



Hall of Fame Induction 2020

Virtual Press Conference

Opening Remarks

Patrick Pizzarelli, Executive Director

Presentation of Inductees - Carl Reurter, Master of Cermonies

Closing Remarks

Dominick Vulpis, Assistant ED

Bruce Arena

An outstanding three-sport athlete at Carey High School who went on to become the most important soccer coach in United States history. After starring in both soccer and lacrosse at Nassau Community College and Cornell University, Arena became the soccer coach at Virginia and guided the Cavaliers to five NCAA championships. From there, he went on to coach both the United States Olympic team in 1996 and USA World Cup teams in 2001 and 2016. He was the Major League Soccer Coach of the Year three times.

Joyce Mary Badger

A Lynbrook graduate who played field hockey, basketball, volleyball, bowling, and softball in the pre-Title IX era. Badger became a longtime official and administrator. She officiated multiple sports for nearly 40 years and was the Assistant Executive Director for Girls Athletics for more than a decade. She earned a certificate of appreciation from the Nassau Council of Administrators in 2012.

Melissa Batchelor Zamroz

“Missy” Batchelor was truly one of the premier Nassau County basketball players in the 1980s. She was a four-year starter who broke every St. Dominic scoring, rebounding, and assist record, including a record 53-point performance. By the time she graduated in 1989, she held the CHSAA career record of 1,854 points. She was a two-time All-Long Island selection and was named All-State as a senior.

Mark Belger

The finest Nassau track performer of the 1970s decade. Belger won 10 county championships and eight state titles in both the 880 and mile run while at Mepham. He was a 2-time high school All-American under coach Paul Limmer. Belger set a slew of records at Villanova. He was an 8-time NCAA All-American and a two-time NCAA champion. He remains the only Long Island native to run a sub-four-minute mile (3:57). He was a member of the 1980 Olympic team that boycotted the Moscow Games.

Fred Bruntrger

A three-sport athlete who excelled in baseball. During a 4-year varsity career at New Hyde Park, Bruntrger had a pitching record of 33-9, including 12-1 as a senior when he was an All-County selection. He was also the point guard on one of Nassau's top teams. With no background, he ran cross country as a senior and wound up as the team's MVP. He played 3 seasons in the Detroit Tigers organization.

Raymond Buckley

A longtime lacrosse official and a member of the Long Island Metropolitan Lacrosse Hall of Fame. Buckley was chosen to officiate some of the most significant high school and college games, including 25 Nassau championships, 3 CHSAA championships, 12 New York State championships, three NCAA Division I and three Division II title games. He was named the Nassau County Lacrosse Officials Association Man of the Year in 1991 and the Nassau Coaches Association Man of the Year in 2003.

John Camien

As a high school runner at Sewanhaka, Camien was the premier track athlete of the 1960s. He was the top half-miler and miler in Nassau and New York State. He was the state champion at 800 meters in 1960 and followed that the next spring by becoming the state champion in the mile run. He held the state record for the mile for 20 years. At Emporia State in Kansas, Camien won five NAIA championships, three times in the mile run. He also was a four-time NAIA all-American in cross country.

Tony Capozzoli

Capozzoli was a genuine quarterback phenom at St. Dominic. At the time he graduated in 1975 he held Nassau County's career records for passing yards (5,376) and touchdown passes (68). After leading St. Dominic to an unbeaten 9-0 record and the CHSAA championship, Capozzoli, who also kicked field goals and extra points, was only the second CHSAA football player chosen to win the Thorpe Award since Chaminade's Fred Miller won the first Thorpe Award back in 1942.

William Cherry

A highly successful coach of football and lacrosse at Manhasset. Guided the Indians to 112 victories and two county titles on the gridiron and forged an outstanding lacrosse record of 154-38 that included two state crowns, 3 Nassau County titles and 3 Long Island championships. He was named the conference Coach of the Year five times and the Newsday Coach of the team twice. Cherry coached 13 high school All-Americans and was inducted into the Manhasset Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 1996.

Joanna Commander

Commander guided Elmont to nine girls' basketball conference championships, as well as a Nassau and Long Island title. But she made her most significant mark as an administrator. She was the Director of Athletics at Elmont, the District Coordinator of Health Education at Sewanhaka, the District Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics at Lynbrook and Harborfields. She has been inducted into both the Elmont and Malverne Halls of Fame.

