

**DR. JAMES TOLLE
NASSAU COUNTY
HIGH SCHOOL
ATHLETICS
HALL OF FAME
INDUCTION CEREMONY**



SPONSORED BY

**CREST HOLLOW
COUNTRY CLUB**

SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

NASSAU COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME

WELCOME

THE NASSAU COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME IS ORGANIZED AS A MEANS OF RECOGNIZING, PRESERVING AND PROMOTING THE HERITAGE OF INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS IN NASSAU COUNTY. THE NASSAU COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME HONORS THE CONTRIBUTIONS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE WORTHY OF COUNTY-WIDE RECOGNITION. NOMINEES MUST EXEMPLIFY THE HIGH STANDARDS OF SPORTSMANSHIP, ETHICAL CONDUCT AND MORAL CHARACTER.

THE CATEGORIES OF NOMINATION INCLUDE: ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICIAL, CONTRIBUTOR, ATHLETE AND COACH. ALL CANDIDATES FOR THE NASSAU COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME MUST BE AT LEAST 35 YEARS OF AGE PRIOR TO DECEMBER 1ST OF THE APPLICABLE YEAR IN ORDER TO BE CONSIDERED FOR INDUCTION.

NOMINEES FOR THE NASSAU COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME WILL GO THROUGH A TWO-STEP PROCESS BEFORE BEING SELECTED FOR INDUCTION. THE TEN (10) MEMBER SCREENING COMMITTEE WILL DETERMINE WHICH CANDIDATES ARE WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION. THE FIVE (5) ANONYMOUS MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION COMMITTEE VOTE INDEPENDENTLY TO DETERMINE THE CANDIDATES WHO WILL BE INDUCTED INTO THE HALL OF FAME.

APPLICATIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THE SECTION VIII WEBSITE AT WWW.SECVIII.ORG. CLICK ON THE LINK FOR "INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS". ALL NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2023 HALL OF FAME ARE DUE ON DECEMBER 1, 2022. NO SUPPORTING INFORMATION WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER FEBRUARY 1, 2023.

PROGRAM

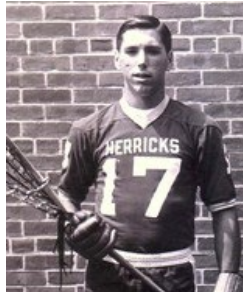
**INTRODUCTION OF THE CLASS OF 2022
MASTER OF CEREMONIES – CARL REUTER**

**HONOR AMERICA
STAR SPANGLED BANNER**

**OPENING REMARKS
PATRICK PIZZARELLI
SECTION VIII EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**PRESENTATION OF AWARDS
CARL REUTER**

**CLOSING REMARKS
JUSTIN JONAS
SECTION VIII ASSISTANT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

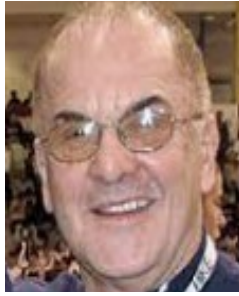


DAVE BAYLY ATHLETE

Perhaps no other player in Nassau lacrosse history had more to do with carrying a team to the Nassau and Long Island championships. Dave Bayly did it in 1969, to give Herricks a 16-1 record and its only county and Long Island titles. The Highlanders could not advance to the state playoffs because there was no state tournament at that time. Bayly finished the season with 61 goals and 60, at the time a Nassau County single season record for points in a season. His three goals and four assists in Herricks victory over Uniondale in the county final earned him the MVP trophy. Herricks was trailing Uniondale, 5-4, entering the final quarter before Bayly fed for two goals and scored another on the way to a 9-5 victory.

"The greatest player I ever coached," said coach Al Butler at game's end. "We rode David to the championship."

Bayly was heavily recruited before deciding to go to the US Naval Academy where his star continued to shine. He was a three-time USILA all-American, one of only eight players in Navy history to do it at that time. He led Navy to the NCAA quarterfinals from 1972-75 and finished his career with 72 goals, 81 assists and 153 points.



ALAN BERKOWSKY COACH

In the pantheon of the greatest cross country and track coaches in Nassau County history, Bellmore JFK's Al Berkowsky must be in that conversation.

First, start with his phenomenal won-and-lost records. Then go to a man who devoted his life to helping others, not by judging them with a stopwatch, but by spending untold hours helping them and impacting their lives.

Berkowsky's record can be matched by few coaches in New York State history. His cross country teams had a 467-24 dual meet record, that included 151 consecutive wins from 1986 to 1996. He produced 13 individual county champions and 11 team championships.

Now let's look at track and field. The Cougars were three-time Nassau team champions and an astonishing 78 individuals won county championships. Berkowsky produced three individual state titlists, four state relay champions and a national relay title in 2000.

