

# North Hunterdon High School

**Michael P. Hughes**  
Principal

**John P. Hahola, Jr.**  
Assistant Principal



**Robert W. Hopek**  
Director of Athletics

**Michael Gleason**  
Disciplinarian

September 2002

Dear Friends,

It is with great pleasure that North Hunterdon High School welcomes you to the inaugural Athletic Hall of Fame Luncheon. We especially recognize our first inductees who have so richly contributed to the school and community.

The purpose of forming the North Hunterdon High School Lions Athletic Hall of Fame establishes pride and preserves the tradition of the North Hunterdon High School Athletic Program by honoring those who have made a significant contribution. Athletics is a way of life – hard work, discipline, commitment, dedication and sacrifice. These high standards held for the induction into the Hall of Fame!

North Hunterdon has always had a rich tradition of producing outstanding athletes who have gone on to significant accomplishments in their professional careers. Their accomplishments set the standard against which all that followed were challenged to surpass. Individually, each made numerous contributions to the North Hunterdon athletic and school community.

On behalf of North Hunterdon High School, our administration, faculty, staff, student body and community, we would like to congratulate each inductee, for you represent a very select and prestigious group of people who were chosen by their school community for recognition in the athletic arena. You have all left a legacy with North Hunterdon High School.

This induction ceremony provides us with one more opportunity for the North Hunterdon High School community to honor each of you for all that you have given to so many. Enjoy this special recognition that you so richly deserve.

A special thanks to the Hall of Fame Committee for their dedication and commitment to the North Hunterdon High School Community.

Once again, congratulations to all our inductees and special thanks to the sponsors for their support.

Sincerely yours,

Michael P. Hughes  
Principal

Bob Hopek  
Assistant Principal/Director of Athletics

# **NHHS LIONS ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE**

David K. Pitfield, President

Mark Saharic, Vice President

Bonnie Carter, Secretary

Leon Cronic, Treasurer

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John Fasanella

Dennis Haughey

Robert Kornberger

Don Roberts

Debbie Roosen

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Lowell Snare

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## **ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Michael Hughes, Principal

John Hahola, Vice Principal

Robert Hopek, Athletic Director

*Special Thanks to: Maureen Silver-Billiard and David Sosidka*



# **NORTH HUNTERDON LIONS HALL OF FAME LUNCHEON AND INDUCTION CEREMONY**

**Welcome . . . . . Mr. Robert Hopek**

**Invocation . . . . . Mr. John Fasanello**

## **LUNCHEON**

**Inception of Lions Athletic Hall of Fame . . Mr. David Pitfield**

**Recognition of Committee Members . . . . Mr. David Pitfield**

**Induction Ceremony . . . . . Mr. Robert Hopek**

**Closing. . . . . Mr. Michael Hughes, Principal,  
North Hunterdon High School**



## JOHN TRANSUE '54

"Get the lead out!"

We've all heard that expression; but did you know that for one North Hunterdon athlete the saying would be prophetic? When the school opened, sophomore John Transue proved to be well-nigh impossible for blockers to move on the football field—so much so that he soon acquired the nickname "Lead," to match his ability to hold his ground.

For the next three years he played varsity center and linebacker for the Lions. The team center anchors the line, and Lead did so well that he was honored in the Democrat when the all-county teams were chosen: "By far he was the standout center in the county."

In baseball the catcher is the anchor, and that was, once again, John Transue. A fine hitter as well, he was varsity catcher for all three years at the school. (North Hunterdon, in its first year of baseball, surprised the league by winning the championship.)

John is another of the lads from the school's first years who remembers well how the physical education classes piled up rocks and shoveled them onto the school's pickup truck for removal, thereby helping to create our playing fields. For that first year the football and baseball teams played their games on the Clinton Community House Field.

After his high school days, John played for the Hunterdon Huskers semi-pro football team for the two years they were in their league. Up with the big boys now, he still played with the skill and toughness that had earned him his sobriquet, and again proved the point.

As for baseball, John began playing with the big boys even before graduation. In the summer following his junior year he joined the Washington Bombers, members of the old Tri-County League founded by State Senator Wesley Lance. Most of the players in the league were older men, so John and a few other high-school-age players had to be really good to make the teams.

After his senior year John switched to the Asbury team and helped lead them to the league championship. He also played American Legion ball and, in fact, was on the diamond six days a week with various teams for a number of years. His baseball ability was such that sometimes he would be called upon to help in the outfield. Through all the teams and leagues, for all the years, John batted well over .300.

John has worked as an automobile mechanic for car dealers and, for the last fifteen years, at his own garage. He lives on a 33-acre farm near Pittstown, keeping sheep and growing food for the table. And he is still rock-or lead-solid.





## DAVE STRAIN '55



Desire...intensity...all-out effort...super strength..."reckless abandon"...How to describe Dave Strain the athlete? Let it suffice to say that even the sports writers in the big city knew how great he was, and so did Hunterdon County, of course.

When the school opened in 1951, Dave was a member of the first four-year class to attend. He recalls how, because of lack of funding, the gym classes and athletes spent part of each day bringing dirt from the Clinton quarry and shoveling it to create our first athletic fields, where the baseball field is now. Athletes received certificates—much cheaper than chenille letters!

When the Democrat staff chose Dave as lineman of the year, they summed up what everyone knew: "He was the sole bright spot on a comparatively weak team. Strain played fine defensive ball at tackle and had no equals at blocking....He proved to be the Lions' most devastating back later in the season." At tackle or fullback, Dave was just the best.