Kim Conway Haley

One of the pioneers upon which the South Side girls' soccer dynasty was built. Conway-Haley helped the Cyclones win their first state title in 1987, the first of 17 state championships that would follow. A year earlier, she had been named to the state's first-ever All-State team. Conway-Haley went on to star at the University of Virginia. As a senior, she was a finalist to the Hermann Trophy given to the top female college player in the country. She has been inducted into the Long Island Soccer Player Hall of Fame.

Maria DeCristoforo

DeCristoforo has been judging high school gymnastics for 52 years. Her impact goes beyond merely the meets she officiated. She was a founder of the New York State Girls Gymnastics Association. She co-authored the New York State Girls Gymnastics Handbook. She does the training and writes the exams for all gymnastics judges in the state. She has also been an international judge for 40 years. She has judged the Olympic Trials, the Pan American Games and the USA National Championships.

Matt Doherty

One of the finest players to grace a basketball court in Nassau County history. By the time he graduated from Holy Trinity in 1980, he had forged a legendary career. As a four-year starter, Doherty led the Titans to three CHSAA championships and a New York State Federation title. To no one's surprise he was selected first-team All-Long Island and All-State in 1980, was named to the Parade Magazine All-American team and played in the 1980 McDonald's All-American game. He accepted a scholarship to North Carolina and was a starter on the Tar Heels' 1982 team that won the NCAA championship.

John Driscoll

One of, if not the best midfielder in Nassau history. He led Manhasset to consecutive county lacrosse titles in '75 and '76. He scored four goals in each championship game and remains the only two-time MVP of the county tournament. "John Driscoll was the best all-around player I've ever seen," said Bob Rule, a former Manhasset and Cornell star. "He refused to let anyone beat him." Driscoll went on to become a three-time All-American at Virginia and led the United States to the World Championship in 1982. He died in 2002 of brain cancer.

George Emma

Emma was a 3-sport star at Freeport. By the time he graduated in 1955, he had been Nassau's top basketball scorer for two years and was a two-time All-County selection. His single-game school record of 50 points, stood for 28 years. He was good enough in baseball to be signed by the Yankees after attending Villanova, but his most unique achievement was running cross country as a senior. During a superb 18-year career as Freeport's boys' basketball coach, his teams won 14 league titles and the 1978 county championship. He passed away in 1983.

Rudy Fiorvanti

One of those rare athletes who achieved greatness in three sports at Massapequa, then went on to become a three-sport star at both Nassau Community College and Hofstra. Fiorvanti was a fearsome defensive football player, a county finalist in wrestling, and one of the toughest defensemen in lacrosse. One of his Massapequa teammates said “Rudy was the kind of athlete and person that comes along once in a lifetime.” After a battle with leukemia, he passed away in 2007.

Reginald “Reggie” Giddens

One of the finest all-around athletes in Oyster Bay High School history. Giddens was a unique four-sport athlete, starring in football, basketball, track and field, and baseball. He excelled on the gridiron as a tight end on offense and a defensive end. Giddens was an All-Scholastic selection in 1950 and 1951. He also had an outstanding basketball career during which he was an All-County selection in the 1950-1951 season.

Dina Grossman-Case

Much like Kim Conway-Haley and Traci Sofsian Maier, Dina Grossman Case was one of the key players in building the South Side girls’ soccer dynasty, a dynasty that produced 17 county and state championships. Grossman-Case was perhaps the most versatile player on the Cyclones 1986 team that went to its first state championship game, alternating between midfield, striker and defensive center midfielder. After spearheading South Side’s rise to a New York State power, Grossman-Case played college soccer at Cornell.

J. Kenneth (Dutch) Hafner

A pioneer in the evolution of high school athletics in Nassau and New York State. Hafner coached football, basketball and baseball at Mineola High School but made his real mark as the school's athletic director. As President of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, he was responsible for the program that enabled thousands of students in grades 7-9 to participate in varsity sports if they met certain standards. Although he is being inducted posthumously, his impact is still being felt throughout the county and the state.

Andre Hawkins

Hawkins was truly a man among boys. He scored, he rebounded, he blocked shots and he was at his best in big games. A four-year starter for legendary coach Hank Williams at Malverne, the 6-8 center carried the Mules to two Nassau, Long Island and New York State championships. A three-time All-Long Island selection, Hawkins was named the state Player of the Year in 1981. Hawkins accepted a scholarship to Syracuse and spent four years as a starter for the Orangemen.

A.J. Haugen

One of the most talented and versatile athletes in Nassau history. He was an All-State quarterback while leading Bethpage to a pair of Long Island championships. He was a four-year starter and an All-Conference performer in basketball and was one of the finest players to grace a lacrosse field. He was the Long Island Player of the Year as a midfielder in 1996. He was a two-time All-American and led Bethpage to its only state lacrosse title. He was a 3-time All-American at Johns Hopkins and was named to the National Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2018.