Those records are breathtaking, but they don't account for how many boys and girls he mentored or how many he led through family problems or how many he got into college. His mantra was "it's not a perfect day until you can do something for someone without being thanked." Berkowsky didn't just talk it, he lived it."

"If there ever was a teacher-coach who deserved to be in the Nassau Athletics Hall of Fame," said David Friedfeld, who Berkowsky coached 47 years ago, "it's Alan Berkowsky."



STEVE BONGIOVI CONTRIBUTOR

It's the voice. The folks in Seaford can close their eyes and recognize the voice. They've been listening to it for 45 years at football games, soccer games, basketball games, wrestling matches, field hockey games and lacrosse games. Seaford isn't the only place you can hear "the voice." It has been announcing Nassau County football, basketball, and lacrosse playoff games for 23 years.

The voice belongs to Steve Bongiovi, and it wasn't only heard at athletic events. It had more impact during the 36 years Bongiovi taught English at Seaford High School.

"As a teacher, Steve set the gold standard for his students and colleagues," said former Seaford principal Ray Buckley. "Steve was the recipient of the 2006 New York State Teacher of the Year honor." As a result of that honor, he was invited to the White House to meet President George Bush.

Bongiovi spent many years paired with Nassau Hall of Fame announcer Norm Murray.

"They were a dynamic duo," said long time Nassau lacrosse coordinator Jim Amen.

When Murray passed away, Bongiovi took over the responsibilities by himself. "He was always prepared, extremely diligent at his craft, and has a great voice," said Amen. "He adds his own flare with some comic vernacular."

"His dedication to the student-athletes and the schools in Nassau County is monumental," said Section VIII Executive Director Patrick Pizzarelli. "He absolutely deserves this honor."



DR. GAY BULLOCK ATHLETE

Gay Bullock was a powerhouse. The former Hempstead High School track star was one of the dominant sprinters and middle distance runners in New York State during the 1980s. Bullock won numerous county and state championships, and she was also a great teammate in the relays.

“There weren’t many athletes at the time who could run three rounds of the 400-meter, 200-meter, 100-meter and two relay legs at one meet and dominate,” said former Hempstead coach Norman Tate. “Gay did it, and she did it with grace and great sportsmanship.”

From 1981-1983, Bullock earned All-American status and it was more than deserved. Even her teammates were in awe of her running power.

In 1983, when Hempstead set a state and national record with a clocking of 1:41.84 in the Eastern States Women’s Track Championships at Harvard University, Bullock’s 24.4 astounding anchor leg enabled the Tigers to become the first team in the nation to break the 1:42.00 mark in the 4x220-yard relay. It was a monumental achievement and cemented a state record that has stood for 39 years.

Bullock went on to earn a Doctorate in Education and has earned too many honors to list here. “I have known this woman for over 25 years,” said Dr. Melvin Douglass, President of Barber-Scotia College in North Carolina. “She is remarkable.”



PRINCESS MEGAIL COOPER ESQ. ATHLETE

Gail Cooper gave early notice that she was going to be a track star. When she was only a sophomore at Hempstead High School, she won the Nassau 55-meter Hurdles, she was the Nassau and Long Island runner-up in the long jump, and she was a key member of the New York State indoor and outdoor 4x100-meter championship relay teams.

In 1981, she and her 400-meter relay teammates clocked one of the fastest times in the nation while competing at the Athletics Congress Junior National Championships at UCLA. As a result, she was named a Track and Field National High School All-American. And she was still just a sophomore.

She was even better as a junior and senior. She was Nassau's outdoor long jump champion and 100-meter hurdles winner. She won the indoor 60-yard hurdles at the Eastern States Track Championship in a Long Island record 8.27 seconds. As a senior, she was the Nassau, Long Island and New York State 55-meter indoor hurdles titleholder with a state record 8.25 clocking. And again, she was selected to the National High School Athletic Association Track All-American.

"Gail Cooper clocked some of the fastest times in the nation as a hurdler and sprinter," said former Hempstead coach Norman Tate. "I am proud of her accomplishments on and off the track."

Today, Cooper is a practicing attorney in California.



DON CRUMMELL COACH

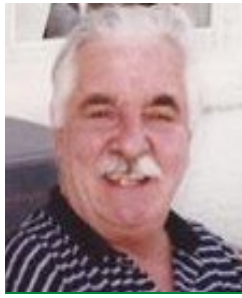
Don Crummell may not be unique, but he is one of a precious few high school coaches who has guided both boys' and girls' teams to Nassau County championships.

His championship run began in 1986 when he guided Roosevelt to Nassau's Conference III football title, something the Rough Riders repeated two years later under Crummell. Then, he assisted Morris Brandon en route to winning three Nassau County boys basketball titles.

It was time for a change, so Crummell switched to the girls' basketball team, this time as the head coach. During his first year, Crummell led the girl's team to the 1989 Nassau Championship. He did it again in 1990. Then, four years later, in 1994, Crummell led the girls to another Nassau championship. When his girls weren't winning county titles, they were winning 11 Conference titles. Just for good measure, Crummell took over the girls' softball team and produced another Conference title in 2001.

