NHHS LIONS ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

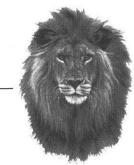
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Ms. Bonnie Carter, Secretary

Mr. Leon Cronce, Treasurer



Advisory Committee

Mr. Michael Hughes, Principal

Mr. John Hahola, Jr. Ass't Principal

Mr. Robert Hopek, Director of Athletics

September 2003

Dear Friends,

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

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 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

1445 Rout 31, Annandale, New Jersey 08801 – Telephone 908-735-5191, Fax 908-735-6447 www.nhvweb.net/nhhs/

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Special Thanks to: Maureen Silver-Billiard and David Sosidka

NORTH HUNTERDON LIONS HALL OF FAME 2nd LUNCHEON AND INDUCTION CEREMONIES

Welcome..... Mr. Robert Hopek

Invocation Mr. John Fasanello

LUNCHEON

Closing. Mr. Michael Hughes, NHHS Principal

North Hunterdon Lions Hall of Fame Committee congratulates the newest Inductees to the

North Hunterdon Athletic Hall of Fame

Coaches

Robert O'Rourke
Paul E. Rickenbach (posthumous)
Harold Vandermark (posthumous)

Contributors

Lowell M. Snare
Ann Snyder (posthumous)

Athletes

Darlene Andrews

Tracy Bigley

Bob Clawson

Allison Greene

Beth Gromlowicz

Alice Hedden

Brendan Heffernan

Jason Kramer

Anne-Marie Letko

Tom McGourty

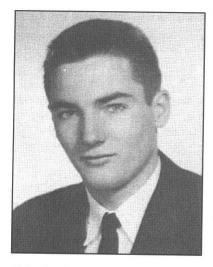
Eugene O'Neill

Joe Skripko

Parker Snare

Team

1975 State Football Champions



EUGENE O'NEILL'57

The DeCleene family on his mother's side owned the colonial Clinton House restaurant; dad Gene O'Neill, a state game warden, owned the affection of innumerable fishermen, hunters, and kids; and Eugene "Jake" O'Neill owned the basketball court in North Hunterdon's first decade.

This fine young athlete became the first basketball player in school history to reach the 1000-point mark in scoring, finishing with 1003 in only three years as a varsity starter.

But before Jake stepped onto the basketball court each year, he ran out onto the football field. He will tell you that he lacked prowess in football, yet he was a surefingered receiver, the finest on the 1956 team that went

7-1, the best record the school had achieved in the sport.

If he was great at end in football, he was spectacular on the court. In addition to his 1003 career points, Jake also held the school mark for points in a season, 403. Further, he held for many years the school record for best points- per- game average in a season, 22.4.

Twice he scored 37 points in a game, especially with his great jump shot, a move that was coming into vogue during that era. Jake had great basketball sense and was consistently able to drive to the basket in spite of the tight defenses in his day.

Jake was the leading scorer in the county and in the entire Plainfield area. He was picked for the All-County, All-Conference, and All-Area teams. In those days when there were no state tournaments to showcase our local talent.

In the spring, Jake would move from Coach Pedersen's court to Coach Pedersen's baseball field. He was a line-drive hitter who batted nearly .400 in his final year, and a respected outfielder because of his rifle arm. The *Newark News* chose Jake for the All-State team.

Seton Hall and St. Francis were talking to Jake about scholarships to play basketball and baseball, but he was accepted at Notre Dame, "a dream come true" for him and his family.

Trying out as a walk-on, Jake came within one player of making the Irish basketball team. In the spring, he just missed being on the baseball team (which had another freshman named Carl Yastrzemski). He did play intramurals at ND and quite a lot of basketball during his Navy career and beyond.

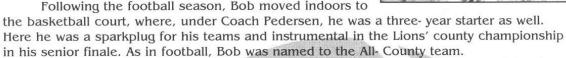
After college, Jake was commissioned an officer in the U.S. Navy and served as the disbursing office on a supply ship for submarines, including the Nautilus, our first nuclear sub. After military duty, he was a purchasing agent for Pfizer; for the past decade, he has been the Director of Logistics for Lorillard Tobacco.

Jake and wife Irene live in Greensboro, NC, with their three children and three grand-children spread out along the southern coast. He has coached youth basketball and base-ball over the years and enjoys playing golf, including participating in PGA pro-ams.

BOB CLAWSON '59

Hall-of- Fame coach Norman Pedersen called Bob Clawson..."a strong youngster – he's built like a fireplug," and Robert Clawson showed his power as a varsity star in three sports during North Hunterdon's formative years.

Bob won three varsity letters in football when coach Paul Rickenbach's teams went 20-3-1, the beginning of the gridiron glory days for North Hunterdon. The highlight of his career came as a junior, when he ran around right end against Metuchen for a touchdown – of 99 yards and 2 feet. This is still the school record; in fact, Bob was recently informed that it is the longest run from scrimmage in the history of high school football! He led the team in rushing as a senior.



Moving into the spring, we find Mr. Pedersen happily coaching Bob in baseball – for half his freshman year and three more varsity seasons afterward. Even though he was a standout football and basketball player, Bob was even greater on the diamond. He batted over .300 as a sophomore, then led the team the next two years with averages of .385 and .355. Bob also went 5-0 as a pitcher in his senior year, even though he was primarily at shortstop.

That season, the Lions were 16-3 and won the Central Jersey Group III state championship, to go with their titles in the county and the North Central Jersey League. Bob hit safely in 16 consecutive games that year. He was All-County for three years and selected to the All-State team as a senior. His baseball prowess was noted: Rutgers offered him an athletic (and academic, we must add) scholarship.

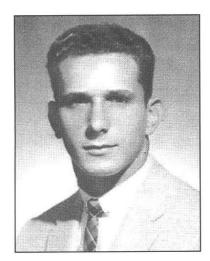
Aside from sports, Bob found time to play trumpet in the school band and was a member of the Key Club, the Honor Council, and other clubs; he was also inducted into the National Honor Society.

Following his successful career at Rutgers, Bob turned down the opportunity to enter the Yankees system and began his 36- year career as a teacher in Lebanon Township, where he and a colleague initiated the school's physical education program. Since retiring, he has worked in golf at the Stanton Ridge Club. (The man who hired him is Coach Rickenbach's son Jeff....)

Besides golf, Bob has other interesting hobbies. The most unusual has to be collecting railroad switch keys (and researching railroad history). He has some 720 of the keys so far. And then there are the six beehives... a "great" hobby, he says, in spite of the hard work – and bears!

