

WPIAL HALL OF FAME AND COURAGE AWARD 2013 INDUCTEES

ATHLETES

LOU “BIMBO” CECCONI, DONORA HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1946

A man for all seasons, Bimbo starred in football, baseball, track, and basketball at Donora High School. Cecconi earned 11 out of a possible 12 varsity letters in high school. He was a key performer on three WPIAL Championship football teams and led the basketball team to state runner-up honors. In his senior season, he ran and passed one of the greatest football teams in the WPIAL to a WPIAL Championship. The 1945 team was inducted into the WPIAL Hall of Fame in 2008. At Pitt, he was a four-year starting quarterback and halfback as well as a basketball and baseball standout. He is a member of the Mid-Mon Valley Hall of Fame and was inducted into the Pennsylvania Sports Hall of Fame in 2011.

SEAN GILBERT, ALIQUIPPA HIGH SCHOOL Class of 1989

Gilbert is known for his outstanding football talent, but he also led his team to a PIAA Basketball Championship as a senior. In football, Gilbert established himself among the best football players at every level: high school, college, and the National Football League. After leading the Quips to a WPIAL AAA Football Championship, he was named a Parade Magazine All-American, the USA Today Defensive Player of the Year, and the Gatorade Player of the Year in Pennsylvania. As a defensive lineman at Pitt, Gilbert earned All-American honors in 1991 ending his collegiate career against Penn State with 16 tackles and 1-1/2 sacks. A first-round draft pick of the Los Angeles Rams, he established himself as an outstanding defensive lineman for 12 seasons in the NFL. Gilbert is the founder of Sean Gilbert Associates, Inc.

JEREMY HUNTER, MCGUFFEY HIGH SCHOOL Class of 1996

At McGuffey, Hunter was an elite wrestler recording a dual meet record of 171-2 and led his team to a WPIAL Team Championship his senior season. He was a four-time PIAA champion and a three-time WPIAL champion. In the Dapper Dan Wrestling Classic, Hunter defeated a four-time state champion from Iowa. At Penn State, he posted a string of 41 straight dual meet wins and won an NCAA Wrestling Championship in 2000 and earned All American status for three years. Currently, he is an assistant wrestling coach at the University of Illinois.

CHRISTA HARMOTTO, HOPEWELL HIGH SCHOOL Class of 2005

Harmotto has plenty of accomplishments during her career as an indoor volleyball player in the middle-blocker position. At Hopewell High School she led her team to three consecutive WPIAL titles while cumulating a record of 59-0 against WPIAL opponents. In 2005, her team garnered the PIAA AA State Championship and she was named the Female Athlete of the Year by the Post Gazette, Tribune Review, and Beaver County Times, and was selected as the Pennsylvania Gatorade Player of the Year. A three-time All American at Penn State, her team was the NCAA women's

volleyball champion in 2007 and 2008. Last summer, Harmotto was a stellar performer on the US Olympics Women's Volleyball team that won a silver medal in London.

ELAINE SOBANSKY- BLACKHURST, TRINITY HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1980

Sobansky was a three-time WPIAL and PIAA champion in the shot put. She also was a PIAA champion in the discus. In high school, she ranked #1 in the nation for shot put and was in Sports Illustrated "Faces in the Crowd" for establishing a girls' indoor high school national record of 50' 10". In 1980, she was named the Post Gazette Female Athlete of the Year. Her career flourished at Penn State where she was an eight-time All American. While at Penn State, she set outdoor records in the shot put and discus. At the 1984 Olympic trials, she finished 6th in the shot put. Sobansky was the first person at Trinity High School to score more than 1,000 points in basketball. She is a member of the Pittsburgh Women's Hall of Fame.

MEGHAN SCHNUR, BUTLER HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 2003

An exceptionally talented athlete at Butler High School, she was named All-Section, All WPIAL, All State, a McDonald's All American, Gatorade Player of the Year, and Parade Magazine All American during an illustrious high school soccer career as a midfielder. In addition, she also was captain of the school's track team for two years. At the University of Connecticut, she made an early impact in helping to lead her team to the NCAA final four as a freshman and was named to the All Big East First Team and Big East Rookie of the Year. In 2007 she was named a First Team All American by the NCAA and the National Soccer Coaches Association. She has extensive international soccer experience in the US National Soccer Program and the Women's National Team. Schnur played in the inaugural Women's Professional Soccer League season in 2009 and led her team, New Jersey's Sky Blue, in winning the inaugural WPS Championship.

TYLER PALKO, WEST ALLEGHENY HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 2002

Palko led his team to three WPIAL Class AAA football titles and a PIAA title in 2001, which made history as West Allegheny became the first WPIAL AAA team to win a PIAA Championship. A four-year starter at quarterback and defensive back, he was a three-time Post Gazette Player of the Year. In 2001, he was named a USA Today All American, the AP Pennsylvania Big School Player of the Year, and played in the prestigious US Army All-American Bowl. After being heavily recruited, he played at the University of Pittsburgh and amassed 8,343 yards with 66 touchdown passes ranking him as one of the top three passers in Pitt football history. In one game against Notre Dame, he threw five TD passes becoming the first ever visiting team player to do so against the Irish. Following his collegiate career, Palko played for several seasons in the NFL.

JACK WALTZ, MT LEBANON HIGH SCHOOL

Class of 1963

Waltz was a three-time WPIAL and PIAA tennis singles champion. In each of the six championship matches, he defeated his opponent in two sets. In his senior season, he led Mt. Lebanon to the WPIAL Team Tennis Championship. As a sophomore, he was the starting point guard on a Mt. Lebanon team that defeated Uniontown in the WPIAL Championship Game. At Yale University, he was the top tennis player in the Ivy

League and was team captain in 1967 when the team won the Ivy League Championship. He also played basketball at Yale.