Joe Vito, a Nassau Athletics Hall of Famer, succeeded Crummell as Roosevelt's football coach and has watched his predecessor up close. "I have worked with Don for 33 years and he has left an indelible impression on me," Vito said. "He is a gentle soul and a tenacious competitor. If there was a Mount Rushmore for coaches I have encountered, he would be worthy of being placed on it."

Roosevelt's girls and the boys would surely agree.



THOMAS DELUCA ATHLETE

If you had been a Long Beach sports fan in the late 1940s and early 50s, you would have been a Tom DeLuca fan. Although other outstanding athletes came along later, the hardcore folks who had grown up watching DeLuca star in three sports could not be moved.

“He was the greatest athlete in Long Beach history,” said childhood friend Larry Elovich. “Tommy is a legend in this town.”

At 5-11, 175 pounds, DeLuca wasn’t physically imposing, but put a football, basketball or baseball in his hands and his skills were extraordinarily imposing. He was a speedy ball carrier in football, a deadeye shooter in basketball and a dynamic shortstop and pitcher in baseball. So good on the diamond that he was offered a tryout with the Brooklyn Dodgers at the age of 15.

After high school, DeLuca went off to NYU and had a brilliant two-sport career. He played basketball and became an All-American. He played baseball and became an All-American again.

DeLuca signed with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1957. He spent two years in the minor leagues before a knee injury ended his major league aspirations. So he went home to Long Beach and had a longtime career as a beloved teacher and coach.

He passed away in 2011 at the age of 78.



THOMAS DIANA III COACH

To say that Tom Diana has been a successful boys basketball coach at Uniondale High School is like saying Frank Sinatra was a pretty good singer. It simply doesn't fit. Since he took over as the Knights coach in 1995, Diana has become one of the finest coaches in Nassau and New York State history. In fact, he was inducted into the New York State Basketball Hall of Fame in 2016.

Diana has guided Uniondale to 20 conference championships. From 1999 to 2010, the Knights won 12 straight conference crowns. That's merely the beginning. They also won nine Nassau titles and three Long Island crowns. It is an astonishing record.

Perhaps the most impressive part of Diana's resume is that during his 27 years as Uniondale's coach (subtract two for the pandemic) his teams have never had a losing season. Not one. It is almost unimaginable. At the same time, he has produced four teams that won 20 or more games.

Aside from his induction into the state basketball Hall of Fame, Diana has received numerous honors. The Nassau County Coaches Association has made him its Coach of the Year ten times. In 2003, he was named *Newsday's* Nassau County Boys Basketball Coach of the Year. And, in 2018, after a 21-2 season, Diana was named the National Federation of State High Schools Association Coach of the Year.



CHRISTINA DIMARTINO ATHLETE

Christina DiMartino came along first. The eldest of the four amazing DiMartino sisters whose reign at Massapequa High School resulted in eight Nassau championships, four Long Island titles and three New York State crowns.

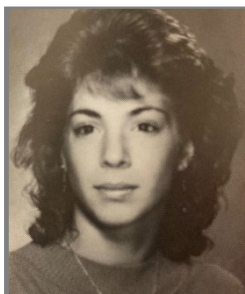
Gina, Vicky and Rosalie all became great high school players, but it was big sister Christina who set the example. She was sensational.

The list of her achievements is mind-boggling. The 5-foot, 2-inch midfielder was a two-time Parade Magazine all-American. An NSCAA/Adidas all-American and the National Player of the Year in 2004. She was Gatorade's New York State Player of the Year as a junior. A two-time Nassau Player of the Year. Four-year starter at Massapequa while leading the Chiefs to a pair of state Class AA championships. All-County, All-Long Island, All-State. The list goes on and on.

Not much changed when she made the decision to travel across the country to accept a scholarship to UCLA. She was a four-time all-American, and a semifinalist for the Herman Award, symbolic of the best player in women's college soccer.

DiMartino was fortunate to travel the world as a professional soccer player. However, when she was asked about her fondest memories during a 2008 interview, her mind wondered back to Massapequa.

"I got to play with my sister Gina for three years," she said. "That was special. I loved playing with my friends, too."



KAREN GALLEGO ATHLETE

In the history of the state girls' tennis playoffs, only one Nassau athlete has won the championship in consecutive years. That would be Glen Cove's Karen Gallego who won the title in 1986 and came back to do it again in 1987. That record has not been matched by any Nassau tennis player in the 35 years since Gallego swept through the best players in the state. Gallego was unbeaten as a senior while leading Glen Cove to a 13-1 record and the county playoffs.

She immediately stood out as a freshman at the University of Virginia when she was named to the all-Atlantic Coast Conference team. Despite her early success, Gallego was not happy at Virginia, which led her to transfer to William & Mary. She was selected to the all-Colonial Conference Association team in 1991 and was named the ITA Region Sportsmanship Award the following year.