Bob and his wife Jane have two daughters and four grandsons and reside in the Port Murray area.





JOE SKRIPKO '60

Like father, like son...but we refer not to the presidents...

For the first time, the North Hunterdon High School Athletic Hall of Fame includes a father-son duo: Joseph and Scott Skripko. Although they are separated by a generation in family life—and a world apart in the opportunities offered to athletes in different eras—their excellence as athletes shines forth.

Joe Skripko played four years in each of three sports—football, basketball, and baseball—during North Hunterdon's first decade. He was one of the premier athletes in the school's history.

He started at varsity halfback in football for three seasons, helping the Lions to achieve a record of 26-4-1. The

team won four consecutive Hunterdon County titles, and Joe was selected to the All-County team twice, as well as being picked for the All-Area squad as a senior—and that area included such big football schools as Plainfield. In his senior year Joe led the team in scoring.

Joe was a star on the basketball court, too, starting on the varsity in his sophomore year in that sport also. In his senior year, he was a team captain and led the team in scoring. He was All-County for all three years and was selected to the North Central Jersey first team. Joe was also honored by being placed on the All-Area team and received All-State mention as well. Not bad for a lad from what was regarded as "the sticks" by the folks in the big cities...

But Joe wasn't done when those two sports seasons ended. He was outstanding in baseball, too, and led the Lions to a 16-3 season as a junior when he compiled an 8-1 pitching record. When he wasn't on the mound, he was covering vast amounts of outfield for the team.

In that junior season, Joe threw a no-hitter to defeat Middletown Township in the state tournament, 2-0, to lead his teammates to the Central Jersey Group III championship. Joe says his most memorable time in Lion baseball was winning three titles in three days that year: the Hunterdon County League, the North Central Jersey League, and the state Central Jersey Group III title...even better than no-hitting Hunterdon Central—which both he and his son did during their North careers!

He was All-Country three years, All-Area twice, and All-State as a Senior. Not one to rest up in any "off season," Joe could be found playing ball for Hampton, Washington, and Whitehouse in the old Tri-County League and the Suburban League. The game was in his blood...

...and right out of high school he signed with the Milwaukee Braves. Joe started in the New York-Penn League and was doing very well until stricken by a career-ending arm injury.

Joe is employed at Johanna Foods. He and his wife Barbara have three daughters and son Scott, plus six grandchildren. They enjoy their free time nowadays by attending their grandchildren's sporting activities...another generation of athletic excellence on the way.

PARKER SNARE '69

The big halfback lunged into the line, but the defense rose like a wave to seal the center. Turning to his left, he dashed to the end and cut right, heading upfield—for 80 yards—and a touchdown, outrunning the foe's speedy safety in a footrace.

Parker Snare was a three-year starter on Coach Leonard Lane's football teams and proved to be one of the most versatile gridders ever at North Hunterdon. He held many records, including five touchdowns and 37 points in one game, as well as most td's in a season—14. Naturally, all this meant a single-season points record, 98.

Parker also had the most yards receiving in a game, 125; most pass receptions in a season, 32; and most yards receiving in a season, 543... thus the record for

most total offense, 1225 yards...and the season in those days was only 8 games.

Parker held the record field goal distance at 42 yards—still the longest for a straighton kick. Of course, he also kicked the points after td's.

Park was the leading scorer in Central Jersey in his senior year and was selected to the All-State Group 3 first team and third team for All-Groups. He was also All-Area and All-County for two years.

In basketball, Parker was a three-year starter and made All-County two years.

And then came baseball season. Parker started as catcher for three years under legendary Hall of Fame coach Norman Pedersen—whom Parker would succeed as head coach when "Pete" retired in 1977.

On the diamond, Parker was once again a star. He held the school mark for home runs in a season, 5; RBI for a season, 25; and career home runs, 9. He was named to the All-County team all three varsity years and All-Area first team for two years. As a senior, Parker was All-State Group 3 first team and All-State, All-Groups third team, duplicating his football awards.

As a sidelight, Parker would on occasion visit the track team after baseball practice and beat the sprinters—while still wearing his catcher's equipment! Took after his brother and fellow Hall of Fame honoree, Lowell...

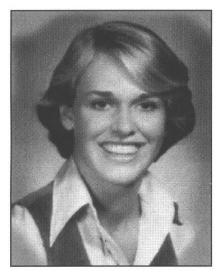
At Montclair State, he played three varsity seasons under the great Clary Anderson and was All-Conference in his junior and senior years. Parker started at varsity halfback and helped the Indians to win the Knute Rockne Bowl game in Atlantic City for the NCAA Division III National Championship.

For two years of baseball, Parker was the backup varsity catcher to Larry Berra—Yogi's son—but then Coach Anderson called him to spring football practice to help give MSC a better chance at championship ball.

Back at his alma mater as a physical education teacher and coach, he has been a head coach or an assistant in football and swimming, and has the most wins in baseball...or any other sport.

Parker and wife Sherryl, a NH English teacher, reside in Palmer Township, PA with daughter Kate-Lyn. Son Matt, a former quarterback for Easton HS, is an engineer in Baltimore.





ALICE HEDDEN '77

One of the all-time great three-letter athletes, the willowy Alice Hedden-Wettstein would stand out in any era. In the 70's, she was the dominant basketball player in the area, as well as an outstanding track and field athlete and a superb defender in field hockey.

Alice's great love was basketball, and she compiled a scintillating record on the court. In the days of a different brand of ball—and before the three-point shot was instituted—Alice became North Hunterdon's first girl to score 1,000 points in her career, finishing with a grand total of 1,119. She still ranks third on the list of "grand" scorers.

In her three years of varsity basketball, the teams went 52-10 under coach Jean Laskowski and won the Delaware River Conference championship in 1976 .In addition to scoring prolifically, Alice set records for

rebounding. She hauled in 26 in one game, 420 in one season, and totaled an amazing 967 rebounds in her three varsity years. Alice also holds the record for most field goals in one game, 20, and most points in a game, 41. She was also the record-holder for a season average of 22.2 points per game and held the mark for free throws in a game, 12.

Twice she was selected to the DRC first team; the All-Area team, including such hot basketball schools as Plainfield; and in her senior year, made the All-State team. She also won the Al Irons Award for leadership, dedication, and outstanding performance.

