

WPIAL HALL OF FAME AND COURAGE AWARD 2011 INDUCTEES

ATHLETES

MARLA PURYEAR, THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1989

The only thing that beat Marla Puryear in her high school career was cheerleading. Due to a hamstring suffered in cheerleading tryouts as a sophomore, Puryear couldn't compete in the WPIAL track qualifiers. Otherwise, she never lost a race in high school. One of the greatest sprinters in Pennsylvania history, Puryear won the 100-, 200- and 400-meter dashes at both the WPIAL and PIAA level as a freshman, junior and senior. A two-time Post-Gazette athlete of the year, she is one of only five female athletes in WPIAL history to win six or more gold medals at the PIAA championships in individual events and her WPIAL championship time of 11.2 seconds in 1989 is still the best in WPIAL history. Marla passed away of an illness two years ago.

MELANIE BUDDEMEYER, PENN HILLS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1984

Buddemeyer was valedictorian of Penn Hills' senior class of 1984. In the history of WPIAL swimmers, Buddemeyer also is in an elite class. She finished her high school career with eight WPIAL gold medals in individual events, and eight golds at the PIAA level. She is one of only 12 swimmers in history to win eight gold medals at the state level. In 1984, she was selected the Dial National Female High School Athlete/Scholar of the Year. She set three state records in the 100- and 200-yard butterfly, and also the 200 individual medley. She also held the national record in the 100-yard butterfly. She went on to swim for the North Carolina Tar Heels, where she was a four-time NCAA All-American, an eight-time ACC champion, and was undefeated in every dual meet and conference championship. Outside of high school, she finished second in the world championships and was twice an Olympic Trials finalist. In 1987, she was the United States National Champion in the 200 butterfly. Buddemeyer has previously been inducted in four different halls of fame.

AARON GATTEN, WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1996

From football star, to wrestling champion, to track champion, Gatten did it all at Washington High School. In his career, Gatten earned 12 varsity letters in three different sports. He also won four state championships and six WPIAL titles. In football, he was a running back-defensive back who rushed for more than 3,000 career yards and won one WPIAL title. In wrestling, he won back-to-back WPIAL and PIAA Class AA championships as a junior and senior at 189 pounds. As a sprinter in track, he won two state titles in the 100- and 200-meter dashes as a junior, and finished second in both events as a senior. For his career, he won four state championships and six WPIAL titles in the three sports. He went on to play linebacker at Penn State.

ADAM DIMICHELE, STO-ROX HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2004

This says it all about DiMichele's all-around athletic ability: He is the only athlete to ever make the Post-Gazette Fabulous 22 in football, the Fabulous 5 in basketball and the All-Area team in baseball. DiMichele accomplished all of that his senior year at Sto-Rox, but he was a four-year starter in all three sports. He finished his football career as the WPIAL's all-time leading passer, a record that stood until this past season. He was a standout point guard on a WPIAL and state championship team and also was part of playoff teams in baseball as a shortstop, pitcher and outfielder. As a junior and senior at Sto-Rox, he had a combined record of 103-20 in three sports. That's an .837 winning percentage. He was taken in the 38th round of the Major League Baseball draft, but eventually went on to become the starting quarterback in football at Temple. He was in the Philadelphia Eagles training camp, played in the Canadian Football League and now plays for the Erie Explosion in the South Indoor Football League.