Her career winning percentage (.764, 55-17) is fifth all time at William & Mary. She ranks 8th all-time in single season winning percentage (24-5.).

Gallego also made a brief appearance on the professional WTA tour.



MARIA GIAMANCO COACH

Maria Giamanco excelled in multiple sports as a high school and college athlete. She played softball. She played lacrosse. She played volleyball. She was an All-County volleyball player and an All-County softball player. She has been inducted into the East Meadow High School Hall of Fame. Her credentials are such that she could've been a candidate for the Nassau Athletics Hall of Fame as an athlete.

However, her credentials as a coach are superb. Not only did she lead Port Washington's girls' volleyball team for 17 years with great success, but she also founded the boys' volleyball team in 1990 and has guided the Vikings on a championship journey.

Giamanco has been selected as Nassau's boys' volleyball Coach of the Year five times, an award most coaches would be happy to earn even once. She has produced a record of 323-177 that includes five county championships; again, something most coaches would like to win just once. In 1999, she guided the Vikings to a perfect 21-0 season and a Nassau championship. Starting in 1996, Giamanco guided Port Washington to four consecutive county championships.

She was twice named Coach of the Year while coaching Port Washington's girls volleyball team, including 2005 when the girls won the conference championship with a stellar 14-1 record.

When Giamanco started the boys' volleyball program, she said she had modest goals, but time has demonstrated that she was just being modest.



DENISE HAMMERSLEY ATHLETE

Hammersley was an outstanding three-sport star at OLMA, but there was never a doubt that the basketball court was her second home. She could do everything...shoot, dribble, pass and defend. The bigger the game, the better the opponent, the better she played.

“Denise flows on a basketball court,” said OLMA former coach Karen Andreone, years ago. “She’s relentless and she’s a winner.”

She also was a legendary figure. The 5-foot, 5-inch Hammersley became the first Catholic High School Athletic Association player—male or female—to eclipse 2,000 career points. As a senior in 1991, she led OLMA to the New York State Federation Class D championship. She finished her dazzling career with school and league records of 2,048 points; records that stood for 15 years.

Denise accepted a scholarship to Fordham where she continued her spectacular play. She was on the court for every game at point guard during her four years with the Rams. She scored 1,331 points including a school-record nine three-pointers against Lafayette in 1994. She was named to the All-Patriot League team in her freshman, sophomore, junior and senior seasons. With Hammersley running the team, Fordham won a pair of Patriot League championships.

She led the Rams to their first NCAA tournament in 1994, was subsequently named Fordham’s Female Athlete of the Year and was inducted into the school’s Hall of Fame.



SHARON HAMPTON ATHLETE

Hampton was a major reason Hempstead put together the greatest four-year girls' basketball dynasty in Nassau County history.

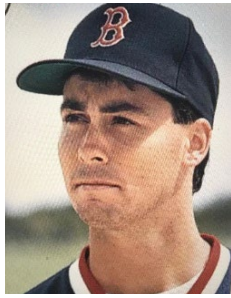
She was the team's best rebounder, defender and managed to score 1,184 career points as a four-year starter on a team that won four county championships, three Long Island championships and two state public school championships, a state Federation title and an overall record of 92-4.

Hampton shared the stage with Lisa Smith, a Nassau Hall of Famer. Smith and Hampton first teamed to lead their middle school team to consecutive unbeaten seasons. The two were freshman starters on a 20-0 team that won the county title. That was the beginning of a record that stands alone in Nassau girls or boys' basketball.

During Hampton's time on varsity, Hempstead won 102 consecutive league games. They won 71 straight home games, but the most extraordinary achievement was never losing a single game to a Nassau County team over a four-year career.

Hampton and Smith were Hempstead's version of Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen. Smith (Nassau's first 2000 point scorer) led the team in scoring. Hampton led the Tigers in everything else.

Smith, once said "Sharon is our Charles Oakley. When she was playing defense, opponents drove down the land at their own risk."



DOUG HECKER ATHLETE

How talented was Doug Hecker?

Just examine the New York State Gatorade Baseball Player of the Year award list. In 1989, Hecker was the recipient. Thirty-three years later, Hecker remains the only Nassau public school baseball player to win it.

That's all you need to know about the career of this extremely talented player who led MacArthur High School to Nassau County championships in 1986, 1988, and 1989.

Hecker could do it all. Just look at the numbers during his senior year. He batted .496, hit 7 home runs and had 28 RBI. When he wasn't playing the infield for the Generals, he was an outstanding pitcher with a 9-1 record in 1989.

Every year, the awards kept coming. As a sophomore in 1987, he was named All-Division. As a junior, he made All-County and was the league MVP. He was picked for the Daily News All-Star team. After his extraordinary senior season, Doug was named Newsday's Long Island Player of the Year.