Topping off his awards was Dave's initial selection as the first North Hunterdon player to be named All-State. In December of his junior year, Dave was one of only 35 lads from the Garden State, New York, and Rhode Island to be chosen to attend the presentation of the Heisman Trophy to John Lattner of Notre Dame.

Dave played varsity football for three years—All-State twice—as well as basketball and baseball. He thus played on the hardball team that won the league championship in the school's first year at the game. He also found time to work as freshman class president and vice president of the Student Council...nor should we neglect to mention the many hours of muscle-building work on the family farm.

After high school Dave played football for the semi-pro Hunterdon Huskers, and then went off to the U.S. Army, where he played for the Rock Gimlets in Munich, in a league that included many college and professional players. The team won the conference title—and Dave was picked to the All-Conference team.

After the service stint, Dave was asked to try out for the NY Titans (now the Jets), but with a young wife and a newborn, he decided to give up football. He did help to coach the Pop Warner team in Flemington; he also amazed younger North athletes by his daredevil play in the old-timers games against the rival Red Devils a few years back.

Last year Dave and wife Helen moved to Pennsylvania to be near family. They have two daughters and two grandchildren. But, Dave says, their hearts remain in Hunterdon County: "I still bleed Green and Gold."



## TOM LANGSTON '56

Speed, elusiveness, determination—all that makes for a great running back—was epitomized in Thomas Langston, the first truly great backfield star at North Hunterdon.

Tom amazed spectators with his fluid style of running that left defenders sprawled on the ground, wondering how they had missed tackling him. How often he ran a kick back 60 or 85 yards and then immediately did it again after some penalty had nullified the first run!

Running with the ball was his forte, but Tom also excelled on defense, pass-receiving, and on occasion tossing a pass too. Of course, back in the 50's the game was not so wide-open as it became. In spite of the controlled offenses of those days—and only an eight-game season—Tom set the conference record his senior year by scoring ten touchdowns. He also had five 100-yard-plus games that year. He averaged six yards per carry and eight tackles per game.

Tom was selected to the All-State team, as well as the conference all-stars. His prowess on the football field is only enhanced further when we realize that he did so well as an individual when the team had just one winning season, going 9-19-3 during his four years on varsity.

Football was not his only sport. Tom played varsity baseball for three years and varsity basketball for two. In basketball he was the play-maker, the assist man, for the most part. He was there to help the team.

Tom began playing varsity baseball near the end of his freshman year and was the catcher for the next three seasons, with a career batting average well over .400. Coach Pedersen, knowing Tom's speed, had a play set to go: If Tom was on second base, the coach would call for a bunt—and Tom's job was to score from second base! It worked well.

In a game against the old Flemington High, Tom hit two home runs, one right-handed and one left-handed. The former traveled so far that the opposing coach gave Tom the ball and his congratulations!

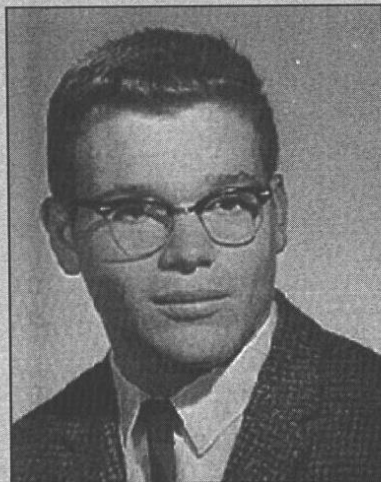
After graduation, Tom spent 1957-1960 serving the country as a US Marine. He then worked for Jersey Central Power & Light for 30 years, followed by a 6-year stint with the PGA, teaching golf as one of his duties.

Giving back to sports in the area, Tom helped coach the fine youth team, the Cubs, in 1971-72. Fans will remember how well those lads performed on the field in their high school days, bringing home our only football state championship in 1975.

Along the way he married Patricia McCaffrey and sent five daughters to North Hunterdon...and two grandchildren have also graduated from NH. The Langstons divide their time between Jersey and Florida these days, and Tom still plays a fine game on the golf course.







## PAUL GOBLE III '63

How fast is fast? How about setting an NCAA record for pinning your opponent in the post-season tournament in 6.5 seconds?! Paul Goble III, son of a prominent north-county minister, became North Hunterdon Regional's first state wrestling champion in 1963. Paul credits the late Harry Vandermark, who founded NH wrestling, with his success on the mat, both during and after high school.

A terror to opponents on the football field, where he played offense, defense, and on special teams and received All-State recognition at tackle, Paul was to prove even more ferocious in "hand-to-hand combat." In his junior wrestling season Paul was undefeated until the Regional finals, losing to the eventual 1962 state champion, and then went undefeated in his senior year and brought home the gold medal at heavyweight.

For a little spring fun he tried his strong arm at the shotput and discus—and set school records in both, although he downplays his prowess....

Later, at Rutgers, Paul won the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Association title. As a member of the U.S. Air Force, Paul attended Penn Military College (now Widener U.). It was there that he set the NCAA 6.5-second pin record in the post-season tourney. During his USAF grappling days he won both the USAF and Interservice heavyweight titles in '67 and '68. No slouch in the classroom, he was first in his class, graduating summa cum laude with a 3.90 GPA.

Paul wrestled further for the AF when he studied for his master's degree in engineering at Denver U, again winning the USAF and Interservice titles, and qualifying for the final Olympic tryouts, having been third in the national AAU tournament in '72. In Ankara, Turkey, he once more set a record, for the fastest pin in the international military championships, decking his Greek opponent in 10 seconds. (His favorite quick-win move during his varied career was the lateral drop he learned at North Hunterdon.)

