



Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame

Welcome to the 37th annual induction ceremony of the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame. This anniversary affords us an opportunity to honor past enshrinees while saluting a new group of exceptional athletes.

The Class of 2010 continues the tradition of excellence that has epitomized the Rockland Hall of Fame. Included among this year's headliners are T.J. Ford, a highly successful multi-sport athlete for Nanuet who received the New York State Class C Football Player of the Year award as leader of an undefeated and unscored upon 1989 football team; Barbara Mellen-Speerin, a four-sport standout for Clarkstown North in the mid 1970's; Margie Sahlstrom-Jaxel, a 1992 Nanuet graduate who was a seven-time All-County performer and first team All-State soccer player; Robbie Woods, a first team All-State selection in football and basketball in the mid 1970's who then went on to become a successful football and girls basketball coach at Ramapo; Mike Sparago, a 1982 Suffern graduate and three sport athlete who was the fourth-leading rusher in RCPSAL football and went on to play Class 1 professional hockey; Joe Conace, 1941 Nyack standout who played baseball, football and wrestled and is a decorated World War II veteran; and Sol "Spike" Israel, Spring Valley class of 1946, who was an outstanding football and wrestling champ and became a highly regarded wrestling referee. Unfortunately Spike, who lives year round in Deland, Fla., will not be able to attend this year's induction ceremony due to his fragile health.

The Hall of Fame is always seeking high-quality candidates to consider for induction. We applaud the continuing efforts of local high school halls of fame to honor their past stars and to assist us in obtaining the resumes of top candidates from the respective schools.

We acknowledge and congratulate Tom Collins, a distinguished Hall of Fame inductee (1994), board member and colleague who will be retiring as Pearl River athletic director in June. We wish him much success.

We also wish to thank those people who make our organization an indispensable contributor to the Rockland sports community: Joni Neuendorf, vice chair; Ethel Doller, secretary; Pete Castellano, treasurer and ticket chair; Bob Veltidi, master of ceremonies and screening committee chair; Gibby Sweet, for dinner arrangements; Dan White, Gene Erickson, Tom Doherty and Jamie Kempton for their behind-the-scenes support; Phyllis and Bruce Schweizer of Quality Graphics; and the entire Board of Directors who all contribute to the support of the organization throughout the year.

Regards,

Pete Scheibner, Chairman

Visit our Web site at www.rcshf.org

Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame List of Inductees

INDUCTEE: **SOL "SPIKE" ISREAL**
INTRODUCED BY: *Skip Feinberg (Nephew)*

INDUCTEE: **JOE CONACE**
INTRODUCED BY: *Angela Weygant (Daughter)*
TROPHY SPONSOR: Nyack American Legion Post 310, Nyack, NY
PLAQUE SPONSOR: Nyack American Legion Post 310, Nyack, NY

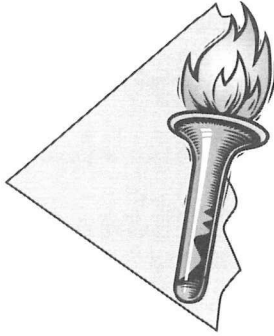
INDUCTEE: **BARBARA MELLEN-SPEERIN**
INTRODUCED BY: *Chris Markam (Softball Coach)*

INDUCTEE: **T.J. FORD**
INTRODUCED BY: *Mike Hussey (Co-Capt, Teammate)*

INDUCTEE: **MIKE SPARAGO**
INTRODUCED BY: *John Orlando (Coach)*

INDUCTEE: **MARGIE SAHLSTROM-JAXEL**
INTRODUCED BY: *Dave Powers (Coach)*

INDUCTEE: **ROBBIE WOODS**
INTRODUCED BY: *Derik Davis (Brother-in-law)*
PLAQUE SPONSOR: Nyack High School



Dinner Program

Pledge of Allegiance.....Gene Erickson
National Anthem.....Jean Marie Beckerle
Master of Ceremonies.....Bob Veltidi