COACHES

DON BARTH, NORTH CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Under Barth, North Catholic won 22 section championships in 23 years compiling a record of 600-83. He guided North Catholic to a WPIAL Championship game 19 years in a row. The Trojannettes won 11 WPIAL titles and made it to a PIAA Championship game ten times while winning seven PIAA titles. From 1987-89, Barth's teams had a 56 game winning streak, the longest in WPIAL history. Barth is a member of the Western Pennsylvania Basketball Hall of Fame.

LINDY LAURO, NEW CASTLE

In New Castle and throughout Western Pennsylvania High School football, Lindy Lauro needs no further introduction than his nickname "Lindy". Lauro was the head football coach at New Castle High School from 1961-1992 accumulating a career record of 220-104-15. Among his wins were six undefeated teams and three WPIAL Championships in 1967, '73, and '75. His 1970 team was undefeated and first in every poll but last in Gardner points. As a result, the team did not play for the championship. Following this game, the WPIAL devised the On-Field Playoff System that is in effect today. Lauro was elected as the West Coach in the Big 33 Classic three times and is a member of the Western Pennsylvania Sports and National High School Athletic Coaches Halls of Fame.

JACK McCURRY, NORTH HILLS HIGH SCHOOL

During a legendary career of 35 years, McCurry led North Hills to conference, WPIAL, PIAA, and national championships while amassing a career record of 281-108-9. During his tenure, his teams recorded 14 conference titles and WPIAL Championships in 1982, '85, '87, and '93. The '93 team won the PIAA State Championship. A high point in his career occurred when his 1987 team was ranked No. 1 in the country by USA Today. McCurry has won numerous coaching awards and is a member of the Edinboro University Athletic and Pennsylvania Sports Halls of Fame. The field house at North Hills Stadium is named after McCurry.

DONNA RICHEY, ALIQUIPPA

A pioneer of WPIAL girls' basketball, Richey started the girls' basketball program at Aliquippa in 1976. After only two years, she led the Lady Quips to their first section championship starting a string of 11 consecutive section crowns. In addition, she led the Quips to four WPIAL Championships, and two PIAA Championships in 1989 and 90. Her overall record is 324-67; she was named WPIAL (four times) and section (seven times) Coach of the Year. Richey has been inducted in the Beaver County Sports Hall of Fame.

TEAMS

QUAKER VALLEY BOYS' SOCCER 1996

The 1996 team was the section, WPIAL, and PIAA champion and finished the season with a perfect 26-0 record. They outscored their opponents 169-7 and recorded shutouts in 21 games. The team was voted the #1 team in the nation by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America and the head coach, Gene Klein, was honored as the NSCAA National Coach of the Year. The team produced two National All-Americans, Chris Churchill and Brad Christof, as selected by the NSCAA. The nine seniors on the team won PIAA titles three out of four years with a record of 14-1 in PIAA tournament competition.

MT. ALVERNIA GIRLS' BASKETBALL 1983

This small private school team was the first WPIAL team to go through an entire season with an undefeated record. The Lions dominated Class A in 1983 and finished 34-0. Their dominance was apparent in both the WPIAL and PIAA Championship games. In the WPIAL Championship, they defeated Bishop Boyle 81-45 and in the PIAA final, they defeated Trinity Catholic of Camp Hill, 78-52. In 34 games the team had an average of 73 points per game and outscored their opponents by an average of 34 points per game. The team was ranked #25 in the USA Today. Five members of the team played college basketball. Mt. Alvernia was coached for 48 years by the legendary Dee Porucznik.

CONTEST OFFICIAL

DON "WOODY" WOODWARD FOOTBALL, BASEBALL, BASKETBALL, SOFTBALL

For 41 years Woody was a highly respected official at the scholastic and collegiate levels. At the scholastic level, he officiated in football, basketball, baseball, and softball and has worked over 500 varsity football games. Since 2001 he has served as the WPIAL Football Rules Interpreter. He worked numerous WPIAL Championships and at the PIAA level worked championship games in football, baseball, and softball. At the collegiate level, he has worked more than 300 games including serving as the referee at the 1998 Division II National Championship game. Woody also been active as an assigner for all the sports he officiated. A U.S. Army veteran, he served in Viet Nam.

CONTRIBUTOR

JACK FULLEN

Fullen has been a leader and supporter of the WPIAL as a Track and Cross Country Steering Committee member and member of the Board of Control. As a Board member, he has been the Junior High School Rep for 20 years. After serving terms as the Treasurer and Vice-President, he was elected President of the Board of Control in 2010. For many years, he has served as a game and site manager at district tournaments in football, basketball, wrestling, and volleyball. He has raised funds and

received grants of over \$900,000 to improve fitness at all levels (K-12) in the Blackhawk School District. Fullen has always been active as a leader in interscholastic athletics and has served as President of the Mid-Western Athletic Conference and the WPIAL Athletic Director's Association.

COURAGE AWARD

KURT WOLFE

Kurt is a teacher and head baseball coach at Pine Richland High School. Since 2009, he has battled stage IV colon cancer that spread to his liver and threatened his life. Demonstrating fortitude and courage, he led his team to the 2010 WPIAL Baseball Championship following two surgeries and on-going chemotherapy treatments while never missing a game. In support of and respect for their coach, in 2012 his team formed a service group known as "WOLFE-PACK" – Players About Community and Kids. The group has engaged in community service donating time at food banks, sponsoring a run for colon cancer, and assisting with the Pine Richland youth baseball programs.