While attending PMC, Paul married Stephanie Negoescu, NH '64. The AF set Paul to working as a communications engineer in Europe, southwest Asia, and northern Africa, followed by a four-year stint in Washington, DC, in the Office of Special Investigations, and then USAF Space Command in Colorado Springs. Paul retired from the AF in 1987 with the rank of Major and now works for the Air Force as a civil servant in engineering. Stephanie teaches high school math. All four daughters have gone to college via athletic scholarships; son Paul is on active duty with the US Army.

And one more thing—a holdover from his days at NH: Paul won his HAM radio license before his junior year...and HAM is still his number-one hobby... a communications man all the way....



## DAVE GAUNT '71

If you have ever seen a big cat—such as a lion—in action, you have some idea of what Dave Gaunt looked like on the mat. He was given various titles over the years, starting with "Super Frosh" and then "Super Soph," but most fans of a generation ago simply call him the Champ.

He was third in a family of athletes; first in the family of North Hunterdon wrestlers. In his final two years, many opponents simply did not want to wrestle him. Those who chose to fight were usually pinned. Fans were somewhat amused by Dave's practicing—and inventing—moves during matches. Sometimes he would "carry" a foe thus for the entire bout, when the team did not need pin points.

Points and falls were awarded differently in those days; it was much more difficult to get "back points," and stalling was hardly ever called. Nevertheless, Dave racked up many pins, including nineteen in his twenty-three-match senior year. Coach Harold Vandermark, founder of NH wrestling, could always count on Dave to get the points—even when wrestling while in the grip of the grippe....

From his freshman year on Dave won all four sectional titles. From sophomore on he was champion in the Regions. Dave took second in the State tournament as a sophomore, losing by only one point to an extremely weary senior opponent, who crawled back to the center of the mat several times in the final period.

After that Dave was unbeatable, running off forty-nine consecutive victories in his junior and senior years, giving him a three-year record of 72-1-1. Of course, that meant he was North Hunterdon's first wrestler to win two State championships (at 167 pounds), as well as being closest to winning three. Dave pinned his way through the states, too.

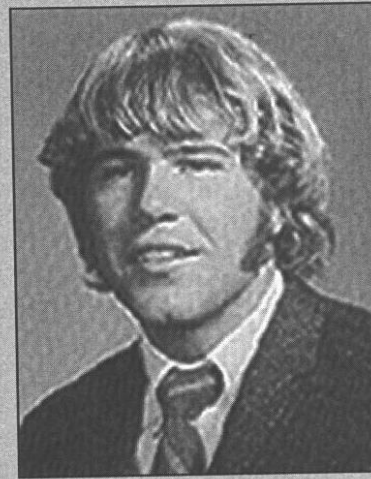
Dave also wrestled in the United States Federation tournaments and won the Outstanding Wrestler award in 1969 and 1971; he also received All-American honors.

Wrestling for Indiana State University, Dave won many tournaments and awards, including Outstanding Wrestler at ISU and All-America honors in his senior year. A Terra Haute sports writer reported that Dave often came onto the mat and decked his opponent so fast that the ref missed it. As in high school, a most exciting wrestler for the fans...

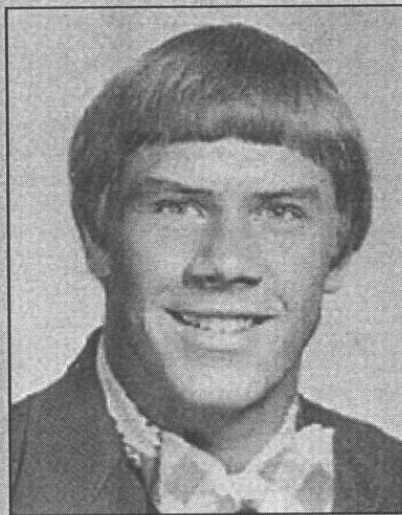
Dave wrestled for the NY Athletic Club after college. He was inducted into the Region 5 Hall of Fame for outstanding achievements, leadership, and contributions to NJ wrestling.

For the past eleven years Dave has taught special education and physical education at DelVal HS, where he put in two years as head wrestling coach. He also was an assistant coach at both North and Voorhees. Over the years he has helped with the Voorhees junior wrestling program, for which his son Derek had grappled.

Dave and his wife Brynn, with their son and two daughters, currently reside in Lebanon Township







## MIKE LUSARDI '74

Mandrake the Magician had nothing on North Hunterdon's Mike Lusardi when it came to illusions, whether in football or baseball.

Mike was not only a slick ballhandler, he was also a fine runner in his own right. He had lettered as a running back in his sophomore year. Against DelVal in his senior year Mike racked up a record 241 yards carrying the ball. He was a passing threat on the gridiron, and he was called upon to punt, as well—in one game, eight times.

As for baseball... It was obvious when Mike was just a sophomore that he was a superior hurler. In that first year of varsity ball, lefty Mike won ten games and lost none to lead the team

to the league title.

Next year was a repeat for the league championship, with Mike going 9-1 on the mound. Along the way he pitched two no-hitters and, with two other pitchers, combined for a third. His "magic" in this sport, to many fans, was that Mike's fastball became a wisp of smoke on the way to the plate; it apparently seemed that way to the batters, too! His ERA of 0.45 was a school and conference record. Mike was chosen to the All-State team.

In his senior year the team, without many solid hitters, went all the way to the State Group IV finals at Princeton, losing a heartbreaker in eleven innings. Mike was 10-2 that season, with eight shutouts and a record ERA of merely 0.31! He also had a record 119 strikeouts for the season. And Mike was again All-State.