His collegiate career was brilliant. He accepted a scholarship to the University of Tennessee where he was twice named All-American by the Sporting News and twice named to the All-Southeastern Conference team.

Hecker was drafted in the third round by the Boston Red Sox in 1992, after which he spent six seasons in the minor leagues.



KYLE IVEY-JONES ATHLETE

Hempstead's basketball history is replete with great teams and players. Who can forget Al Williams, John Mackey, Joe Blocker, John Pitts and Lamont Hough to name a few. So, for someone to be called the Tigers' best all-time player, he would have to be an extraordinary talent.

That perfectly describes Kyle Ivey-Jones. At 6-6, he was a forward who was comfortable playing guard or center. He was the ultimate team player. "Kyle makes everyone around him better," said coach Ted Adams. "He's a true winner."

There has never been anything quite like him in Nassau boys' basketball history. Ivey-Jones is the only player to lead his team to four Nassau and four Long Island championships. The only player to play in four state tournaments. The only player to play on two state championship teams. The only player to be named MVP in state championship games two years in a row.

By the time his Hempstead career was finished in 1990 Ivey-Jones had scored 1,657 points to become the school's all-time leader, topping Joe Blocker's mark of 1,433 that stood for 33 years. He scored a record 37 points in a 1990 state Class A semifinal, breaking the mark of 35 set by teammate Lamont Hough in 1989.

At the conclusion of his record-setting career Ivey-Jones accepted a scholarship to the University of Rhode Island.



WARREN KING COACH

Warren King was an elite high school coach over a span of 61 years at Garden City High School. After starring in football and track at Dartmouth in the 1930s, he began his career as an assistant football coach and head ice hockey coach at Springfield College in 1939.

One year later, King arrived in Garden City and immediately led the Trojans football team to an undefeated season. In the spring of 1941, he also became the school's track and field coach.

The rest is history. He left Garden City to serve in the Navy for three years during World War II, then returned to teach and coach. In 37 years as the Trojans football coach, his teams won 142 games and recorded four unbeaten seasons. King was the first Nassau football coach to be named Coach of the Year twice.

His career as a track and field mentor was unprecedented. He was not merely admired because of longevity. In fact, when Garden City beat Port Washington in a 1999 meet, it brought King's dual meet record to an amazing 500-69-1. Under his tutelage, the Trojans had 54 consecutive winning seasons, won 27 league titles and five county titles.

After he retired in 2001, the school district honored him by naming its high school athletic field "Warren King Field."

King passed away in 2004 at the age of 90.



FRANK LUISI COACH

You could make the case that since Frank Luisi retired as Oceanside High School's football coach, he has contributed more to Nassau football than any ex-coach in history.

Luisi had been a good enough coach to nurture future Miami Dolphins quarterback Jay Fiedler. But his work after coaching has been legendary.

Luisi runs clinics. He trains coaches on rule changes. He sends out material about the latest medical and athletic training information. He developed a road map for getting players into college. Hours after the school day ends, after teaching his English classes, he works on some aspect of the county's football program.

"Mr. Luisi is often found working in his small office at the end of the hallway well into the evening and weekend hours," said Dr. Phyllis Harrington, Oceanside's Superintendent of Schools.

Frank's work running the Nassau coach's clinic for 30 years has been phenomenal. He has brought in some of the finest professional and college coaches to train high school and middle school coaches. "During the pandemic when schools were closed, Frank didn't miss a beat," said Section VIII Executive Director Patrick Pizzarelli. "He set up zoom presentations for athletes and coaches on a variety of topics."

Luisi is revered by his colleagues. "He's been the glue of the Nassau Football Coaches Association for 35 years," said Roosevelt coach Joe Vito. "No one has come close to how much Frank Luisi has contributed."



LISA MACCHIA ATHLETE

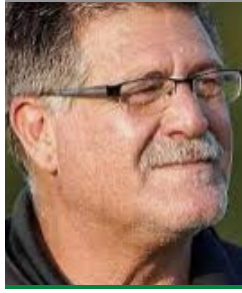
Macchia was the whole package. Great student. Great athlete. Great 4-year volleyball starter and the greatest girls' basketball player in Island Trees school history.

When Macchia earned a spot on the varsity as an eighth grader, it was clear that a bright future was in the making. Extremely bright. During five years as a starter, she turned Island Trees into a champion and a title contender. By the time she graduated in 2002, she held every significant school scoring record while leading the Bulldogs to one county championship and two county finals.

Lisa's senior season was magical. She averaged 27 points and 19 rebounds per game. More important, she led Island Trees to the Nassau Class B championship. Over her career, she had 2,047 points, 1,562 rebound, 318 assists, 468 blocks and 166 steals. No wonder she was a 4-time all-Nassau selection a two-time all-Long Island and two-time all-New York State choice. She was named Nassau's Player of the Year in 2001.