TROY LETTERS, SHALER AREA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2001

Letters never knew what it was like to NOT win a WPIAL wrestling championship. He won four WPIAL Class AAA individual titles, becoming at that time only one of nine in league history to accomplish the four-peat. At the WPIAL championships as a senior, he pinned all four of his opponents in 2 minutes, 40 seconds – or less. He finished his senior year with a 38-0 record and his career mark was 145-5. He had 110 wins by fall or forfeits. He was named a high school All-American before going on to wrestle at Lehigh University, where he won an NCAA championship as a sophomore. Letters has been inducted in the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

LaVAR ARRINGTON, NORTH HILLS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1997

He was one of those athletes known simply by his first name - LaVar. As a football player, he is known as one of the greatest in WPIAL history. As a senior at North Hills, Arrington was named Parade magazine's national player of the year. He was a four-year starter and a dominating linebacker. He also was an outstanding running back at North Hills, becoming the first at the WPIAL Quad-A level to rush for 4,000 career yards. But Arrington also played two years of high school basketball at North Hills, averaged 19 points as a junior and was an all-section pick. On top of that, he competed in track and field as a sprinter and long jumper for two years, finishing second at the WPIAL championships in the long jump and fourth in the state meet with a leap of 22 feet, 2 ¼ inches. He went on to become an All-American linebacker at Penn State, a Butkus Award winner and the No. 2 pick in the 2000 NFL draft. He played with the Washington Redskins and New York Giants and was a three-time Pro Bowl selection.

CLINTON DAVIS, STEEL VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1983

Simply put, Davis is the greatest high school sprinter in Western Pennsylvania history. Davis was so good that his state records in the 200- and 400-meter dashes still stand today, 28 years after he set them. They are the longest-standing records in Class AAA. He also set a state record in the 100 as a senior with a time of 10.46 seconds, but that has since been broken. He is the only male in the history of the WPIAL to win six gold medals from individual events at the PIAA championships. He won the 100, 200 and 400 two years in a row at the WPIAL and PIAA levels. In 1983, he also anchored Steel Valley's 400 relay team to a first-place finish at the state meet. Davis also set several national indoor records while attending Steel Valley and won three gold medals at the 1982 junior Pan Am Games. In addition, he was a receiver on Steel Valley's WPIAL championship football team in 1982.

WILLIE THROWER, NEW KENSINGTON CLASS OF 1949 HERITAGE AWARDEE

Willie "The Pro" Thrower was a trailblazer, the first African-American quarterback to play in an NFL game in 1953 with the Chicago Bears. But before Thrower made history in the NFL, he was an outstanding football player at New Kensington High School in the late 1940s. He played some at halfback and helped New Kensington win back-to-back WPIAL championships in 1946-47. As a senior in 1948, Thrower was a first-team all-WPIAL, all-state and was named to the Wigman Wiseman All-American team. He was the first black quarterback in the Big 10 Conference at Michigan State, and although never a starter, he stepped in for injured Tom Yewcic and led Michigan State to a crucial victory against Notre Dame en route to the 1952 national championship.

COACHES

JOE COLELLA HOPEWELL- BASEBALL

When it comes to coaching baseball, he is no average Joe. Colella is in his 48th season as Hopewell's baseball coach and he came into the year with 650 wins. On top of that, he has been Hopewell's American Legion coach for 47 years and has more than 950 wins on that level. That is more than 1,600 wins as a Hopewell coach. On the high school level, Colella has three WPIAL title, one state championship and 16 section titles. The field at Hopewell is named after him

BOB MILLER NORTH ALLEGHENY – VOLLEYBALL

For decades, volleyball seasons were Miller Time at North Allegheny. Miller is considered one of the greatest volleyball coaches - boys and girls - in WPIAL history. He won seven state championships and eight WPIAL titles before retiring in 2002. For the boys, Miller won six WPIAL titles and four PIAA championships from 1967-2002. For the girls, he won two WPIAL titles and three PIAA championships from 1982-2002. He is a 1963 graduate of North Allegheny and a four-sport letterman, but the school didn't have a volleyball team then. One of the founding members of the Pennsylvania Volleyball Coaches Association Miller served as President for two terms. Miller is an active member of the WPIAL volleyball steering committee

TOM DOLDE CONNELLSVILLE - WRESTLING

No wrestling coach in the history of the WPIAL has more wins than Dolde. A 1956 graduate of Connellsville, Dolde had a record of 448-137-6 in 34 years as the Falcons' coach, and he won four WPIAL team titles. He also coached seven individual state champions, 28 state place-winners and numerous WPIAL individual champions. Dolde has been elected to three different wrestling halls of fame and is also a member of the Slippery Rock University Hall of Fame.