His career includes 370 strikeouts, an ERA of just 0.79; and he also belted nine home runs. When Mike wasn't pitching, he started in the outfield every year...and had time to be senior class president.

At the University of Wyoming, Mike was a three-year starter and All-Conference team pick twice, as well as honorable mention All-American. In his junior summer he played extremely well in the Cape Cod League, was selected to the All-Star team, and fifth in the league in hitting. After graduation Mike played in various countries as a member of the inaugural Athletes in Action international team.

Mike is now in his 22nd year with Athletes in Action, in ministries for colleges and professional teams. He started at Auburn—even helping to coach baseball at the university for six years before moving to Kansas City to begin the AIA ministry with the Chiefs and the Royals. For years he was batting practice hurler for the Royals.

He and wife Debbie give spiritual guidance and counsel to professional athletes and their wives. Mike is on the board of primary care counselors for both KC teams, and is also on the board of the Lighthouse, a crisis pregnancy center in Kansas City. They reside in Lee's Summit with their two daughters and son.



## DAVE SMIGELSKY '77

To name any North Hunterdon football stars who have gone to the National Football League is an easy task; just say David Smigelsky.

Dave began to play varsity quarterback in his sophomore year, when coach Fritz Halfacre led the team to the Delaware River Conference title with a 7-1 record. Dave not only handled play-running, he was free safety and punter as well. His tremendous, booming punts frequently dismayed the opposition and awed the spectators. In a night game at Warren Hills, in a teeming rainstorm, Dave punted one so high and far that the WHHS fans thought they were already facing an NFL kicker. Distance and "hang time" of his punts pretty much precluded any hopes of good runbacks by opponents.

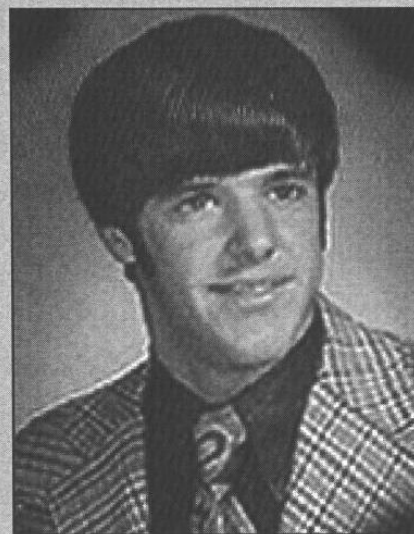
In his junior year the team went undefeated in ten games, culminating in the New Jersey Group III state championship for 1975...the only State title our football teams have ever won. The gridders' record for three seasons was 23-4. Against arch-rival Hunterdon Central that year, Dave tossed eight completions in nine attempts. His passing percentage for the season was 54.2%—a school record—even though Dave's playing time was somewhat curtailed by injury. Opponents found nothing to rejoice in if Dave ran with the ball, thanks to his speed and agility. He was another running back out there—a triple threat.

Football was the big game, but Dave also excelled in baseball. In his senior year he went 8-0 on the mound for the Lions, while the season record for the team was 15-6—a solid indicator of how valuable his strong arm was to the team.

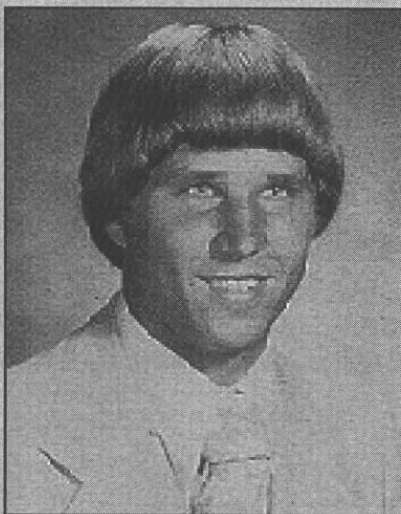
After high school Dave was off to Virginia Tech on a full scholarship. Unfortunately, his quarterbacking days were ended early by an arm injury; but Dave proved invaluable to the team by assuming the duties of punter all four years. He set the school record for most yards per punt in a season, a mark that stood for eighteen years. One of the high points came when Dave played in the 1980 Peach Bowl against perennial powerhouse Miami.

Dave went on to punt for the Washington Redskins and the Atlanta Falcons; he then joined the Washington Federals of the US Football League, kicking 55 times for an average of 42 yards per punt before the league folded.

Dave and his wife Cindy live in Georgia, where Dave works for the UPS and coaches youth sports. Their son Steven played linebacker for his high school team, even though he was only a freshman. Daughter Cindy helped lead her middle school team to an undefeated basketball season.







## MARTY VYBIHAL '79

Nowadays there's much talk of el tigre on the golf course, but back in the late 70's, high school golfers in New Jersey were checking out the movements of a lion—a North Hunterdon Lion, that is: Marty Vybihal.

At the end of a decade of building up the fledgling golf team, Coach James Smith was ready for all comers. He had a talented group, including freshman Marty Vybihal. It was the spring of 1976 and would prove to be the best golf season ever.

The team record that year was 18-0, and of course they were Delaware River Conference champions. Marty began his string of Hunterdon County championships in '76. The team would

repeat as DRC champs in 1977 with a record of 19-1, and Marty would take the county title again.

In his junior year, Marty would lead the team to a third consecutive DRC title, with a record of 18-2, and continue his dominance of the county with his third straight title. Best of all for him individually would be his crowning as State golf champion. Mr. Smith says that Marty had become the "backbone" of our team and one of the greatest high school golfers he's ever seen.

