

Gerald Roman



GERALD ROMAN gave a pretty good indication of his athletic talent and a peek at things to come at a very early age.

The future Brien McMahon three-sport standout was only nine years-old when he entered his first ‘Punt, Pass and Kick’ skills competition in 1974 and made it all the way to the national semifinals in his age group at Three Rivers Stadium in Pittsburgh, home of the NFL Steelers. The popular event, which was offered by the NFL and ran from 1961-2017, was sponsored by the Ford Motor Company.

“My mother was at Ritar Ford looking to buy a new car and she saw an application for the Punt, Pass and Kick,” Gerald recalled, referring to his mother, the late Mary Roman, a 1995 Old Timers honoree. “So she brought one home and filled it out for me to enter.”

Gerald advanced past the local and sectional qualifiers to make it to the national semis, finishing fourth in the country that first year. He would compete again the next several years and made it back to the national semifinals when he was 13, this time at the Houston Astrodome.

“I always felt a little short,” he said.

But his all-around athleticism continued to shine and the accolades kept coming when he got to high school. After two solid years as a freshman and sophomore at McMahon, Roman transferred to Trinity-Pawling School in New York for his junior year. That’s the same private boarding school another 2024 *Norwalk Old Timers* honoree, Maurice Vaughn, attended.

But Gerald returned to BMHS for his senior year and the Senators were glad he did. He was a two-way player for the 1982 football team, which finished 8-2 that season. Despite missing three games, Gerald still finished second on the team and third in the city in scoring with four touchdowns, all on receptions. His best day in a McMahon uniform was the second game of the season, a 28-6 win over Andrew Warde, when he caught four passes for 124 yards, including two TD passes from quarterback Mike Correnty, covering 67 and 46 yards. He also picked off an interception on defense to set up the final touchdown.

And given his history growing up, it was no surprise that Roman handled the kicking and punting duties for the Senators. In one game against unbeaten league champion Greenwich, he got off punts of 64, 46, and 48 yards.

Then a few months later Gerald helped the McMahon boys basketball team go 22-4 and win its second state championship in program history as the 6-foot-6 center averaged 13.5 points and 8.4 rebounds a game while shooting over 56 percent from the field. In the biggest game of the year—and arguably the biggest game in city history—Roman came up big as he scored 14 points in the Senators’ 73-65 win over city-rival Norwalk High in the 1983 Class LL state championship game.

That wouldn’t be the last state title Gerald experienced at McMahon. In the Spring of ’83, he won not one, but two individual state championships in track, capturing the Class LL crown in both the 110

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meter high hurdles and 300 meter intermediate hurdles. He became the first trackman from McMahon to win an individual state title in seven years. The last to do it before him was his brother Craig Roman, who was also a hurdler and won the State Open in 1976. Gerald was also the first city athlete in 17 years to win a pair of state championships, the last being McMahon's Kelly Myrick, who won both hurdle events in 1966. Gerald finished second at the Open in the 110 hurdles, just 1/100th of a second (14.66 seconds to 14.67) behind the winner. He also finished fourth in the 300 intermediate hurdles.

Roman continued his football career at Graceland College in Iowa and wasted no time making an impact. In his very first game as a freshman, filling in for an injured regular, Gerald returned a kickoff 110 yards for a touchdown. He now makes his home in Blairsburg, Iowa, about a two-hour drive from where he played his college football.

Gerald is the son of 1994 Norwalk Old Timers honoree Mary Roman. ■

Norwalk's Roman Fourth in P,P&K

Norwalk's Gerald Roman finished in fourth place this past Sunday in the national semi-finals of the 13-year-old Punt, Pass, and Kick competition at the Houston Astrodome.

Roman, representing the New York Jets and competing against 13 other 13 year-olds before Sunday's San Diego Chargers-Houston Oilers game, accumulated a fourth place total of 298 points, one point for every foot he punted, passed and kicked. The top two finishers then competed again at halftime with the winner advancing to the national finals which will take place during one of the upcoming NFC playoff games.

Roman also attended a banquet at the Astrodome honoring all the candidates in every age bracket with the Oilers' Billy "White Shoes" Johnson the guest speaker.