Before the winter sports seasons, Alice was out on the hockey field, a three-year letter-winner. Coach Bonnie Carter says Alice was simply "outstanding" in hockey, "a force to be reckoned with." Alice was a DRC All-Star in her senior year and won the Al Irons Award.

Alice also tried track and field for a couple of years and won varsity letters for both seasons. She held the shot put and long jump records and still holds the discus record of 131 feet, six inches.

Alice went to Douglass College, having been recruited for the Rutgers team. She started for the frosh basketball team and promptly beat the school record for scoring average. Alice was soon moved up to reserve varsity and averaged five points and seven rebounds per game. She hit for 31 points against Kean College.

In her sophomore year, she helped the team achieve a record of 28-4 and the EAIAW Mid-Atlantic tournament championship. Her averages were five points and four rebounds per game. She helped start RU on its first wave of big-time success in the sport.

Health matters intervened, however, and she was unable to continue her career.

Alice has had fun playing women's soccer and has successfully coached community basketball and a girls' traveling soccer team. She and husband Rich Wettstein—of another family of fine athletes at NH—reside in the Lebanon area. Daughter Emily, a Merit scholar, just started at Lehigh and will play soccer for the Engineers. Son Derek is an industrial designer.

TRACY BIGLEY '84

In the early 1980's, when the North Hunterdon girls cross-country teams were embarking on the trail that would lead to their remarkable run of successes through the decade, Tracy Bigley was the lead runner.

The diminutive blonde was so fast over the course that she earned her first varsity letter as a freshman. She would not only win four varsity letters in the sport, however—she would also be selected to the All-State first team three years in a row, from soph through senior, the first ever to accomplish such a feat for the Lions.

Tracy led the teams to an excellent record of 42-3 in her four years. Along with the high percentage of wins they would bring home four conference titles, three State Sectional titles, and three State Group Championships under Hall-of-Fame coach Bob McGivney.



In her freshman year she took fourth in the State Group III meet and was an All-State third team selection. As a soph she was DRC champion and won the Group III State meet, and was chosen to the All-State first team.

For her junior season Tracy ran to the championship of the new Mid-State Conference and set a course record. Again, she made the All-State first team. In her final cross-country year Tracy again ran her way to the All-State honor to cap her brilliant career.

Although she took off some time during a pair of winters, Tracy did run winter track in two seasons and won varsity letters in both.

On to the spring and the "regular" track season... Again, Tracy won four varsity letters, two each with coaches "Skip" Norcross and Mike Murphy. And once again she participated on teams that ended up with a 42-3 record.

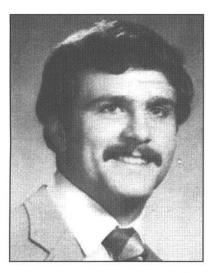
Tracy, too, had to be considered consistent; she was always in the front running—good enough to help the teams to four conference titles, three State Sectional titles, and three more State Group championships. As a freshman she not only won the DRC titles in the 1600- and 3200-meter races—she set records in both. In her senior year Tracy was picked to the Group 3 All-State team.

After NH came running at Bucknell University. There Tracy ran cross-country, indoor track, and outdoor track. In her second year she was second in the East Coast Conference championship in cross-country.

In spring track she was the East Coast champion at 3200 meters. She kept on running superbly and was co-captain of the cross-country team in her senior year.

Still running, and infrequently entering races (having to overcome Achilles tendon injuries), Tracy will be in the Marine Corps Marathon in Washington, D.C. next month.

Tracy followed her degree in economics and finance with an MBA from Drexel University and joined the Vanguard Group, a mutual funds company, in Valley Forge. After a decade there she relocated to Annapolis. She is Vice President of Custody Services at Deutsche Bank in Baltimore and wed to Mr. Lee Hetrick.



TOM McGOURTY '85

Among the fine families whose children attended North Hunterdon was the McGourty clan. John and Leona McGourty sent a host of multitalented offspring and grandchildren to the school over many years, to the dismay of sports opponents—especially those from arch-rival Hunterdon Central.

The last of their sons, Thomas, proved to be the greatest thorn in the side of our opponents.

Tom enjoyed football and won three varsity letters at fullback and on defense for the Lion gridders. Most of the time, he was the one who set the running backs free with his crushing blocks. And on defense, Tom was, again, outstanding. Captain in his senior year, he also won the Boyer Award; he was the defensive MVP.

But Tom's major sport was wrestling. Here he was a four-year starter under coaches Fred Pierro and Dennis Haughey. Starting varsity as a freshman in the middle and upper weight classes can be daunting, but Tom was up to the task. He would become, in fact, the school's first grappler to win 100 bouts.

In post- season tournaments, Tom excelled. He won a District 17 crown in that first year, and repeated the feat every year thereafter. He went on to win the Region 5 championship three consecutive years. And in his senior year, Tom not only won the state title at 159 pounds; he also was chosen to receive the prestigious Ringler Award as the Outstanding Wrestler in the state finals.

Tom's totals for his four years on varsity were 103-11-1. Tom didn't just win, however; he also caused many opponents to "count the lights" by virtue of being a pinner. He had 13 pins as a frosh, 18 as a sophomore, 16 as a junior, and 17 in his senior year, when he was undefeated at 30-0, for a grand total of 64 pins,

Stats for that final season show he had 91 nearfalls. Of course, we take a bit of extra pride in Tom's setting a record of ten seconds flat that year–not in the 100- yard dash, but to deck his opponent from... Central.

Tom led the Lions to the State Group 3 championship at 17-2 in 1983 and again in Tom's junior year, when the team was ranked second in the start, also at 17-2. In his senior year, the team won the old Mid-State Conference title. The teams record during his four years was 53-12.

Trying freestyle in the off-season, he twice won the State title and rose to sixth in the nation.

The colleges were calling. Tom went off to West Virginia University on full scholarship, and began to make his wrestling ability obvious in his freshman year. He was a frosh All-American and took fourth place in the ECAC tournament. But in his sophomore year, severe injuries ended his superb wrestling career.

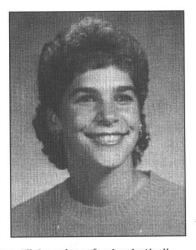
Tom has been a NJ state trooper for eight years and resides in Bethlehem Township with wife Tara, a Voorhees grad, and their three children.

ALLISON GREENE '86

Allison Greene, from seventh grade on, was a member of one sports team or another that won—every year—at least a conference or regional title. And that includes coaching as well as playing...an amazing string of successes.