For a senior-year finale to a great high school career, Marty took his teammates to the fourth straight DRC championship (18-1-1), his fourth county title, and a repeat of '78 as State champion.

Marty's average during his NH days on the nine-hole courses was 37 strokes. At Beaver Brook he set a record with a round of 33. His 18-hole best was 71, and he had the lowest State tournament 36-hole score of 157. The team's won-lost record in his four years was a scintillating 73-4-1, or 94% wins.

When Marty wasn't out on the course or at the driving range, he was on a basketball court. Coach Smith says Marty was athletically good all-around, as well as being a "good student and a nice kid, who could have done anything in sports." And he did become an exceptional varsity hoopster, too, helping the team to the State semifinals. In addition, he played three years of varsity football.

Marty next played four years of outstanding golf at the University of Maryland, winning various tournaments along the way. Afterward, he became a golf "pro" and has continued in that line for eighteen years. Marty credits his father's passion for the game as the prime cause of his success and career.

Marty is presently golf pro at Mountain Ridge in West Caldwell and would like to once again reside in the NHHS district. He and wife Kathleen are eagerly awaiting the birth of their first child, due on St. Patrick's Day.



## SCOTT SKRIPKO '80

Joseph Scott Skripko came to North from a family of fine athletes. During grade school he worked out incessantly at the Saturday-morning basketball practices that he was brought to by his varsity-playing Uncle Jim.

The young boy's determination impressed his future coach, Don Roberts, who said of Scott as a high-school player: "Scott was the catalyst of our team success for three years." Coach Roberts gives Scott much of the credit for getting the team to a conference title and appearances in the State tournament.

When Scott reached his senior year, he decided that basketball and baseball were great sports, but that he also wanted to try his fortune at football. He did so—with great success. He still holds the school record of eleven interceptions in a season. In the tremendously exciting Hunterdon Central game, Scott had three interceptions and caught the long pass that set up the winning touchdown in a see-saw battle won by North, 36-34. In a State playoff game, Scott scored the only TD ever by a North player—in Giants Stadium. And he was chosen All-State....

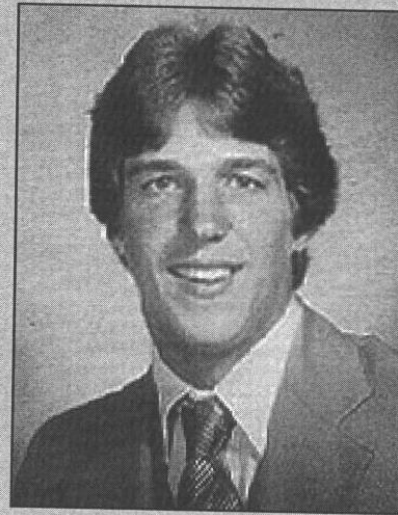
In his final basketball season, Scott led the team in scoring and provided the "spark." He had a 12-for-12 foul-shooting night. In a State tourney game, with North down by one point near the end, Scott stole the ball and raced half-court to dunk for the win. He was our first-ever "dunker"—at 5-foot-eleven. And he was selected All-State....

Wrapping up his baseball career for NHHS, Scott went 8-0 on the mound and threw a no-hitter (like father Joe and Uncle Jim before him at North). One of his fondest memories is beating Central 1-0 in two consecutive years for the conference title. In the NJ All-Star game, he hit a triple and a home run. He enjoyed pitching in Yankee Stadium in a game-simulation tryout of the Yanks' top-20 high school prospects. And he was All-State—in the third sport, in the same class year!

Next, he headed for Middle Georgia College and, as MVP, led the team to the Junior College World Series championship in 1982. Scott was selected MVP. He also won the award for most outstanding defensive player in the national title series and set the series record for most runs scored.

He was then drafted by the Boston Red Sox in the third round and played several seasons in the Carolina League, where he became a member of the "Silver Glove" team—analogous to the "Golden Glove" in the major leagues. While pitching for the Red Sox in spring training, Scott suffered a severe arm injury....

Nowadays Scott, with wife Lisa, two daughters, and a son, resides in the Milford area and is employed by Coca-Cola. He plays a solid game of golf, and scored his first hole-in-one last year.





## ANDY MARTIN '85

As a lad of nine, Andy Martin was a fine basketball and baseball player. His father, Jeff, himself an excellent runner at Metuchen, gave his son ample opportunities to play both. They could often be seen at North Hunterdon athletic events, afterwards frequently tossing a football and running. It wasn't long before Andy was a member of the Hunterdon Harriers, a local kids' running team that won state and national championships.

So when Andy arrived at his freshman year in 1981, he was ready for both high school running and the continued winning of championships. Starting with cross-country that fall under coach Robert O'Rourke, Andy and his teammates ran up a dual-meet record of 48 wins, with only one loss, including 27 consecutive victories. In Central Jersey Group III, they were champions in 1981, 1983, and 1984.

As for the state championship, the team won that title, too, in those three seasons. In the Meet of Champions for all Group titleists, they were first in 1983 and second in 1984. Andy was instrumental in gaining all those titles. Individual achievement during his cross-country years? Consider:

First-team All-State . . . . 1982-1983-1984

Course records . . . . . Holmdel Park (1984), Mercer County Park (1983)

NJ State Champ. . . . . 1984

Eastern States Champ . 1984.