Macchia's 2,047 points placed her sixth on Long Island's all-time scoring list at the time her career was finished. Such was her prowess that she was named honorable mention all-America by Street and Smith magazine and was a McDonald's all-American finalist.

Lisa was inducted into the Island Trees Hall of Fame in 2011. It was fitting recognition of a glorious high school career.



GARY MARANGI ATHLETE

Gary Marangi was not merely a three-sport athlete at Elmont High School. He was a three-sport star. You might not know that based on his superb football career. But, in fact, he was an excellent basketball player and a brilliant lacrosse player.

Let's start with basketball where he was a two-year star and an All-League selection in 1970. When winter turned to spring, Gary was a gifted attackman who scored 53 goals and assisted on 51 for 104 points while leading Elmont to a 21-0 record and the Long Island championship. He was an All-Nassau and All-Long Island selection as a senior and was heavily recruited for lacrosse.

But his heart belonged to football. Marangi quarterbacked Elmont to consecutive Conference titles and an unbeaten season in 1970. He was named to the All-County and All-Long Island teams and was a finalist for the Thorp Award as Nassau's top player.

Marangi went to Boston College and from 1971 to 1974, he passed for 2,739 yards and 23 touchdowns. He was named to the All-East team and played in the East-West Shrine and North-South All-Star games. Marangi was drafted by the Buffalo Bills and the first pass he threw in the NFL produced a touchdown against the Miami Dolphins.

Gary is currently the Dean of Students and football coach at Patchogue-Medford High School where he led the team to the 2002 Long Island championship.



AL PALACIO ATHLETE

If young Al Palacio hadn't been bored and restless after the fall middle school soccer season ended, he might not have had any interest in becoming a wrestler. Fortunately, Palacio had a conversation with legendary Long Beach coach Paul Gillespie who suggested that the Columbian immigrant might solve his restlessness problem by taking a turn on the wrestling mat.

The first time Palacio showed up to wrestle, Gillespie knew he had uncovered a gem. It did not take long for Palacio to become one of the best wrestlers in Nassau history. In 1979, he won the 98-lb county championship and placed 4th in the state tournament. And he was only a freshman.

It was a sign of things to come. Over the next three years, Palacio won state crowns at 98, 105 and 112. It was the first time a Nassau wrestler won three successive state titles.

Palacio finished his high school career with a phenomenal record of 133-4-1 that earned him a scholarship to North Carolina.

He thrived at Chapel Hill. Palacio placed second at 118 pounds in the 1986 NCAA tournament in and seventh the following year. He produced a 4-year record of 129-19 for the Tar Heels, including 44-1 in '86-'87. He was twice named All-American.

The Palacio family has become synonymous with Nassau County wrestling excellence, and Al Palacio started it all.



DAVE PIETRAMALA ATHLETE

Even before he arrived at Johns Hopkins, Dave Pietramala was a Long Island legend. Anyone who saw him play for St. Mary's of Manhasset came away with the same thought. "Best high school defenseman I've ever seen."

That was no exaggeration. Pietramala was at the forefront of modern defenders who were quick enough and strong enough to handle speedy attackmen or midfielders. He reveled in the chance to guard the opposition's best player. He was a takeaway machine. It wasn't uncommon for a lacrosse stick to fly out of the hands of an opposing player after being checked by Pietramala.

When Pietramala's career with the Gaels ended in 1985, he headed for Johns Hopkins. Those were the days that the Blue Jays dominated college lacrosse and Pietramala wanted to be part of that tradition.

Pietramala lived up to the hype at Hopkins. He was a 3-time, first-team All-American. He was twice the recipient of the Schmeisser Award, honoring the nation's best defenseman. He received the Lt. Ray Enners Award as the United States Intercollegiate Lacrosse Association's Player of the Year in 1989. And he was an All-World selection at the 1990 and 1994 World Championships.

Eventually, Pietramala returned to Johns Hopkins as its head coach where he built a record of 207-93 and won two NCAA titles. He was named National Coach of the Year in 2002.



JOHN ROGAN ATHLETE

A legendary quarterback at Chaminade High School.

It's been 78 years since Newsday began giving the Thorp Award to the top player in Nassau County. Over that span, only four private or parochial school players, have won the Thorp, Fred Miller was the first winner in 1942, then came Tony Capozzoli in 1975, John Rogan in 1977 and Anthony Brunetti in 2009.

Rogan distinguished himself during his career at Chaminade. Aside from the Thorp, he was an all CHSFL selection while leading the Flyers to the league championship. At the conclusion of his senior season he was named New York State's player of the year. He was recruited by many big-time schools, among them Pitt, Syracuse and West Virginia but chose Yale instead. "I always wanted to go into pro football," he said, "and I figured that even if I didn't make it, I'd have a degree from Yale."

It was a good decision for Rogan and for Yale, since he became an All-Ivy quarterback and the Bulldogs won back to back-to-back league titles in 79,80, and 81 under his leadership.

