

Mark Kreymborg



It was the summer of 1968 when the Brien McMahon High School athletic department—specifically the football, basketball, and track and field programs—received an unexpected gift.

That gift was **MARK KREYMBORG**.

Living in Nebraska at the time, Kreymborg and his family moved to Norwalk during the summer following his sophomore year of high school. The new arrival made an immediate impact that fall as a junior tight end on the 1968 McMahon football team under first-year head coach Leroy Vaughn.

While the Senators' offense featured a strong running game, the addition of Kreymborg bolstered the team's passing attack and he finished third on the team in scoring while being selected first-team All-FCIAC by the league's coaches. He helped McMahon win its first five games that season en route to a 7-1 finish, the best record in the program's eight-year history. The Senators tied Danbury and Stamford for first place in the Western Division and were declared tri-champs, giving McMahon a share of its first division title in football. Danbury, the only team to beat the Senators, won the three-way tiebreaker to advance to the conference title game.

As a senior in the fall of '69, Kreymborg had to learn a new position. With the graduation of last season's starting quarterback, coach Vaughn moved his all-conference tight end to QB and Kreymborg responded with another stellar season. He threw a pair of touchdown passes while running for five TDs and a conversion himself to finish second on the team with 44 points. One of those touchdown runs was for a then-school record 80 yards. He helped the Senators finish 7-2 that season and 14-3 in his two seasons while starting every game.

While Kreymborg played JV football as a sophomore in Nebraska, he lettered in both basketball and track, making him a much-welcomed addition to the Senators in both sports. As a junior, the 6-foot-3 forward finished second in scoring on the 1968-69 basketball team with a 14.4 ppg average and was named All-FCIAC first team as the Senators won their first-ever Western Division title. Then in the FCIAC semifinals, Kreymborg was involved in one of the most memorable games in the storied McMahon-Norwalk rivalry as the Senators beat the Bears 51-49 in a four-overtime thriller. Kreymborg was the high scorer in that dramatic contest with 19 points along with a team-high 11 rebounds. Three nights later, McMahon lost to New Canaan 66-60 in the conference championship game.

The Senators were West Division co-champs in Kreymborg's senior year and made it back to the FCIAC finals, but finished conference runner-up again following a 67-65 loss to Stamford Catholic. McMahon would finish 15-5 while Kreymborg was second on the team in scoring with 15 points a game and received All-FCIAC Honorable Mention.

But perhaps Kreymborg's best sport in high school was track and field where he shined in the discus, shot put, high jump, and long jump, consistently winning three to four events every meet and earning All-FCIAC honors in a third sport.

And 52 years after he graduated in 1970, Mark Kreymborg still holds the Brien McMahon school record in the discus. But his greatest achievement that season, he says, was winning McMahon's

annual end-of-the-season Decathlon, a grueling two-day, 10-event competition.

Kreymborg had the distinction of being a senior captain in all three of his sports and he culminated his two years as a Senator by being named Brien McMahon's 1970 "Career Athlete" while the Norwalk Fire Fighters Association presented Kreymborg with its prestigious *City of Norwalk Athlete of the Year* award. His three head coaches at McMahon—Leroy Vaughn in football, Ralph King in basketball, and Jack Casagrande in track—have

all been honored by the Norwalk Old Timers, along with Sam Testa, his line coach in football.

Recruited by several colleges, including Yale, Kreymborg accepted a scholarship to play football at UConn, where he returned to his familiar tight end position all four years and was part of three Yankee Conference championship teams.

But while Kreymborg did plenty of winning during his high school and collegiate careers, his biggest victory was beating cancer in 2018, which inspired him to become a volunteer in a chemo ward at a local cancer center.