Committees

DinnerGibby Sweet
Program BookPeter Scheibner
Screening/EditorBob Veltidi
TicketsPete Castellano

2010 INDUCTEES

JOSEPH CONACE

T.J. FORD

SOL "SPIKE" ISRAEL

BARBARA MELLEN-SPEERIN

MARGIE SAHLSTROM-JAXEL

MIKE SPARAGO

ROBBIE WOODS

ENSHRINEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame was established to honor outstanding sportsmen and sportswomen, living and deceased, who have gained prominence while residing or competing in, or have brought recognition to Rockland County. To be considered for nomination to the Hall of Fame, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- A. Attain prominence in sports as an athlete, coach, manager, official, owner, writer, broadcaster or supporter.
- B. Reside or have resided in Rockland County, competed here at the time of their prominence, or brought fame to Rockland County as a result of their accomplishments.
- C. Be a person of integrity and good character.
- D. Candidates cannot be considered until 10 years after their high school class graduation, except in special cases.

Our committee encourages the public to send athletic resumes/nominations of prospective candidates to Screening Committee chairman Bob Veltidi, 400 Jersey Avenue, Greenwood Lake, NY 10925. Nominees are reviewed by this committee and, if accepted, voted upon for enshrinement by the committee as a whole.

The Hall of Fame Committee holds monthly meetings the first Tuesday of the month from October to May. Anyone wishing to join the organization should write to Chairman Pete Scheibner, 1 Captain McGovern Drive, Stony Point, N.Y. 10980, or e-mail him at scheibnp@msn.com.

Each inductee in the Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame receives a commemorative trophy and is further honored with an individual plaque, which is given to the inductee's high school for public display.

The Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame is more than awards and trophies and dinners, however. It is really about people – Rockland County people who have had an impact in the world of sports. A total of 178 such individuals have been honored since the hall's inception in 1974.

The Hall of Fame has evolved from those early beginnings to become a recognized presence in Rockland County athletics. In addition to its annual dinner, where it honors new inductees, the hall makes sizable donations to worthwhile local organizations and charities. Included among these donations have been cash gifts to:

- ARC • Varsity Athletes Against Substance Abuse • Salvation Army
- Haverstraw Little League Save the Fields Fund • American Cancer Society
- Special Olympics • Venture • Big Brothers-Big Sisters • Challenger Little League

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (OFFICERS)

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Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame Nomination Form

Nominee: _____
(Last) (First) (M)

Current Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ Date Submitted: _____

** If deceased, please give name, address and phone number of family member.*

H.S. and Year of Graduation: _____

College and Year of Graduation: _____

On a separate typewritten page, list all of the significant accomplishments of the nominee, both as a Rockland County resident and otherwise. Please be as specific as possible. Include varsity sports played in high school and college, dates, letters earned, honors won, records set, post-collegiate achievements, etc.

** Please submit a clear black-and-white or color photo of the nominee.*

Nominating Person:

Last name: _____ First: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Please Submit to:

Bob Veltidi
Chairman, Selection Committee
Rockland County Sports Hall of Fame
400 Jersey Avenue
Greenwood Lake, NY 10925

Rockland County Hall of Fame Inductees

1974

Chuck Aleno*
Henry "Peck" Artopee*
Dr. Daniel "Danny" Fortmann*
Joseph "JoJo" Mackey
Howard "Howie" Pierson

1975

Roger Brown
Joe D'Auria
Bill Drescher*
Billy Hogan*
Donald "Pop" Sherwood*

1976

Howard Parker Talman*
John Koster*
Jim Ridlon
Pete D'Auria*
Gloria Callan Jones

1977

Augusta Bradley Chapman*
Nick Gamboli*
Ed Greene*
Harry Jackson*
Paul Toscano
Richard "Gus" Shankey*

1978

Jim Brown
Harold "Hale" DeChelfin*
Jim Faulk*
Ira Shuttleworth*
Jim Schnaars
Nick Mottola*