CONTEST OFFICIALS

PAMELA CHERUBIN BASKETBALL

A veteran of more than 30 years as a contest official, she worked many final championship contests at the District and State levels. In addition to her career in high school officiating, she was an active basketball official in NCAA Division I basketball. For the past 25 years, she has served as the Female Officials representative for the WPIAL. Since 1997, she has maintained a seat on the WPIAL Board of Control and has also served three terms on the PIAA Board. Over the years, she has worked tirelessly as an interpreter, assignor, observer, recruiter and educator of contest official's individuals. During her career, she has earned the respect of her peers, coaches, athletic administrators and student-athletes.

CONTRIBUTOR

BOYD STROUP

Served on the WPIAL Board of Control for 12 years from 1972-1984. For 11 of those years, he was vice-president of the Board. In addition, he represented the league on the PIAA Board of Directors for several years. Following his retirement, he continued to contribute to the wpial by serving as an active member of the League's Scholarship Committee. Under his leadership, girls' sports became a reality in the league. A distinguished educator, he served the Avonworth School District for many years in many capacities including head basketball coach, teacher, high school vice-principal

TEAMS

UNIONTOWN BASKETBALL 1964

Not only is this team considered one of the greatest in WPIAL history, but one of the greatest in state history. Coached by legendary Abe Everhart, Uniontown finished with a 28-0 record, which started a 52-game winning streak, still tied today for the longest in WPIAL history. The '64 team defeated a powerful Midland squad to win the WPIAL title and Plymouth-Whitemarsh to win the state championship. Uniontown was loaded with basketball talent and superior athletes. Five of Uniontown's top six players went on to play Division I college basketball or football. Stu Lantz played at Nebraska and in the NBA. Ben "Pope" Gregory played at Nebraska and in the NFL. Ray Stephens became a quarterback at the University of Minnesota and was drafted by the LA Rams. Ray Parson also played at Minnesota and in the NFL. Eugene Huey played at Wyoming and the St. Louis Cardinals and was a long time running back coach in the NFL under Tony Dungy. Pat Yates and Jim Rae were two of the '64 team's other top players.

CHARTIERS-HOUSTON WRESTLING 1982

Back in 1982, the Bucs were Pennsylvania wrestling's version of "Hoosiers." Chartiers-Houston was a small school, but finished ahead of all the big boys 29 years ago. The Bucs wrestled "up" in classification and ended up winning the Class AAA state team championship, finishing ahead of second-place North Allegheny. During the season, Char-Houston defeated Hempfield, Mt. Lebanon, Canon-McMillan, Trinity and North Allegheny. Despite Chartiers-Houston's small size, five Bucs' wrestlers qualified for the Class AAA state tournament. Phil Mary won his second consecutive state championship. Jim Vulcano, Brian Bell and Chris Mary all finished third at the state championships. Kurt Kesneck was the other state meet qualifier from Chartiers-Houston.

COURAGE AWARD

RICHARD CONSTANTINE

Richard was the WPIAL president for the past four (4) years, but spent 14 years on the Board of Control, including stints as vice-president and treasure. He was also a member of the PIAA Board of Directors. He was gravely ill, but as League president, he stayed current and involved in league matters from his hospital bed by communicating daily with WPIAL Executive Director, Tim O'Malley. Battling cancer and chemotherapy treatments, he participated and addressed the WPIAL Board at a meeting on August 3, 2010. At the meeting he encouraged everyone to continue acting in the best interest of interscholastic athletics and student-athletes. Richard was a standout football player and wrestler at Uniontown High School. In 1965 he participated in the Big 33 football all-star game and was second in the 180 lb weight class at the state wrestling tournament. Mr. Constantine passed away on August 29, 2010.