A major reason for such success is, of course, Allison herself. At North Hunterdon, she lettered in three sports, and all the teams won State championships.

Basketball was the big sport for Allison, who won four varsity letters for her skill on the court. She was the third girl to reach the 1,000-point level, finishing with 1,066 points. In three of those years, she was All-Conference and made All-State twice, including the first team in her senior year.



In her senior year, Allison was also selected a Converse All-American for basketball. Better yet, she made the Converse Academic All-American team, placing her in the top ten for the USA!

She played on two of those Lion State Group 3 Championship teams, and was a major reason they went 78-3 in her final three seasons. In her senior year, the Lions were ranked first in the state, with a record of 27-0.

Allison ran cross-country for two years, during which time the teams went 23-0 and won the Mid-State conference title and the State championship both years. Her determination and tenacity were perfect for the sport.

In the spring, Allison won three varsity track letters, helping the teams to a 20-0 record in her junior and senior years. Those teams won three conference titles, two Central Jersey championships, and two State championships. She made All-Conference and All-Area in the throws.

Next came Dartmouth and four more years of winning basketball—four straight Ivy League titles. Allison was All-Ivy League as a senior and is still on the top ten all-time lists in rebounding and assists.

In the spring, she threw javelin, discus, and shot and qualified for the Eastern championship in the discus her last two years.

After college, Allison played basketball professionally in Portugal for a year and helped her team—a team that had never been higher than seventh place—win the TASA cup.

For the next ten years, Allison was Assistant Coach for Old Dominion University's basketball team. They won ten straight conference championships, went to five "Sweet Sixteens," and, in 1997, were runner-up to Tennessee in the National Championship game.

Allison recruited six international All-Americans for ODU; five have graduated and are playing in the WNBA. No wonder that she was picked to the list of Top Ten assistant coaches in the USA from 1998-2001.

She was a speaker at the 1999-2001 NCAA Women's Final Four conventions, being dubbed the "pioneer and expert" on international recruiting.

In June, Allison received a Doctorate in International Studies from ODU and is now back in New Jersey serving as Assistant Director of American Friends of *Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam*, meaning "Oasis of Peace" in Hebrew and Arabic, a non-profit group supporting a village of that name in Israel where Jews and Arabs live in peace.



ANN MARIE LETKO '86

The best-known former North Hunterdon athlete is Ann Marie Letko-Lauck, a world-class distance runner and United States Olympian—a great success story that began with her running along at age twelve to keep her father company.

Ann Marie was a four-year varsity letter-winner in crosscountry during the "Golden Age" of Lion running. She burst onto the scene when future Hall-of-Famer Tracy Bigley was leading the team, and was joined a year later by Hall-of-Fame star Jodie Bilotta.

These three and their fine teammates would run North Hunterdon to the top of the state's cross country rankings. Their record is astounding: 52-0 during Ann Marie's four years in cross-country, with four conference titles,

four State sectional championships, four State Group titles, and three State Meet of Champions titles! Jodie and Annie ran 1-2 in the Meet of Champions.

Ann Marie would acquire first-team All-State status in her junior and senior years. In winter track, Ann Marie starred in the distance events, culminating in record-setting performances in her senior season. She set the school record in the 1600 meters at 5:14.6, which she still holds. Topping that, she set—and still holds—the state record of 10:38.5 for the 3200-meter run.

And she was All-State in both her junior and senior years.

Springtime brought her to the outdoor running track, where, as usual, she excelled. Ann Marie again won four varsity letters on teams that had winning records totaling 41-2, going 20-0 in her junior and senior seasons.

Jodie and Ann Marie would finish 1-2 in three consecutive State Group 3 meets and help their teams to three conference titles, three State Sectional championships, and three State Group titles.

Once more, Ann Marie was All-State as a junior and as a senior...and ready to go off to Wake Forest University on full scholarship. Sadly, she spent five injury-ridden semesters there before retiring to New Jersey.

Rutgers offered her a running scholarship, but Ann Marie concentrated on earning her degree in English. She then began a highly successful road-racing career, rising to the heights in national rankings. In 1991, she won the World University Games 10k race.

By 1993, she had qualified for the World Championship 10,000-meter team; she ran in the Worlds in 1993, 1995, and 1999. Anyone good enough for that competition is, of course, an Olympic-caliber runner,

Ann Marie had taken third place in the 1994 New York Marathon. Two years later, she was running the marathon in the Atlanta Olympics and was the only American woman to finish in the top ten.

Four years later she was back in the Olympics, in Sydney, Australia and this time in the 10,000. She had had a difficult time after arthroscopic knee surgery in the spring of 2000, but a gutsy run in the trials got her onto the team. She took eleventh place in the Olympic finals.

Coach McGivney said, "Her primary goal is to be the best." Her dedication and hard work certainly paid great dividends for this world-class athlete. Ann Marie and husband Jim Lauck reside in the Hampton area.

DARLENE ANDREWS '87

For sports that require a combination of extraordinary speed and stamina, North Hunterdon was blessed with the prize: Darlene Andrews. Darlene competed and succeeded at the highest level in three of them, no less.

Darlene was a three-year varsity starter in field hockey and played on that great team of 1986 that went 22-1 and won the State Central Jersey Group 3 championship. With fellow Hall-of-Famer Beth Gromlowicz, she provided the one-two punch that helped make it our best field hockey team ever.

Darlene set the record for most goals in a game, 6, and had 23 for the season, third highest in school history. Her prowess earned her All-State Group 3 honors and second team All-State for All-Groups.



In basketball, Darlene once again helped lead teams to championships. She was a two-year starter and part of the three "loaded" teams that went 83-0 from 1984-1987. That one-two duo of Beth and Darlene accounted for most of the scoring and brought home three State Group 3 titles and the number-one ranking in New Jersey for both 1986 and 1987.

Her personal awards for junior and senior years included All-Conference first team selection, All-Area first team, and All-State Group 3 second team.

And for the yearly finale, Darlene moved to the track—and we mean moved! Her all-star status in hockey and basketball was superb; as a pure runner, she was absolutely stellar. Darlene began competing at track when she was nine years old; the culmination of those early efforts was her winning the NJ AAU Junior Olympics 100-meter crown.

Darlene was a varsity letter-winner all four years. Central Jersey Section sprinters learned why when Darlene captured the 200-meter crown—in her freshman year. She would repeat the feat for the next three years. In addition, she would also win the 400-meter title in those three seasons.