Todd Heimer

Heimer was both an outstanding athlete and administrator. He played football and baseball at North Shore High School where he led the Vikings to their first Nassau baseball title in 1973. He was named All-County and League MVP. Heimer played baseball at Seton Hall, helping the Pirates earn two appearances in the College World Series. He returned to Long Island and eventually became the Executive Director for Interscholastic Athletics in Nassau County. He served in that role from 1993 until his death in 2012.

Bob Hendrickson

Another all-around athlete who was a standout in football, basketball and lacrosse at Manhasset. He was an outstanding wide receiver, a stellar basketball guard who held the Indians' record for most steals when he graduated and an All-American lacrosse player as a senior. He continued his career at Cornell where was a three-time lacrosse All-American and a starter at wide receiver. Hendrickson went on to become a Veterinarian and operates the Manhasset Animal Hospital.

Lamont Hough

In the pantheon of the most versatile high school athletes in Nassau history, Lamont Hough must be in the conversation. He was a great quarterback, leading Hempstead to a two-year record of 19-1 and two conference championships. He won the Thorpe Award as Nassau's best football player. He was an outstanding basketball player, helping Hempstead to win a state championship and setting a state tournament single-game record of 7 three-pointers. He was both an All-Long Island and All-State football and basketball player. And, in the spring, he was an outstanding lacrosse midfielder.

Barry Landers

He was not an athlete, coach, or administrator but Barry Landers had a huge impact on Nassau County high school sports. Landers was the driving force behind putting high school games on local television as the founder and announcer for the Long Island Sports Network. Landers provided countless Nassau athletes with their “moment in the sun” by broadcasting regular season, playoffs and championship games in football, basketball, lacrosse, soccer, wrestling, baseball and others.

Larry Levane

Levane first distinguished himself as a high school basketball player at Great Neck South where he was an All-Long Island player and went on to become a truly elite coach. Among the achievements of his 28-year career as Syosset’s tennis coach, were four straight Nassau and Long Island titles from 2009-2012. He guided the 1982 Westbury girls’ basketball team to the New York State crown and has also guided Syosset to county titles in softball and baseball.

Jimmy Lewis

If you had talked to a lacrosse follower in the 1960s, you might have heard the words “Jimmy Lewis is the best player of all time.” He was that good. When lacrosse was in its infancy on Long Island, Lewis was light years ahead of the competition. With his speed and stickhandling he was Nassau’s top player while leading Uniondale to 45 straight victories. He continued his outstanding play at Navy where he was a three-time All-American, three-time national Attackman of the Year and the key player in Navy’s three national championships in 1962, 1963 and 1964.

Dotty Lynch

A standout coach and official, Lynch guided South Side to 5 consecutive division titles in the 1980s, then transitioned into one of the premier officials in the county. She has been ranked the No.1 official multiple times in girls and boys' volleyball. She has officiated more than 30 county finals, 10 Long Island finals and 2 state finals. She was also a superb softball coach at Oceanside, leading the Sailors to two Nassau championships and 7 conference crowns while compiling a record of 302-92.

Bob McKillop

After being a standout in basketball at Chaminade and Hofstra, McKillop became one of the most successful coaches in Nassau County history. He compiled an 86-25 record at Holy Trinity including a state championship, then moved to Long Island Lutheran where he led the Crusaders to a 182-51 record and four more New York State titles. McKillop accepted the coaching job at Davidson in 1989. He has guided Davidson to eight NCAA tournaments and is credited with developing NBA star Stephen Curry.

Jennifer Mitchell

She was a star before her time. A great player who was mired in anonymity when there were few high school girls' basketball teams in the pre-Title IX era. Mitchell spent her youth playing with and against the boys at Kennedy Park in Hempstead. "Jennifer was the best girl's player I've ever been around," said former Knicks president Steve Mills. Consider that Mitchell once scored a state record 60 points in a 62-60 victory over Bethpage. That record stood for 40 years. Mitchell eventually played for Federal City College in Washington D.C., but she suffered an untimely death in 1977 at the age of 22.

Laura Orticelle

An historic figure in Nassau athletics. Orticelle broke the glass ceiling when she became the county's first female Director of Athletics at Holy Trinity High School in 1980. She then became the Chairperson of Health, Physical Education and Athletics for the Sewanhaka School District. From 1990-2010, she was the District Director of Athletics at North Shore High School where she supervised a program that included 43 high school teams, 31 middle school teams and 122 coaches.