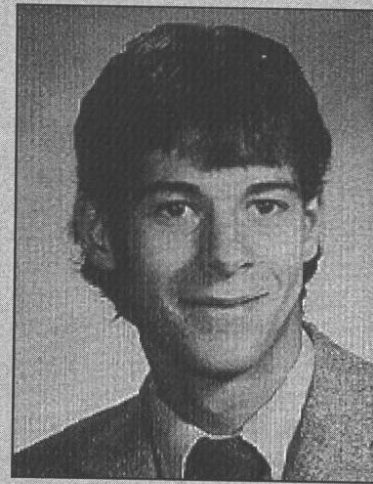
On to spring track and field...here individuals stand out for their effort and ability, and Andy made his presence felt around the state in this sport too.

In 1984 Andy set school records at 1600 and 3200 meters. He was Sectional champ in the 3200 in 1983, 1984, and 1985. He also added the 1600 title as a senior. In the Group championships, Andy was first in both the 1600 and the 3200 in 1984, followed by the State title in the 1600 in 1985. He followed up with the Meet of Champions victory at the 3200 in 1985.

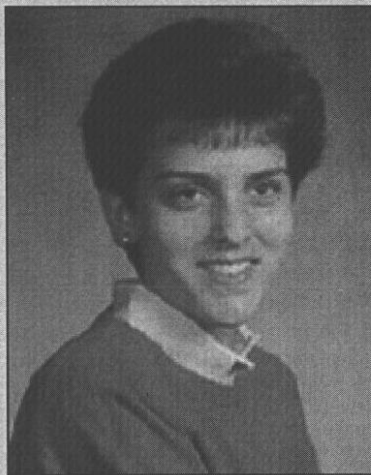
Just having some fun in winter track, Andy won the Group 1600-meter championship in 1985 and was All-State in 1983 and 1985.

After this stellar career in high school, Andy went on to run well for the University of Virginia, where he earned his degree in sports administration; he would later get a master's at East Stroudsburg. For a number of years Andy owned the "Tees to Please" screenprinting business, and then became the managing director of the NJ branch of the USA Track and Field Association. His fine work was noticed at headquarters; now he is National Manager of Associations and Membership Services and living in Indiana.

Andy still runs moderately, but spends more time with his spouse and three children and in coaching kids' athletics. Wife and classmate Connie (Tkac), herself a fine NH runner, still competes in races. (And, yes, dad Jeff, now a municipal judge, the originator of "Sprintin' Clinton," is still putting in mileage on Hunterdon roads.)







## JODIE BILOTTA '88

So how many State individual championships make the record? At North Hunterdon, it's 25—count 'em—25!

Jodie Bilotta, in cross-country and track, won that many group and overall titles in her varsity career, on teams that were loaded with talented runners in the 1980's. NH had scintillating stars in that era; the dedication of Jodie Bilotta made her the brightest.

In cross-country, Jodie was chosen to first-team All-State in all four years. In 1985, 1986, and 1987 she was the Central Jersey champion, then the Group III champion, and extended her dominance on the hills and dales by winning the

state title at the Meet of Champions over all the best female runners in the state—all three years.

Jodie continued her superb competitive running in the springtime. She set the school records for the 800-, 1600-, and 3200-meter runs. Sectional championships had to come: As a freshman, Jodie won both the 1600- and 3200-meter races. In her sophomore season she ran those two races and threw in the 800 meters as well—becoming sectional champ in all three. Jodie then proceeded to do the same in her junior and senior years.

On to the groups; as a frosh, she won the 3200 title. In her next three seasons Jodie pulled off the unprecedented feat of winning State championships in all three races, from the 800 through the 1600 to the 3200.

In the state track Meet of Champions category, with the top girls in all groups competing, Jodie won the 3200 in her first year. Next spring she took the 1600 and 3200 titles. She repeated that feat as a junior. In her senior-year finale, she ran the 800, 1600 and 3200—and won all three championships. No other girl has ever done so.

One might also mention her selection as an All-American....

Coach Robert McGivney recalls Jodie's dedication to the team: "She never missed a team workout." That was so even on days when she also ran with the boys to improve her speed. "She was always a team athlete," he says, "and strong and quick."

Following high school, Jodie enrolled at Stanford University and continued her running. Unfortunately, serious injuries occurred and greatly curtailed her speed. Now, a decade later, Jodie is back, striving mightily to overcome those long-lasting problems.

This spring, for example, she placed second at the Penn Relays in the Olympic Development 5000 meters and then easily won the Midland 15-kilometer race and Sprintin' Clinton. Last year she competed for the USA in Seoul, Korea, as part of the Ekiden International Road Relay team.

In May 1999 Jodie became Mrs. Frank D'Ariano. She lives in the area and serves as Vice President of Pierce Equipment Company. Watch for her....



# COACH NORMAN PEDERSEN

"Boys—this is a basketball!"

With some such bit of humor, delivered in his trademark style (imitated by thousands of NH lads), Norman Pedersen would begin class at the beginning of a sports season. A man of few words, but a man who was eagerly listened to, Coach Pedersen was on hand when the school itself began.

Mr. Pedersen played high school sports in Chatham and then went off to Panzer College, one of the most famous—and rigorous—athletic schools in the country, where he was on the basketball and baseball teams. But Uncle Sam beckoned, and he joined others of the "greatest generation," to serve his country. He was soon First Sergeant Pedersen of the US Army, on duty in North Africa and Italy.

After the war, Mr. Pedersen continued his education at West Chester College. Coincidentally, he was a year behind the late Paul Rickenbach (like "Pete," a catcher), who also would come to work at North Hunterdon. And he met at West Chester the future Mrs. Pedersen, Janey Reid, who had sung with Vaughn Monroe's orchestra.