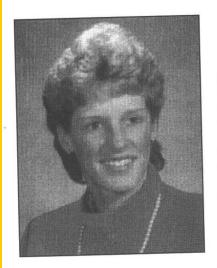
Moving into tougher competition in the Group 3 title meets, Darlene became State champion in the 400 meters as a senior, and in her junior year won the 400 title in the prestigious Meet of Champions for all groups. That year, she set the still-standing school record of 55.8 seconds in the 400 meters.

Darlene was an All-Area first team selection four years running; All-State three years in a row for Group 3; and first-team All-State, All-Groups in her junior and senior years. To top it all off, she was awarded All-American status. Quite a career.

Winning a track scholarship to the University of Connecticut, Darlene continued her winning ways. She set the university's record for the 400 meters and was also a member of the school's record-setting 1600-meter team.

Her collegiate awards include Big East All-Conference team, All-New England, and All-East status in the Eastern College Athletic Conference.

Darlene has lived in Georgia for the last decade and is an operations manager for IBM. She is happily married to Steve Gorman, a Voorhees alumnus.



BETH GROMLOWICZ '87

When it comes to having fun in athletics, no blonde has the edge on North Hunterdon's Beth Gromlowicz. During her high school career, Beth was a three-year starter in two sports, four years in a third, and played on our best-ever field hockey, basketball, and softball teams.

In her three years on varsity field hockey, the teams went 51-7-4. As a junior, Beth tied the single-season scoring record with 18 goals. But in her senior year, she nearly doubled that total by racking up an amazing 35 goals! Needless to say, that is still the school record.

She led the team that year to the school-best record of 22-1 and the Central Jersey Group 3 championship, and then to the State Group 3 semifinals. Beth concluded her hockey career as the all-time leading scorer, with 57 goals.

For the winter sports season, Beth turned to basketball, where she was a four-year starter. She played during the golden years of girls' basketball, when the 1984-1987 teams were thrice State champs and runners-up once under Coaches Pete Catanese and Bill Snyder.

Beth was a mighty quick guard and a prolific scorer, attaining 1,496 points, second only to Hall-of Famer Pam Balogh, her teammate for two years. Beth still holds the Lion single-season record, 577 points, and the season-high average of 23.1 points per game. She played in four Group 3 State finals, including the three championship teams, when the Lady Lions won 83 consecutive games, a state record. The four-year record was 106-5!

She was a two-time Group 3 All-State first team selection and All-State First Team overall as a senior. That year, Beth was named MVP for the State tournament. Her greatest memory is of winning three State championships and "feeling like your team was truly #1 and invincible...."

And a bit of deja-vu: Beth's father Joe played for North over 20 years before her. She loves the photos from each era's "Dream Team," with each Gromlowicz scoring a layup at the same NH basket. Like father, like daughter.

On to the spring, when Beth's fancy turned to—softball. She was a three-year varsity starter in this sport, playing her final two seasons on teams that won the Conference championship. In those two seasons, Beth batted over 400; in the final season, she helped the team to reach the Central Jersey Group 3 Sectional finals as well. The team record of 18-4 was the best in school history.

Following high school, Beth played three years of varsity basketball on scholarship at St. Bonaventure University, scoring 1,000 points and earning the right to captain the team. No mere athlete, she was selected to the Atlantic 10 All-Academic Team, and she holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the university.

Beth wed New York state trooper James Scanlon last August—a memorable day in more than one way! He was deployed the same day because of the looming war with Iraq. She is employed as a counselor and basketball coach in the Port Allegany school system, which bodes well for the youngsters there.

JASON KRAMER '91

North Hunterdon boys basketball has had its share of conference championships, near misses on the state level, and outstanding athletes in all eras. But only once have we risen to the level of a state sectional championship. And that was the senior year of our all-time leading scorer, Jason Kramer.

Jason was a four-year varsity starter and scored the school-high (and county-high) record of 1,650 points. His school one-game record of 46 points came in a Central Jersey State game in 1991.

He also holds records for most points in a quarter, 19, and for best season average, 23.7. He set a record of 568 points that year. Other records he held were for most three-pointers in a game, 6, and in a season, 51.

Lest anyone think Jason was an all-offense scoring machine only, we must recall that he holds the amazing record of 156 steals in one season!

For his prowess on the court, Jason was selected to the All-Conference first team three consecutive years. In his junior and senior years, he was All-Group 3 and—mighty difficult without a Group championship—All-State first team as a senior. That was the year he led the team to a 20-6 record and the school's only boys Central Jersey Sectional title.

Jason's other love was baseball, and here he continued his excellent athletic career. He started at varsity shortstop all four years and set a host of records, many still on the books. In his career, he had most hits, 106; extra-base hits, 47; doubles, 26; RBI, 82; home runs, 15; and batting average, .390.

He also held records for homers in a season, 5; batting average, .500; extra-base hits in a season, 16 and then 17; and tied with doubles in a season, 11.

Jason was All-Conference three consecutive years and made the All-State Group 3 team two years in a row. As a senior, Jason was selected to the All-State first team.

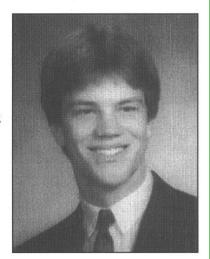
Jason then was awarded a baseball scholarship by Wake Forest University, where he would continue his phenomenal career, starting varsity for three years.

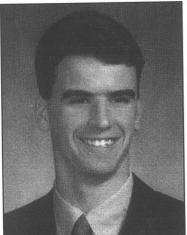
In his junior and senior years, Jason went on a hitting spree; he was second in the Atlantic Coast Conference in both home runs and runs-batted-in. As a junior Jason batted .366 and had seventeen home runs and eight doubles, with fifty-four runs-batted-in.

In his senior year he put on quite a display of slugging power: Jason again smacked seventeen home runs, but had twenty doubles this time and sixty-five RBI's, batting .314. His overall batting average for his college career was a fine .318, with a total of thirty-seven home runs and 145 runs-batted-in.

Jason finished in the top six all-time at Wake for single-season records in home runs, RBI's, and doubles; and in the top ten for career hits (196), runs (145), RBI's and homers.

Jason has been an independent agent in Atlanta for Zimmer, a manufacturer and distributor of orthopaedic implants, for eight years. His wife, Jenny, is an attorney for a large firm in the city. This past spring they were blessed by the arrival of their first child, daughter Payton Reily.