1979

Bob Bacheller*
Frank Cosentino*
Harry "Dee" Dembnicki
Jerry Hollahan*
Bob Grossman*
E.J. Maurer*
Bruno Ablondi*

1980

Dr. Jeffrey Munson
Art Orlando*
Brit Paterson*
Nick Ryder
Horace Tyrus
Emil Willis*
Mickey Wittman

1981

Art Hopper*
Frank Horan
Howard Johnson
Lester Lepori*
Walter Ostrom
Victor Shankey*
Bill Yuda*

1982

Frank DePatto*
Tony Gamboli, Jr.
Bill Perry*
George Jakowenko
Ed McGrath

1983

Warren Austin*
Jim Brechbiel
Frank Dawson
Jeanette Paddock
Walter Sickles*

1984

Jim Ashcroft
Marvin Branche*
Ralph Cordisco
Bryan Hasset
Bob Tierney*

1985

Wil Arietta*
Joseph "Josh" Bolack*
Gene Erickson
Tony Gemma*
Joe St. Lawrence*

1986

Joe Alleva
John Jemison
Harold Lederman
Bob Mathias*
Sylvester "Molly" McGee*

1987

Fred Hahn*
Charles Holbrook
Chuck Scarpulla
Jim Stamos
Bob Strack

1988

Ron Becraft
Darryl Brown
Tom Canty
Pat D'Auria*
James "Sham" Feeney*

1989

Ralph Consiglio*
Patty Dillon Solliday
Vincent "Dugan" Kovalsky
Frank Nelson*
Bob Wolff

1990

Denise McGuire
Guy Guccione
Abe Schuster
Robert "Red" Schassler*
Don Clancy*

1991

Steve Drummond*
Lew Brundage
Johnny Burns*
Pete Haubner
Ethel Doller
Dominic Gamboli*

1992

Murray Olderman
Jerome Bonomolo
Joseph "Biscuit" Picarello
Dale Lydecker
John Mercurio

Rockland County Hall of Fame Inductees

1993

Jim Kane
Kathy Miller Dapolito
Jay Bohnel
Mike Deane
Don Driscoll

1994

Hubert Nealy
Martin "Hawk" Jacobs
Joe Goldsmith
Tom Collins
Ron Tellefsen*

1995

Ron Edwards
Walter "Red" Levy
Max Talaska*
Joe Klopchin*
Joe McDowell*
Paul Urban*

1996

Harry Babcock*
Gerald Kapusinsky
John Orlando
Al Simonds
George Garrecht
Marty Springstead

1997

Mike Hagon
Hank Kapusinsky
Tom Mounkhal
Dennis Pozsar
Steve Wanamaker

1998

Kevin Kane
Lou Kliewe*
Rocco Marano
Howie McNiff
Blaise Winter

1999

Jim Cann
Joe Casarella
Ervan Levine*
Gibby Sweet
Dick Yerg

2000

Rich Conklin
Kevin Houston
Dawn Royster
Sarah Will
Alex Zilko*

2001

George Dalzell
Gerald D'Auria*
Seth Joyner
Tod Giles*
Debbie Grant
Bill White

2002

Ken Harniman*
Derrick Lassic
Norinne Powers
Kris Snider
Dick Teetsel*
Walt Weiss

2003

Genny Mulderig Allard
Jeff Bryant
Peter Hackett*
David Hirsch
Bill Kurisko
†† Joe Grasso*
† Charles "Jumbo" Strack*

2004

Jim Gallo
Dave Hanson
Joan Neuendorf
Nancy Rosenfeld Lewis
Ed Ruppert
Frank Samoylo

2005

Jane Ronner-Beckley
Mike Carroll
Tom Doherty
Jamie Kempton
Lee Klepper
†† Leon Pesner*
Rudolph Rejholec*

2006

Tony Harlin
Jon Hess
Jim Pollard
John Scanlan
Jeff Van Wie
John Van Wyck*

2007

Julius D'Agostino*
John Flaherty
Barbara Hebel
Robert Neuendorf
Richard "Dixie" Reilly*
†† Dan White