By the time he graduated from Yale, Rogan was sixth all time in passing yardage (2844) and sixth in touchdowns (26). He was also ninth in career completions (190).

Rogan was not drafted by any NFL teams and wound up playing for two seasons with the Montreal Concordes of the Canadian Football League.



KEITH SACHS COACH

It is difficult enough to coach championship teams in one sport. It is truly magnificent to coach championship teams in multiple sports. That is exactly what Keith Sachs has done.

During his 27 years as Wantagh High School's baseball coach, his teams have forged a record of 484-169-6. Sachs, who is still coaching, has guided Wantagh to 5 Nassau championships. They've gone on to win 5 Long Island titles. The Warriors won two New York State championships and made it to the state title game 4 times. Those credentials alone would be enough to put Sachs in the Nassau Athletics Hall of Fame. However, those are not his only credentials.

Sachs took over a downtrodden varsity football team in 1992 and turned it into one of the top programs in Nassau. His teams have fashioned a record of 186-93-2. They have won 21 Big Four titles, 4 conference championships and two Long Island crowns. They were unbeaten in 2001 and 2015.

More than a decade after graduating from Wantagh, former football player Adam Aponte remembers the impact Sachs had on so many players. "The greatest gift that Keith gave his players was lifelong lessons," Aponte said.

"The memories that fill my mind are not of wins and losses, but laughter, joy and lessons learned during my formative years."

Which is precisely what a Hall of Fame coach is supposed to inspire.



JOHN SCHAEFER COACH

John Schaefer was lucky. When he began coaching wrestling at Grand Avenue Jr. High School in Bellmore, he was mentored by legendary coaches Sprig Gardner and Ken Hunte. Schaefer was smart enough to incorporate those lessons into his own coaching techniques.

The results were undeniable. By the time he retired in 1995, after 27 years as the varsity wrestling coach at Bellmore Kennedy High School, he had become one of the most successful coaches in county history.

His teams forged a dual meet record of 244-86-9. They won 20 league titles. He developed 73 individual league champions, 26 county champions—including five in one season---and three state champions. He also coached 87 county place winners and 13 state place winners.

Schaefer's demeanor was noteworthy. "In the middle of a match, a young wrestler hears enough screaming," said former Bellmore JFK coach Don Jackson. "He needs a calm voice of instruction. That was John. He was solid oak in a world of plywood."

Steve Hunte, the former New York State champion who became a Big Ten champion at Iowa, cannot say enough about Schaefer's impact on his life. "I would never be where I am today without coach John Schaefer," said Hunte, now an Army Colonel stationed in Germany. "He taught me many lessons beyond the walls of the wrestling room." Which is precisely what great coaches do.



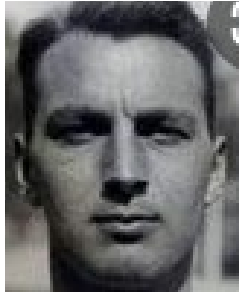
LARA VON SEELEN ATHLETE

These days, Lara Spencer is a well-known, popular television personality. But go back more than 30 years and she was Lara Von Seelen, a record-setting three-sport star at Garden City. The Trojans have produced a litany of star athletes over the decades, yet by the time she graduated Von Seelen had established herself as one of the greatest to walk the halls of her high school.

Lara was a three-year standout and captain in softball. She was a three-year standout and captain in basketball. She spent six years as a varsity diver, first earning a spot on the team in the 7th grade. At the conclusion of her career, she had earned an astonishing 12 varsity letters, more than any female or male athlete in the school's history!

Still, it was in diving where she left a magnificent legacy. She was the team's captain as a junior and senior. She was a three-time All-Nassau selection. She twice won the county's individual diving title. She placed second at the state meet in 1986, missing first place by just two points. As a senior, she was named Nassau's most outstanding swimmer/diver by the official's association.

Von Seelen accepted a scholarship to Penn State and stood out again. She twice won the Big East 3-meter board title, and in 1991, placed 15th in the 10-meter platform diving competition at the NCAA championships, earning first-team All-American honors.



LEO SEXTON ATHLETE

Leo Sexton was an imposing figure back in the mid-1920s when he attended Hempstead High School. Standing 6-4 and weighing 240 pounds, he was big enough to play football, tall enough to play basketball and strong enough to star throwing the shotput in track. He even took a fling at the decathlon, but a pole vault injury put an end to that endeavor.

After graduating from high school in 1926, Sexton enrolled at Georgetown and soon became one of the top collegiate shotputters in the country. That wasn't enough for Sexton. He had bigger dreams. He wanted to earn a spot on the U.S. Olympic team. He wanted to win a medal and he wanted to set a world record. He almost accomplished all three.

He did qualify for the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. He did win a gold medal in the shotput. His winning toss of 52-feet, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wasn't a world record, but it was an Olympic record. One month later his toss of 53-feet, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch at the Nassau Fireman's Athletic Association Games in Freeport set a new world record.