BRENDAN HEFFERNAN '92

The coach paced anxiously, waiting for the first runners to come over the hill. Finally, one tall lad—wearing green and gold—appeared, and Coach Robert O'Rourke leaped for joy. Brendan Heffernan was way out in front, headed for North Hunterdon's first and only National Championship.

That great feat occurred in the winter of 1992, and crowned one of the greatest running careers in state history. The event was the Foot Locker National Championship race in San Diego, California, featuring the nation's best high school cross-country runners. Brendan Heffernan proved to be the best of the best, literally running away from the competition.

For three years, Brendan had run his way to the New Jersey State Sectional title, and three times took the State Group championship, along with a Meet of Champions title. During those three years he was, of course, picked to be first team All-State in cross country. Winning the national championship left no doubt as to his All-America selection—for the second time. He is ranked among the top ten New Jersey runners of the twentieth century.

Brendan's great attitude can be summed up in his words to Coach O'Rourke after the team won the State title: "This is a lot more fun than an individual title, Coach." Brendan had just won his state championship, too.

During his four years, Brendan led the team to a scintillating record of 35-2, with four straight titles in the Mid-State and Skyland Conferences. In addition, the Lion harriers took the Central Jersey State Championship twice.

Running occasionally in the winter track program, Brendan joined North stalwarts Pat Dolan, Dave Lyon, and Raheen Henry in 1992 to set a state record of 10:22 in the crowdpleasing distance medley.

From 1989-1992, Brendan was again under the tutelage of Coach O'Rourke for spring track, years in which the team went 26-7. In Brendan's junior season, the team won the Central Jersey Group 3 title. Next season, they won the Sections and the Group 3 title again.

Brendan himself was busy winning championships, too. In his junior year, he ran the 1600- and 3200-meter races in the state sectional tourney and won both. In his senior year, the year of his National cross-country victory, Brendan ran those two distances again in the Sections—and threw in an 800-meter run as well. He won all three—on the same (90 degrees!) day. Moving on to the big time, Brendan ran the 1600 and 3200 races in the State Group 3 championships and won both. Brendan still holds the school record for the 1600 meters at 4:14.6.

In spite of injuries, at Georgetown University, Brendan did well. Indoors, he ran a 4:07 mile. He helped the cross-country team to excellent seasons and was chosen captain in his senior year.

He still runs recreationally. Brendan and wife Caryn, a seven-time All-American runner at Georgetown, reside in Flemington. Brendan is a senior staff engineer at a telecommunications software firm and acquiring an MBA degree.

1975 STATE FOOTBALL CHAMPIONS

In the early days of North Hunterdon, practice often came to an early halt for the many farmboys on the team. At about 4:00, the fathers would start blaring truck horns, and the boys would walk up the hill to head home and do their chores.

They were tough lads, but basically unlettered in the sport when the school opened its doors in 1951. Several years would pass before our second coach, Paul Rickenbach, would start a string of winning seasons. But that one, great undefeated and untied season would elude us for two dozen years.

And then came Fritz Halfacre. Fritz led the 1974 team to a 7-1 record for the first time since Coach Leonard Lane's 1962 team. Next year was the best in school history, a perfect 10-0 season and a State championship. The team outscored its opponents, 247-87, and the superb defense allowed one touchdown or less in six games.

Talk about a balanced attack: Scoring touchdowns were Randy Morton (9), Andy Regitz (7), Paul Christensen (6), Kevin Nagie (4), Mike Greiner (3), Dave Smigelsky and Ken Andrews (2 each), and one apiece for Rich Brescia, Bob Cartabona, and John Snyder.

In addition, Bob Bartnett kicked 17 extra points, while Morton, Regitz, Christensen, Nagie, Smigelsky, and Andrews added a total of seven two-pointers after TD's. Through the air we had six touchdown passes from Smig, two from Bartnett, and one from tailback Morton.

The seventh game was a wild 26-12 win over Central, in which NH Hall of Fame quarterback—and our star punter—Smigelsky had his collarbone broken. Bob Bartnett, a great placekicker, stepped up to lead the team in the final three victories, two of them state games.

Starting the season with a 20-0 win over Phillipsburg Catholic was auspicious. Ridge scored on us but still lost by 20 points, 35-15. South Hunterdon put up a good fight, falling by only six points, 14-8.

Warren Hills and Hackettstown went down 21-6 and 39-0. Next, Delaware Valley and a 37-16 romp. And then it was time for "the enemy": Hunterdon Central. Despite the loss of Smigelsky, the Lions prevailed.

Now it was Bartnett's turn at quarterback, and he came through. The team, out of sorts in the first half, came back after a rousing halftime charge from Coach Halfacre to score twice and beat upset-minded Belvidere, 14-6.

And so, on to the State playoffs. North had the home field advantage as they faced a large, powerful Howell Regional squad in the Central Jersey Group III semifinals. Hard hitting and some big plays by both teams ended with the Lions on top, 14-6.

The final game of the year, for the State title, was also played at home. This time it was the speedy team from Franklin that our boys had to cut down. The foe ran well enough to score 18 points, but North had 27 in a nip-and-tuck contest.

The dream had become a reality: undefeated, untied, and State champs—for the first and only time in North Hunterdon's 52 years of football.

1975 STATE CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL



Pat Ackerman Ken Andrews Bob Bartnett Rich Brescia Dave Buttram Bob Cartabona

Paul Christensen John Cozze

John Davenport

Kevin Dean Charles Deboer

Gary Delia

Rich Egan

Jim Fenwick

Jack Foley

John Foresman

Joe Galley

Rich Galipo

Mike Greiner

Bob Hayes

Brett Hudnett

Mark Hutker

Dave Irwin

Rich Manning

Vince McGourty

Randy Morton

Kevin Negie

Bill Ney

Andy Regitz

Dave Smigelsky

Mark Smigelsky

Dave Snyder

Craig Spinks

Shawn Spinks

Rick Tkac

Paul Tomasello

Dean VanArsdale

Scott Ward

Ron Witte

Joel Lambert, manager

Coaches:

George "Fritz" Halfacre
John Smith
Don Somma

Trainers:

Walt Bowlby (posthumous)
Neil Spinks

COACH ROBERT O'ROURKE

When we think of North Hunterdon boys and longdistance running, we have to think of Coach Bob O'Rourke; the two are synonymous.

Head cross-country coach for 27 seasons, he had a terrific won-loss record of 229-53. That in itself is amazing enough, but the list of championships accompanying that record is astounding.