Anna Paluszek

She was an elite athlete in the 1920s at Baldwin. She was a standout field hockey player, the top long jumper and shot-putter in Nassau County, a sprinter and a member of the 880-yard relay team. At the age of 16, she won the long jump competing against college athletes at the Milrose Games. As an American of Polish descent, she earned a spot as a long jumper on the 1934 Polish Olympic Team.

Melissa Pearsall

She was an athlete far ahead of her time. Pearsall played boys baseball and pitched Oceanside to consecutive unbeaten seasons in the late 1920s. She never lost a game as a high school pitcher. She began playing varsity basketball in the eighth grade and was the leading scorer on the South Shore in 1929. Pearsall played professional baseball for the New York Bloomer Girls and professional basketball for the Long Island Ducklings.

Jerone Pettus

A scintillating football running back who earned All-County, All-Long Island, All-New York State and All-American honors in high school. Pettus began his career by rushing for over 900 yards as a freshman at Freeport. He transferred to Roosevelt the following year and began a three-year career capped by winning the Thorpe Award as Nassau's top player. By the time he graduated, he had run for more than 5800 yards. He also excelled in track, earning All-County and All-State honors.

Emily Pickering Harner

One of the most well-known and talented soccer players to come from Long Island. Pickering's skills were on display in 1983 when she led Berner High School to a state championship and was named to the McDonald's All-American team. Then it was off to North Carolina where she starred at center midfield. Pickering also turned out to be a pioneer. She was a moving force in founding the USA Women's National Soccer Team, and she was the team's first captain.

Edward Reinisch

Reinisch coached Baldwin to more than 100 victories including an unbeaten record in 1946 when the Bruins won the Nassau championship. His coaching record is even more impressive when you consider that wrestling teams in that era only competed in 8 to 9 matches per year. Reinisch was a longtime assistant football coach, helping the Bruins' 1948 team that won the Rutgers Cup as Nassau's top team. He was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2002.

Patty Reynolds Basile

She was one of the early daughters of Title IX, a superb basketball player who was the first Valley Stream South player to break the 2,000-point barrier. A four-year starter at South, Reynolds-Basile poured in 2,258 points over a career that included a single-game school record of 54 points. She was a second-team All-Long Island selection as a sophomore and a first-team choice as both a junior and a senior. She continued her outstanding play at Iona where she scored 1,683 points and was inducted into the Gaels Hall of Fame.

Marco Rivera

Rivera is best known for his football exploits at Elmont, but he was not a one-sport wonder. He also played basketball, baseball and lacrosse for the Spartans. After an illustrious career as an offensive lineman at Elmont, during which he made numerous high school All-American teams, he starred at Penn State and with the Green Bay Packers.

A two-time All-Pro selection and a Super Bowl champion. Rivera was inducted into the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame in 2011 and Elmont retired his No. 72 jersey in 2014.

Cheryl Scalice

Her record as a girls' volleyball coach is nothing short of sensational. During a 30-year career at South Side, Scalice's teams compiled a record of 444-134. And during an 18-year career coaching gymnastics, she amassed a record of 112-61. Her success was not limited to girls. She coached the boys' volleyball team at Valley Stream North for three years before going to South Side and led North to a county championship.

Donald Scott

Scott arrived at Manhasset in 1969, after leading Fredericksburg to the Virginia State Track and Field title. Not only did he become Manhasset's track and field coach in 1972, he also founded the indoor track and cross-country teams. His cross-country teams won 1,295 meets including 22 unbeaten seasons, and 19 county titles. His track teams won 19 Nassau titles and six state titles. He coached all three sports until his untimely death in 2010.

Traci Sofsian-Maier

The third member of the triad that turned South Side into a state girls' soccer power. Sofsian-Maier, the daughter of former Elmont coach Walt Sofsian, was a star defender on the Cyclones' teams that won their first two state titles in 1987 and 1988. She went on to play at Princeton where she was named the Tigers MVP in 1993 and was named first-team All-Ivy. She was a charter member of the Long Island Rough Riders women's soccer team and last year was inducted into the Long Island Soccer Player Hall of Fame.

Chris Thomforde

Thomforde was the first basketball prodigy at Long Island Lutheran. When the 6-9 center was playing for the Crusaders, some of the buildings on campus were still being built. None of it deterred Thomforde who was named to the All-Long Island and All-American high school teams. An outstanding student, Thomforde chose Princeton over such big-time teams such as Duke and North Carolina. He became a three-time All-Ivy all-star and a Converse All-American. By the time he retired in 2013, Thomforde had been the president of three colleges: St. Olaf, Bethany and Moravian.

