

STEVENS, from p.45

Norfolk State on NSU's court to advance to the D-II Final Four at the Springfield Civic Center. He scored 13 points as SHU rallied from an eight-point halftime deficit to knock off Florida Southern in the semifinals. The next night, Stevens scored a team-high 19 points on 9-for-11 shooting as Sacred Heart, a school with 1,700 fulltime students, defeated Southeast Missouri (13,000 enrollment) 93-87 to become the first men's basketball team from Connecticut—as well the first from New England—to win an NCAA championship.

Stevens was one of three SHU players to make the Final Four All-Tournament Team. But his play down the stretch was even more impressive because he was less than 100 percent after suffering an ankle injury in late January that forced him to miss four weeks. Even after he returned to the court, he would soak his swollen ankle in a bucket of ice water after every practice and game. That ankle was put to the test on back-to-back nights in the Final Four, but Stevens' toughness and intestinal fortitude overcame severe pain, something head coach Dave Bike said inspired the rest of the team.

Stevens averaged 14.5 points and eight rebounds a game for the Pioneers, who finished 30-4 that championship season. They would go 19-13 the following season and win the New England Collegiate Conference title while returning to the

NCAA tournament and reaching the New England Regional final. Stevens, a senior captain, put up 15.1 points and another eight rebounds a game, including 23 points in two games and 19 rebounds in another. He would finish his collegiate career with 1,244 points.

That career also included a memorable sophomore season in 1984-85 when rivals Sacred Heart and University of Bridgeport met four times and Stevens went up against 7-foot-6 Manute Bol. Despite giving away 11 inches, Stevens put his 205-pound body on the rail-thin Bol to keep him away from the basket and continually frustrate him. Stevens held his own in all four games and even held the upper hand in a pair of SHU wins, including in the NCAA regional semis.

"He gave him fits," Ray Barry recalled. "I mean he really manhandled him."

After college, Stevens had a tryout with his beloved Boston Celtics ("It was a quick one," he humorously noted), then played professionally in Ireland for one season before returning home and serving as an assistant coach at NHS under Barry for three seasons. The Bears won two FCIAC championships and one state title while reaching the Class LL state final all three seasons Stevens was part of the staff at his alma mater. He also coached PAL basketball for eight years in Fairfield.

WARD, from p.47

the only CCHS player named to the All-City team, the first of his three all-city selections. He transferred back to McMahan for his All-City MVP seasons as a junior and senior.

Being named an “MVP” was practically a habit for Ward throughout his basketball journey, starting when he was 12 years-old and was named MVP of the Norwalk Calvin Murphy Biddy Basketball League after leading his team to a second straight league championship. At McMahan, he won back-to-back MVP awards at the Williard Williams Christmas Tournament, was the Class LL finals MVP, and was a two-time All-City MVP.

In his final season, Ward led the 1984 Senators to an 18-6 record and a berth in the FCIAC semifinals and Class LL state quarterfinals. He finished with 1,386 career points, the third most on the city’s all-time scoring list behind only former Norwalk High great Calvin Murphy and McMahan’s Marvin Spencer.

Hall of Fame coach Ralph King, who coached Spencer, Ward, and a host of other outstanding players, rates Tony Ward among one the best to ever wear the Senators’ uniform.

“Tony was a complete player,” the legendary coach said after the 1984 season. “He was a great team captain and an excellent offensive and defensive player. To have such a good player and such a good person is something special. A player like Tony comes along very seldom.”

King wasn’t the only coach to praise Ward’s

talent on the hardwood. Norwalk High School’s Ray Barry, another legendary Hall of Fame coach, was also a fan.

“We geared our defense to try to stop him,” he said. “If you wanted to beat McMahan, you had to stop Tony. He had the best jump shot in the league.”

Ward excelled in the classroom as well as on the court and the honor student accepted a full scholarship to Penn State University where he was a four-year starting guard and a rare three-year team captain. He led the Nittany Lions in assists all four seasons and averaged double figures in scoring his final three years, including tying for the team lead as a junior with 13 points a game. He graduated in 1988 with 1,007 career points.

A few years after graduation, Ward’s passion for basketball led to a position with the National Basketball Players Association, the labor union that represents NBA players. Ward spent six years as Manager of Marketing for Special Events, including All-Star Weekend. He later joined an advertising firm in New York City where he was Director of Advertising and Marketing for the U.S. Army All-American Bowl and HBCU Football Classic.

And in one of his greatest accomplishments after basketball, Ward produced a documentary titled “Rainbow on the Green” about African-Americans in the sport of golf, which aired nationally on the ABC Network.

SCHAD, from p.51

earning medals throughout the country at every age level.

In addition, the Mad Bulls co-ed team included 10 girls, at the time the largest female wrestling roster in the state. Many of those girls developed into state champions themselves while two are nationally ranked.

Together with the male wrestlers on the team, the Mad Bulls had seven consecutive years of placing more wrestlers in the Connecticut State Open tournament than any other youth wrestling team in the state and won the New England team championship in 2017 and 2019.

On the high school level, Mad Bulls alumni

have gone on to win many FCIAC individual titles, along with five State Open champs and five High School All-Americans.

But for Art Schad, the mission of the Mad Bulls was about a whole lot more.

“It was never about winning championships or team titles,” he said. “It was always about coaching kids and teaching them about a solid work ethic, determination, and perseverance. It was always about creating future leaders and solid human beings. After all, we as coaches are here to educate, nurture, and inspire. The accomplishments are just a byproduct of that philosophy.”

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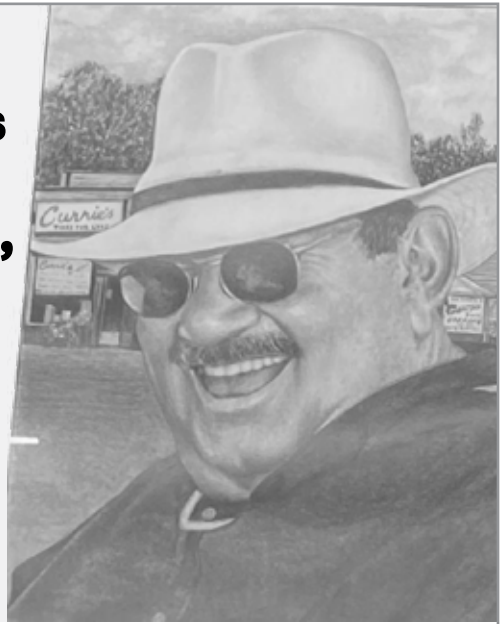
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