Starting with the "local" titles, his teams won 16 conference championships, from the old Delaware River Conference through the Mid-State and Skyland Conferences. How about 13 straight Mid-State and Skyland trophies from 1983-1996?

On the state level, Coach O'Rourke and his boys brought home 16 Sectional team titles, starting in 1975,

with 14 individual champions—including eight-in-a-row from 1990-1997. Moving a notch higher, we find his teams capturing ten State Group championships, with nine individuals taking Group titles.

The list of his lads who won those awards is a "Who's Who" in Lion running annals: Brendan Heffernan, Brad Hudson, Andy Martin, Brian Partlow, Chris Robinson. And four of them—Heffernan (twice), Hudson, Martin, and Robinson—went on to take first prize in the Meet of Champions.

Bob's 1983 squad won everything, including the Meet of Champions. Featured on that team were four All-Americans: Bill Babcock, Hudson, Martin, and Gavin Sloane. And the icing for Coach O'Rourke was the birth of his daughter Kristen just 24 hours after the big victory.

One of those runners, Brendan Heffernan, was the only runner from New Jersey ever to win the high school National cross-country championship.

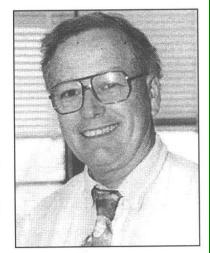
Mr. O'Rourke also coached spring track and brought home five DRC titles, a Skyland Conference championship, and two State sectional trophies. He had seven State champions in Pat Dolan, Brendan Heffernan, Andy Martin, Chris Murray, Brian Partlow, Chris Robinson, and Nate Sisco.

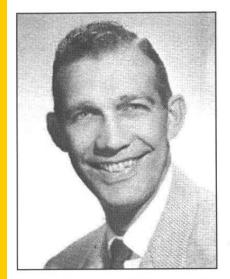
A special high spot came in 1992, when Coach O'Rourke's distance medley team ran their way to the American championship at the prestigious Penn Relays.

No slouch as a runner himself, young Robert O'Rourke set course records at Warinanco and Lincoln Parks, and he won the 1960 Catholic A State championship; he also took second in the Eastern States championship. In the spring, he ran to the Catholic A State mile title as well. (No chance at the Meet of Champions—it was not yet established.) Unfortunately, his college career was curtailed by severe injuries.

Bob O'Rourke earlier was chosen by his coaching peers as Coach of the Year in the Skyland Conference, and also by the New Jersey Cross-Country Coaches Association. He has been inducted into the NJ State Coaches Hall of Fame.

His wife Arlene and children Rob and Kris to have always been "number one" for him, as family should be. But coaching ranks right behind; as he says, he has had "hundreds of proud moments watching and timing hundreds of proud personal accomplishments by hundreds of talented, courageous, hard-working young men." The best of both worlds.





COACH PAUL E. RICKENBACH (1923-2002)

The farm boys were tough lads, but not many had played football before "Regional" opened its doors in 1951. It would take a few years before North Hunterdon's gridders would be able to win consistently. The first winning season came in 1955 when Coach Paul Rickenbach, in his third year at the school, raised the agriculturalists' record to 5-1-2. Leading the team was All-State halfback Tom Langston, a North Hunterdon Hall of Fame member.

"Rick" came to North by a tortuous route, beginning with his schoolboy days in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania, and continuing through the rough days of World War II with three years in the Navy, wherein he served on the

danger-filled amphibious landing craft for island invasions in the South Pacific.

After the war, he returned to West Chester College to complete his undergraduate studies. He played baseball (along with Norman Pedersen, another NH Hall of Famer) and football. As a rugged defensive end, he played in two bowl games in 1947 and 1948 and made the All-East team.

After a stint in the Phillies organization, Rick coached the old Frenchtown High base-ball team to the Central Jersey Group I baseball championship in 1950. He came to North Hunterdon in 1953 to teach Social Studies and coach the struggling football team. He would remain at the school for 32 years and become regarded as an icon by thousands.

The nine years he led the gridders came to be regarded as our "golden years," including six consecutive years of winning teams. In 1956 and 1957, the record was 7-1, followed by 6-1-1 in '58 and 6-2 in '59. In no other era have we experienced such consistent success. And there were no junior leagues to "feed" the high school in those days.

A great treat for the students—and faculty—was the NH "pep rally," when Coach Rickenbach would address the crowd rather emotionally. Tears in his eyes, he would rouse the student body to fever pitch over the next day's game. As he paced excitedly, pens and pencils would pop out of his shirt pocket and scatter over the floor.

Former players recall one halftime at Del Val when, with the team behind Coach put his fist through a thick chalkboard. North Hunterdon won that game.

As time went on, Rick was chosen to be Vice Principal (1962) and then Assistant Superintendent (1968). He excelled at keeping the cafeterias, building, and grounds in tiptop operating condition. And he was a whiz in the transportation department. Many times he was heard telling some inquisitive person—from memory—not only the route a bus took, but also every stop it made—and the name of every student at each location!

Rick put his heart and soul into North Hunterdon, but still had great times with his family, wife Doris and sons Keith, Kent, and Jeff. He greatly enjoyed golfing during his retirement.

COACH HAROLD VANDERMARK (1927-1995)

For a man who did not wrestle for either a high school or college team, Harold Vandermark certainly made a great and lasting impression on the sport.

Mr. Vandermark came out of Nanticoke in the Pennsylvania coal mining area—after some interesting times in the U.S. Navy. He had graduated from Shippensburg State College in 1952, just in time to be called up for the Korean War. Harry flew a jet fighter off Navy carriers for a year and a half, from the winter of '52 until the summer of '53.

Coach Vandermark came to North Hunterdon in 1955 and was promptly made an assistant football coach

to fellow Hall-of-Famer Paul Rickenbach. He would continue in that role—especially as a freshman coach—for nineteen years. He had a flair for the sport, having excelled in school. He also coached baseball and track.

When Harry arrived at "Regional," there was no wrestling team, just a club that had been started by Athletic Director James VanArsdale. He picked Mr. Vandermark to run the grappling program as an official sport. How to start, when the coach had no real knowledge of the sport?

Naturally, one would go to other schools and talk to coaches, attend clinics...the usual. Ah, but how to learn the moves, *really*? Why...let's practice them on the little woman! Jane Vandermark really did have to wrestle her husband to help him learn how the moves should properly be done. (Any hall of fame for coaches' wives?)