2008

Noreen Annunziata Apicella
Charles Dittmer
Reid Hoffer
Randy Nelson
Paul Pietropaolo
Tim St. Lawrence
† Elizabeth "Pat" Ryan*

2009

Joe Biddy
Jeff Brown
Jim Horvath
Mike Longuil
Janice Olszewski
John Sottile

* Denotes Deceased

† Old Timers Special Award

†† Joe Holland Lifetime Achievement Award

JOSEPH CONACE Nyack High School

Joseph Conace is a proud member of "Our Greatest Generation", born in the 20's, raised in the 30's, served our country in 40's, then spent his life working to make this country a better place. Along the way Joe, like many others of his age, realized the value of athletics in the total development of one's maturity. Joe Conace was a three sport athlete at Nyack High School, he lettered in wrestling, baseball, and football. On the mat, Joe was a fierce competitor, and on the baseball team he was known as a terrific clutch hitter, but Joe's forte was football. Joe was a tackle on Nyack High School's varsity football team and in 1940 was voted 1st team All Rockland County at that position. The Journal News cited Joe as the reason for Nyack's late season surge to a final position of 2nd place in the P.S.A.L. in 1940, calling him one of the "sturdiest linemen Nyack has ever seen". Playing both offense and defense, it was said that when Joe tackles someone, "he tackles them for keeps!" Joe's biggest thrill was in his senior year, against rival Haverstraw High School when he scooped up a fumble on Haverstraw's twelve yard line and returned it for a touchdown. Nyack went on to win that game 7-6 on the strength of Joe's touchdown. Joe was a great student at Nyack High School as well as a great athlete. He was an American Legion Award winner, a member of the National Honor Society, a participant at Boys State and the class president.

After graduation from high school, Joe entered the army in 1943. He was a member the 35th Division of the 134 Infantry Regiment Company and served in the European theater. Joe was promoted to Sergeant in the field while serving in France and was wounded in 1944. Before his Honorable Discharge in 1946, Joe earned the following medals; Combat Infantry Badge, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Conspicuous Service, Good Conduct, World War II Victory, and the Diplome Republique Francaise.

Back home in Nyack, Joe went to work for New York Telephone Nynex in March of 1947. Joe continued to stay active in athletics, playing



softball in Rockland County. While playing for Aero Mufflers in the Piermont Softball League, Joe went 5-5 with 3 runs scored in a victory over Gair Office. That 5-5 day ran his league leading streak to 11 hits in a row. Joe retired from New York Telephone in 1984 after 34 years of service to the company.

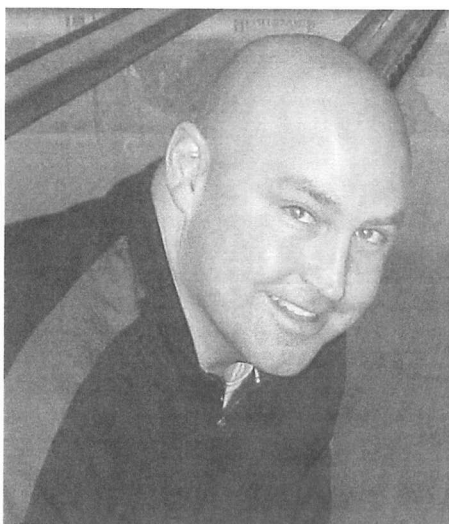
As a tribute to Joe's prominence as a Nyack personality, in 2005 he was selected as the Grand Marshall of the Nyack Memorial Day Parade. He was married to Victorine, who has since passed away, and raised two children, Angela (Weygant) and Anthony. Joe currently resides in West Nyack.