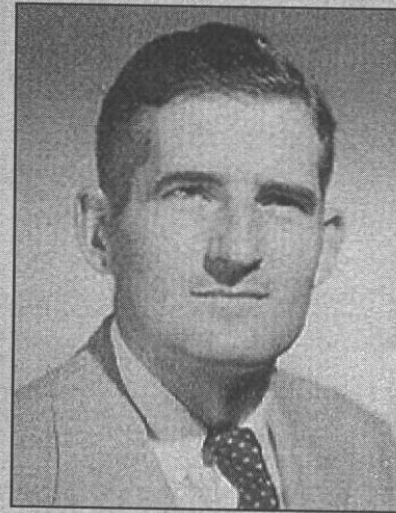
Four years at the old High Bridge High, then to "Regional" when it opened in 1951...there to remain until retirement in 1982. In that first year, Coach led the basketball team to the league championship. He would guide the hoopsters for nine years, but his main love was baseball.

In that first year, the team played in Clinton and at the old White Swan Inn field. After a game replete with strikeouts, Mr. Pedersen and the opposing coach decided to check the latter field. When they found the distance from pitcher's mound to home plate was over four feet short, that game was the swan song for that field!

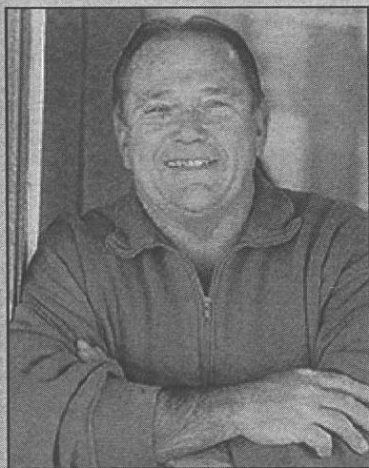
From 1952 through 1977 Mr. Pedersen's teams would amass 316 wins out of 480 games—a 66% winning record. Along the way they would collect many Delaware River Conference titles. In 1959 and 1974, his teams were also Central Jersey Group III champions. From 1971-74 the teams went 81-23 (78% wins).

In 1973 NH was in Group IV, but Coach Pedersen had his team "playing with the big boys" to the tune of a 21-6 record that included the Central Jersey Group IV title. In the state finals at Princeton University, the team lost a heartbreaker in 11 innings to Bayonne, by an one run. Not the greatest hitting team, but Coach Pedersen always got maximum performances from his players. The real mark of the coach was his concern for the well-being and the future of his players, win or lose. And that's the true meaning of success for any coach....

Nowadays the Pedersens spend their time between Ocean City, NJ, and Florida—where their two NH-graduate daughters also reside. Mr. Pedersen works part-time at golf courses in both states, and you can still find him out on the course enjoying the game.







## COACH ROBERT MCGIVNEY

For Robert McGivney, coaching has been an integral part of his life since junior year of college, when he became, for two years, assistant football coach and head wrestling and baseball coach at the Hunt School.

Starting his teaching career at South Hunterdon, Bob helped coach football; and, as head baseball coach, led his lads to several championships, notably the Group I State baseball crown. Major league scouts attended that small school's games—a satisfying memory.

At North Hunterdon he assisted Norman Pedersen with baseball and Harold Vandermark in wrestling, and also took over the girls' swimming and diving program for the Somerset YMCA. Then

he became assistant boys' track coach under Robert O'Rourke.

Next came girls' cross-country and track, and he initiated the girls' indoor track team as well. In what could be considered understatement, Coach McGivney says briefly, "We had some wonderful teams."

That appears clear when we look at the record: Cross-country: 10 state sectional championships, 7 Group III-IV championships, 6 All-Group State championships, 1 runnerup, 4 Eastern States championships; Track: 4 sectional championships, 3 Group State championships.

His cross-country teams went 107-10, unbeaten in six consecutive seasons. In his four years as head track coach, the teams were perfect in winning: 38-0. That's a total of 145 wins and only 10 losses. Of course, there were many individual champions as well....

In addition, he had several state champions in winter track, including well-known North athletes Brad Hudson, Andy Martin, and Anne-Marie Letko; and Eastern sprint champ Pam Hudson.

Mr. McGivney was five times Coach of the Year for cross-country, twice in track, and once (at South Hunterdon) in baseball. He has been elected to the State Interscholastic Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

Some of his special memories include the team that scored over two dozen points in the Meet of Champions; Darlene Andrews winning the 400-meter race in the Meet of Champions; Anne Letko taking the 3200-meter indoor title; and Jodie Bilotta's amazing triple—800, 1600, and 3200 meters—at the Group III championship, within a three-hour span.

Another "super event," he recalls, occurred at the Group meet in 1983, when all five cross-country girls broke the 20-minute mark at Holmdel. Beyond running, the coach enjoyed seeing five or six lads become State champs during Mr. Vandermark's tenure; and he still happily recalls that long-ago State baseball title!

After 28 years at North, and a truly varied coaching career, he retired and now resides in a 100-year-old farmhouse in Denville with wife Barbara, a first-grade teacher; and an interesting assortment of critters—three canines, 3 parrots, a very black cat, ten hens, and a rabbit—all no doubt comprising a formidable team....



## DAVE ROBBINS '63

In the special category of Contributor to NH athletics, we present David Robbins, a man who is well-known around the state for representing North Hunterdon High School.

Back in 1963 attorney George Hoerrner laid the moniker "Gola" on Dave, for the star college and NBA player, Tom Gola. But for many years he has been better known by the sobriquet "Dave the Rave." With his green-and-gold cape, Dave is instantly recognizable at sporting events.