Sexton held the distinction of being the No. 1 shotputter in the country in 1930, 1931 and 1932. He also dabbled in the high jump and his leap of 6-4 was outstanding for that era.



KEYON SOLEY ATHLETE

Soley was a track and field icon at Uniondale High School. A genuine historic figure.

She was the best sprinter in the state for four years and the best long jumper in the state for three years. She literally set a trail of county and state records in both events. She won the state 100-meter dash four times. She won the state long jump title 3 times. She won national titles in the 100-meter dash and long jump. Track and Field News ranked her as the country's No.1 long jumper as a senior. The list goes on and on.

They began awarding the New York State Gatorade Player of the Year in girls track and field in 1986. Thirty-six years later only one Nassau female has won it twice. That would be Keyon Soley.

"She had a strong aversion to finishing any place but first," said her Uniondale coach, Leigh Pollet.

By the time she graduated from Uniondale, Soley had earned a reputation as one of the greatest female or male athletes to ever grace a Nassau track. She was a once in a lifetime talent. An all-time great.

Her star continued to shine in college. In her first year at UCLA, she earned All-American honors in the long jump, 4x100 relay and 4x400 relay. She transferred to Florida as a junior and finished fourth in the NCAA long jump competition.



ROBERT ST. ONGE ATHLETE

If you were a Hempstead High School student or teacher in the late 1930s and early 40s, you knew Bob St. Onge was special. He was a good student, a leader and a terrific athlete, starring in football in baseball. It was clear, he was going places.

St. Onge was the Tigers all-star quarterback in football. He was so good that at the 1940 Heisman Dinner he was proclaimed the top high school player in the tri-state area. He was also a star in baseball as the team's captain and hard-hitting catcher.

He never did play quarterback at West Point. Legendary Army coach Earl Blake switched St. Onge to center on offense and middle linebacker on defense. A brilliant move. He was a starter on two unbeaten teams. And when the Cadets crushed Notre Dame, 48-0, at Yankee Stadium to win the national title in 1945, St. Onge was named the game's MVP. He topped off the season by earning All-American honors.

St. Onge wasn't through. He was the catcher and cleanup batter on the unbeaten Army baseball team in 1946.

His post-West Point career was impressive. He served as an aide to General Douglas MacArthur in Japan during World War II. At the time of his retirement, St. Onge was a United States Army Major General. He passed away in 2002 and was buried at West Point.



STEPHANIE SMITH WALDEN ATHLETE

Stephanie Smith had two personalities. There was the quiet, somewhat introverted student in class and the fierce competitor who blew by opponents on the track.

“Her quiet, measured demeanor transformed when the gun fired,” said former Hempstead coach Brett Truitt. “Witnessing the transformation left me in awe.”

Smith’s achievements gave her coach plenty of opportunities to be awestruck. Aside from being one of the top 55-meter and 100-meter sprinters in Nassau, she was a key component on one of the greatest relay teams to step on a track in New York State history. As the leadoff runner for a team that dominated opponents, Smith triggered victories in the Eastern State Championships, Nassau Championships and many, many invitational meets including the New York State championships.

She and her teammates, Gail Cooper, Vonda Henderson and Gay Bullock reached the pinnacle in 1983 when Smith’s leadoff sprint of 26.2 seconds led Hempstead to a time of 1:41.84 in the 4x220-yard relay at the Eastern States meet. It was the first team to ever run under 1:42.00 in that event and set a New York State record that stands today, 39 years later. For her efforts, Smith was selected to the high school All-American team.

Today, that once shy young girl has become an acclaimed Technology teacher at Manalapan Englishtown Regional Schools in New Jersey. In 2014, she was the recipient of the Teacher of the Year award.



MARY WASHBURN ATHLETE

You could make a compelling case that Mary Washburn was not only one of the most historic women athletes from Nassau County but almost a century later, she remains one of the best female athletes the county has ever produced.

She was the star of Hempstead's basketball and track teams in the mid-1920s. She was a standout in field hockey, lacrosse, and soccer. In fact, after high school she became one of the founders of the Long Island Field Hockey Association and played for seven years on the United States Women's Lacrosse team.

Washburn continued her athletic excellence at DePauw University where she would be inducted into the school's Hall of Fame.

Despite all the accolades that accompanied her high school and college careers, nothing compared to 1928 when she earned a spot on the U.S. Olympic team. This wasn't just any Olympic team. This was the first time that women were allowed to compete in the Olympic Games.

Washburn was part of the silver medal 440-yard relay team, making her the first Long Island woman to earn an Olympic medal. She also ran the 100-yard dash but did not medal.

Washburn went on to a stellar teaching and coaching career. In recognition of her contributions as an athlete, coach, teacher and pioneer, Governor Mario Cuomo named her New York State's "Woman of the Year in Sports."

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