For the 1957-58 season, the Lions put the school's first accredited wrestling team on the mats. It was tough getting started without any "feeder" program from the community and no grade-school experience for the boys. But in just the third season, the Lion grapplers put together a winning record of 8-4-0.

From then until Harry retired from coaching the team, there would be only one losing season. His overall record was 148-69-3 in eighteen years. Four times his teams won the District 17 title and finished second numerous times.

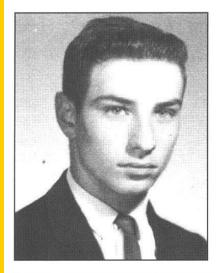
As for State champs, Harry had seven: Hall-of-Fame honorees Dave Gaunt (twice), and Paul Goble; and Alan Detweiler, Kirk Edwards, Walt Hudnett, and Jim McCormick. In addition, Harry was awarded the prestigious Harry Lake Memorial Award by the State Wrestling Coaches Association for his contributions to the sport.

He also had four State second-place winners, five thirds, and sixth in fourth place. In the days of unofficial team championships, his Lions were ranked second in the state in Daye Gaunt's senior year, 1971.

When "sister school" Voorhees opened in 1975, Coach Vandermark moved up the hill to become the first athletic director, thus keeping his hand in the sports scene until his retirement in 1987. Like fellow Hall-of-Fame coaches Pedersen and Rickenbach, an icon from the earliest years of North Hunterdon...

Jane and daughter LeAnn Crosby reside in South Carolina; granddaughter Caitlin is ten. Daughter Tracy is presently in Italy with her husband, an F-16 pilot.





LOWELL M. SNARE '63

Contributor

Reporter...raconteur...athlete...community activist...poet...environmental educator...and more. How many hats can one man wear? Lowell Snare is a "man for all seasons"—and especially for all sports seasons.

Lowell is best known for his ceaseless efforts to give "ink" to high school and younger athletes. Where most sports writers would provide merely adequate coverage of an event, Lowell goes well beyond the expected in order to include all contributors in a contest, win or lose.

Asked why he devotes so much time and effort on the local level, his answer has always been: "I have to do it—for the kids." And so he does, often in spite of debilitating

illness. And so we honor the man who has done his best to support North Hunterdon's athletes for 33 years, 29 of them as sports editor for the *Hunterdon Review*.

Lowell's work is appreciated on a wide scale. For example, the Hunterdon/Warren Athletic Association's award to the Most Courageous Athlete has been named "The Lowell Snare Award." Here, the NH Wrestling Club names the team's MVP in his honor; and Lowell's idea for a NH-V football award led to our great Milk Can trophy. Also, Lowell is the only sportswriter ever inducted into the NJ Wrestling Coaches Association Region Five Wrestling Hall of Fame.

The State Interscholastic Athletic Association honored Lowell for his contributions to the state's athletes—the only weekly sportswriter ever given the award. Lowell has been honored by the "Champs Program" at Hunterdon Central for his stand against drug and alcohol abuse, and by the American Cancer Society for his columns against smoking and the battle against cancer.

We truly do not have the space to list his multifarious awards here.

Aside from covering the local sports scene, Lowell has done much to get youngsters involved in sports. He is one of the founders of the Hunterdon Special Olympics and served on the Board for eight years. He founded and ran for nine years the Clinton Youth League basketball program for high school students not on a school team. Nearly 200 kids played yearly, from our school and four others.

Lowell is definitely a Lion fan, and that goes back to his roots as a lad who saw many great athletes here—and became one himself. He was a North Hunterdon varsity wrestler for two years and a three-year man in football, playing on the 1962 team that had the best school record till then at 7-1. And it is he who put together the compendium of Lion sports from 1951 on.

Lowell's best sport was track: He held the school records in the 100-yard dash, the long jump (21 feet, 10 inches), and the exciting ol' 180-yard low hurdles. He would perhaps still hold records—for he ran very fast before the school even had a track!

Lion athletes past and present know how much Lowell has done for them over three decades. We hope to read his stories—and hear his jokes—for many more years.

MRS. ANN SNYDER (1927-2003)

Contributor

Anyone who entered the North Hunterdon gymnasiums was sure to notice the green-and-gold banners hung high on the walls. All the Lion championship teams were represented there; and the banners were the work of one of North Hunterdon's most loyal fans: Mrs. Ann Snyder.

Ann "Muzzy" Snyder supported the school district for many years, in many ways, but is noted mainly for her services to athletes and the athletic programs. Her love of sports went back to her childhood in Buffalo, New York, where she competed in various sports, notably basketball.

Her prowess can be inferred from an award she received in high school: She was crowned "Queen of the Olympics."

Ann was also able to get lots of time in on the ice in that cold climate and played ice hockey, as well as racing on the ice. Perhaps her love of doing things for athletes began then, for she helped to build a skating rink on her school's land.

When she and her family moved to Clinton, Ann joined the high school boosters to encourage athletes to do their best. Some of those athletes were her own children; she and her late husband Harry presented five football players and a girls basketball player to North Hunterdon.

Ann worked long and hard for the Booster Club over many years. Her dedication won for her the title of "North Hunterdon Loud Mouth"; and fans from our school and all the others in the conferences knew she was in the top rank of Lion supporters. She attended as many home and away games as she could, and they were numerous.

"Apple Annie," as she was called, was well known for providing treats for the athletes after competition—apples, cupcakes, and various other goodies.

Even though she was extremely busy with her own family, rooting for the teams, and sewing the championship banners, Mrs. Snyder also made time to help athletes who were having difficulties and needed the personal approach that could make things right.

As if there were more than twenty-four hours in a day, somehow she and Harry, an engineer, managed to find the time to take pictures of the teams and put together the sports booklets to be sold at home games—and she sold them, too!

Ann also helped kids for many years in the Boy Scouts of America. She received from the national headquarters in Washington, D.C., the Silver Fawn Award for her work with the Scouts in Levittown, Pennsylvania, and here in Clinton. (Harry was a Scoutmaster.)

Her organizational talents were put to good use in the world of work, too, as she ran a nursing home for four years until an irremediable injury forced her to retire from the workaday world. Ann, a registered nurse, really enjoyed taking care of the older patients, just as she enjoyed taking care of "her" athletes for so many years.

Service to others in a good cause—that sums up the life of one of our staunchest contributors, Mrs. Ann Snyder.