Jim Valvano

Before he was an NCAA championship coach and before he was a media icon, Valvano was a three-sport standout at Seaford High School. He quarterbacked the football team, was the point-guard on the basketball team coached by his father Rocco Valvano, and a star shortstop on the baseball team. After an outstanding basketball career at Rutgers, Valvano coached at Bucknell and Iona before leading North Carolina State to a stunning last-second win over Houston in the 1983 NCAA basketball final. Valvano passed away at the age of 47 in 1993.

Ernie Vandeweghe

This legend starred in football, basketball and baseball at Oceanside in the 1940s. Vandeweghe became an All-American basketball player at Colgate, then followed a most unusual path as an NBA player with the Knicks at the same time he was attending Columbia Medical School. He became a physician for the U.S. Air Force and the Los Angeles Lakers, and was eventually named Chairman of the President's Council of Physical Fitness in 1976. He passed away at the age of 86 in 2019.

Joseph Vito

Simply put, one of the best football coaches in Nassau history. During his 24 years guiding the Roosevelt Rough Riders, Vito's teams have produced an overall record of 182-61-2. Under Vito, Roosevelt has won 10 Nassau County championships and four Long Island Class IV titles. The Rough Riders won the Rutgers Cup as Nassau's most outstanding team in 1999 and 2004. He was named the Daily News Coach of the Year in 1997 and was twice named Newsday's Nassau Coach of the Year.

Jeff Weiss

The longtime boys' basketball coach at Woodmere Academy. His 32-year record of 620-180 is amazing. He has been named the League Coach of the Year 14 times and was Newsday's 2006 Long Island Coach of the Year. According to the NY State Sportswriters Association, Weiss has coached more winning games than any coach in Nassau history. His teams have won numerous league and state titles. Weiss has been inducted into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame.

Arthur Wright

The most successful boys' soccer coach in Nassau County history. After graduating from SUNY Cortland, Wright returned to his hometown of Oceanside and built a soccer dynasty. He founded the Sailors' soccer team and saw his early efforts produce phenomenal results. During his 27-year career, the Sailors won 315 games, 18 divisional titles, 11 South Shore League crowns, 11 Nassau championships and 4 Long Island crowns. Between 1968-73, Wright's teams won every Nassau title and three Long Island championships. His unbeaten 1973 team outscored the opposition, 99-4, and may have been the county's best team ever. Wright passed away in 2005.

Marion (Miki) Waldman DeBaise

Like so many female athletes of her era, Waldman played in obscurity. Only a smattering of people knew that she was a four-sport star. She was a standout in field hockey, basketball, softball, and lacrosse. She was good enough to be named the Most Outstanding Senior Athlete at Baldwin High School in 1962. Not only was she the leading scorer in all four sports, but she was also blessed with enough speed, stamina, and strength to place second in the Nassau County Presidential Fitness Competition.

She went on to Arcadia University and was a four-year starter in Field Hockey, Basketball, and Lacrosse. She was named to the All-American team in Field Hockey in 1964-65 and named to the US Field Hockey Squad from 1965-1969 along with the US Lacrosse team in 1967-69. During this time, she represented the United States against New Zealand, Germany, Australia, South Africa, Great Britain, Ireland, and Hong Kong. Waldman was truly a woman for all seasons.

About the Nassau County High School Athletics Hall of Fame

The Hall of Fame is organized as a means of recognizing, preserving, and promoting the heritage of interscholastic sports in Nassau County. Many individuals have made extraordinary contributions and have had superb accomplishments in high school sports. The Nassau County High School Athletics Hall of Fame honors the contributions and accomplishments of these individuals who are worthy of countywide recognition.

Nominations for the Nassau County High School Athletics Hall of Fame are to be made through the approved nominating process. Nominations in each category will be accepted only for those individuals whose achievements or contributions were relative to Nassau County high school athletic programs. All nominees are required to have attended, employed by or worked for a Nassau County High School. The official nomination form shall be completed and submitted with appropriate support materials to Section VIII by February 1 of each year for a candidate to be considered for the following year's class.

Information and photos on past inductees can be found at <http://www.secviii.org> under the drop-down menu on the head footer that is entitled about Section VIII.

2020 Induction Ceremony will be held at the

Crest Hollow Country Club on September 29,2021.

Tickets are available on our website at

www.sectionviii.org