T.J. FORD Nanuet High School

Nanuet High School has had many championship football seasons, but there are none more memorable than the 1989 season. That year the football team was not only undefeated, and untied, but they were unscored upon on their way to a Section I Championship. T.J. Ford was the leader and moving force behind that team. But that was just in the fall; T.J. was also a standout for the Knights on the basketball court and lacrosse field. Playing on the football team, at running back, T.J. was a threat to score any time he touched the ball. One of 13 individual school records he amassed during his illustrious career with the Golden Knights was scoring 27 touchdowns, in just his senior year! T.J. was a threat on both sides of the ball. Playing linebacker, in the Section I championship game against Bronxville, T.J. hit a Bronxville player so hard, the crowd at Mount Vernon Stadium gasped in disbelief. Among his school records were: 5 rushing touchdowns in one game, 33 rushing attempts in one game, 27 touchdowns in a season, 1331 rushing yards in a season, 223 career points scored, 37 career touchdowns, and a career average per rush of 5.9 yards. For his efforts on the football field T.J. was voted All County twice, All League twice, and first team All Section in his senior year. To top it all off, T.J. was selected as the New York State Class C Player of the Year, as well as a New York Daily News First Team All Star.

T.J. was a leader in all three sports he played, serving as captain of the football, basketball, and lacrosse teams, and playing varsity ball for three years in each sport. In lacrosse, he was a two time All Section I midfielder who scored 31 goals and had 23 assists for the 1990 team, which posted a 16-1 record and was undefeated in the regular season. He also scored 20 goals and added 26 assists in 1989. As a point guard in basketball, T.J. was a vital contributor to the 1989 Nanuet team that advanced to the Section I Class final, scoring 245 points and averaging 12.9 points per game to earn All Section and All League honors. In his senior year T.J. scored 247 points with a 12.3 point average per game and again made All League. Being a Member of the National Honor Society,



T.J. was named a Journal News Scholar Athlete of the Week.

T.J. continued playing football in college at St. Cloud (Minn.) State University, an NCAA Division II school, for two years before suffering a severe ankle injury. He played well enough to win freshman of the year honors in the 1990 season. He later transferred to Dominican College in Blauvelt where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. T.J. has also earned an MBA from Iona College, and currently works in surgical sales for Stryker Orthopedics. He and his wife Deirdre live in Mahwah, New Jersey, with their two children Cailey, 6 and Ryan, 4.



Nanuet Golden Knights

SOL "SPIKE" ISRAEL Spring Valley High School

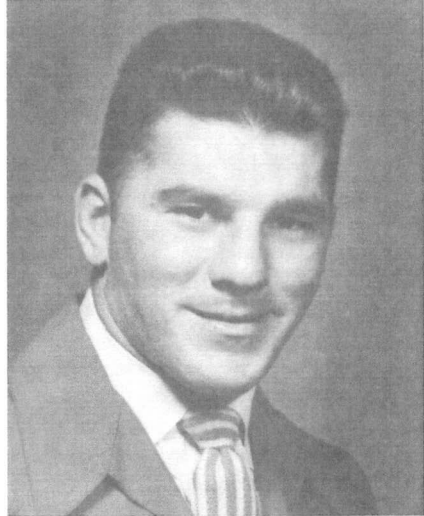
Beginning as an outstanding Rockland County high school athlete from Spring Valley, Sol "Spike" Israel went on to become one of the most respected and accomplished wrestling officials in Rockland County, and the United States. His career as an athlete, coach, and referee has spanned over 40 years.

Spike graduated from Spring Valley High School in 1946, earning 10 varsity letters. Along the way he was selected as a three time All County football player, a three time Rockland County finalist in wrestling and, in 1946 was the 154 lb. county champion. Being a three sport athlete, Spike also lettered in baseball three times.

Upon graduation from Spring Valley High School, Spike enrolled at Bergen County Community College in New Jersey, and played on the varsity football team. The following year, Spike transferred to Stetson University in DeLand, Florida, and played varsity football for three years - 1949, 50, 51. Spike is a proud member of the Stetson University Hall of Fame as starter on their 1951 Championship football team. He also managed to make the varsity golf team in 1950 and 51.