Dave long ago began taking occasional shots from the basketball sidelines during opening and halftime warm-ups. Then, one night in 1978, he tried his first—and now trademark—over-the-head-backwards shot—and made it, to the delight of a large crowd attending the NH-Central game. It was a move he had experimented with at the Tobyhanna summer camp, where he was a favorite of boys and coaches each summer; boys used to ask which week Dave would be there and try to get into camp then.

In recent years Dave has had great success with the shot, making nine consecutively and seven in a row on another night... remarkable feats. His season record is ninety-one. Then, of course, there are the half-court long shots....

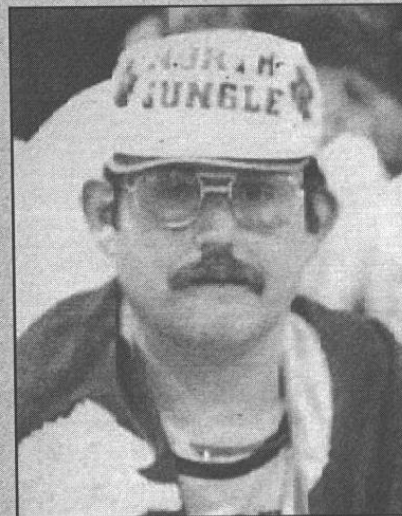
The cape, crafted by Mrs. Florence Whittington, made its debut in 1978 and has made Dave the most recognizable sports personality wherever he attends a game. Fans all over have enjoyed the moves of "Dancin' Dave the Rave," North Hunterdon's number-one fan.

One example of the community's appreciation came a few years ago when Dave's bicycle was stolen a few weeks before Christmas. The girls' basketball team chipped in to buy him a new one and friends at Holiday Inn took care of the accessories. (For years Dave has been traveling far and wide by bike...and thumb.)

And for decades Dave has been a fixture at Tony DiPietro's barber shop in Clinton. He has also been a dedicated worker at all his jobs. Many people will recall his days at the old Clinton Deli and all the grass-cutting jobs around town. Perhaps you have one of the potholders Dave has made....

In recent years Dave has worked in the canteen at the Hunterdon Developmental Center and has been welcomed onto its Special Olympics basketball team; he has also won medals in the softball throw and 55-meter dash at the Summer Games.

Fans of North Hunterdon and Dave the Rave look forward to many more years of Dave's actions at the games. Just keep your eyes on the man with the cape....





# GIRLS' BASKETBALL SUPREME

In the annals of girls' sports at North Hunterdon, there are numerous great teams and championships. The era that stands out in basketball, a sport that is a prime example of the girls' winning tradition, is the 1980's.



North Hunterdon teams of that time hold the New Jersey record for the longest win streak: 84 consecutive victories. Under coaches Pete Catanese and Bill Snyder, those teams won three consecutive State championships and placed second once, as well as being chosen the best team in the state, among all-groups, in 1985-86.

Coach Catanese and the team of 1983-84 started the title runs with a 23-5 record and a second-place finish in the Group III State tournament. Prior to that, his first three teams racked up 67 wins against

only 12 losses and won the Central Jersey Group III crown in 1982, also gaining second place in the State championship.

The following year the team went 28-0 and took the State title. After a tight first half, the Lions dominated their Newark opposition for the victory. Mr. Catanese credits the girls for their total team effort—a "great group" of very coachable girls who worked splendidly in unison and believed in themselves and their dreams—and also the very supportive parents.

His assistant coach, Bill Snyder, took over the next year and, despite some people's doubts that rural North Hunterdon could ever hope to do so well, so soon, in the state competition,



continued to lead the girls to phenomenal success. His 1985-86 girls were undefeated at 27-0 and won the State title, along with the rating of #1 team in New Jersey. But the girls weren't done with the undefeated string just yet. They came back in 1986-87 for yet another State championship, and a repeat record of 27-0.

Nothing in sports continues unchecked forever, but the next year's team opened with two more wins, to run the undefeated string to the new (and still) state record of 84. Up to that point, the 1980-1987 girls'

basketball teams were 173-17 under both coaches, and their record during four years of reaching the State finals was a superb 82-5!

Mr. Snyder says that the girls' dedication was "amazing"; on school days they were lifting weights at 6 a.m., and they never missed a practice, even at 8 a.m. on Saturdays. He, too, enjoyed the cooperation of parents and student fans and an excellent coaching staff.

"We had many excellent athletes who had confidence in themselves and their teammates." Coachable...confident...unified...talented...

well-directed; all the attributes of superlative, championship teams. It doesn't ever get better than that.





# **GIRLS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

## **BASKETBALL TEAMS**

### **1985**

Darlene Andrews	Beth Gromlowicz
Pam Balogh	Lori Kuchman
Melissa Baptist	Laura Lenio
Kerry Czaskos	Jen Moorecraft
Laura Fooks	Lisa O'Dell
Allison Greene	Kim Tiger
Mary Griffo	Donna Walicky

### **1986**

Jen Aanonsen  
Dawn Biel  
Lee Ann Craft  
Karen Dahme

### **COACHES**

Pete Catanese  
Bill Snyder

### **1987**

Candice Bunnell  
Robin Czaskos

### **1988**

Patty Aanonsen	Kim Marsh
Louise Black	Judy Mottley
Debbie Fugazzi	Karyn VanNatta
Mary Beth Hersch	Jennifer Valint
Robin Kushuba	Robin Zingler