After Spike graduated from Stetson in 1952, he spent some time in Florida and Georgia as an assistant football coach. In 1959 Spike returned to the Northeast and his hometown of Spring Valley to teach and coach in New Jersey. Spike coached football, golf, and wrestling at a variety of schools in Bergen County. As a football coach Spike had the good fortune to coach four future NFL players: Jack Tatum of the Oakland Raiders being the most notable. In addition, in 1981 Spike was selected as the Bergen County Golf "Coach of the Year".

It was in the early 1960s that Spike began his career as a wrestling official. He started out officiating Rockland and Bergen County high school matches and soon became the most sought after referee in the area, especially for crucial matches. Spike worked many Rockland



County and Section Nine tournaments and has also officiated at the New York State Public High School Championship Tournament. Spike's wrestling officiating did not stop at the local high school level; he moved on to the collegiate level and had an outstanding career. As a member of the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Officials Association, Spike worked the Eastern States Wrestling Championship Tournament for over 15 years. Spike also officiated the Big 8 and the New York State Collegiate wrestling tournaments, and was elected "chief official" by his peers at both of these tournaments. Three times during his career, Spike was selected to officiate at the N.C.A.A. Division I Wrestling Championships. In 1989 Spike was inducted into the Eastern Intercollegiate Wrestling Officials Association Hall of Fame.

Spike has since retired to DeLand, Florida, home of Stetson University, his alma mater.



BARBARA MELLEN-SPEERIN

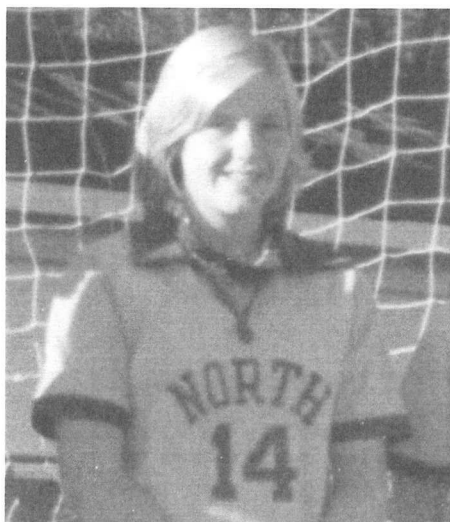
Clarkstown North High School

While many athletes excel at one or two sports, at Clarkstown North High School, Barbara Mellen excelled at four. Barbara played soccer, volleyball, basketball, and softball and was voted MVP and team captain of each of her teams in both her junior and senior years.

On the soccer field as a right inner, Barbara earned 3 varsity letters and was All County twice. She set Rockland County records for the most goals scored in a game (7), and the most goals scored in a season (20). Barbara was a setter on the volleyball team where she earned 3 varsity letters and was voted All County in her junior and senior years. As a guard on the basketball team, she was a two year starter who averaged 14 points a game. In the springtime, Barbara played softball. As a left-handed short stop, she was a four year starter for Clarkstown North; not only was she the MVP three years, but also an All County selection in both her junior and senior years. Her senior stats were amazing: a batting average of .667 (leading the county), 43 RBIs, 19 triples, 20 stolen bases, and 9 home runs.

During the summer months of her high school years, Barbara remained very active. She went to the Junior Olympics in Chicago for volleyball one year, and competed in the New York State Empire Games twice on the girls' soccer team.

In 1976 Barbara enrolled at Westchester Community College and competed on the volleyball, basketball, and softball teams. As a guard on the basketball team, Barbara averaged 21 points per game and was selected All Region for the New York City area. In softball, Barbara developed into a pitcher, where she pitched both right and left handed. During her time at Westchester, Barbara played outside volleyball for a travel team named The East Team for Volleyball that competed all over the United States and Canada.



In 1979 Barbara accepted a full scholarship to play volleyball at Florida State University. While playing at FSU Barbara was named to numerous All Tournament teams, and was voted Collegiate All State, MVP, and Conference All Region in her Senior year. She graduated from FSU with a degree in Biology and a minor in Chemistry.

After college Barbara continued to stay active participating in many recreational softball leagues, but now spends most of her time with her husband Thomas Speerin watching their children compete on the athletic fields. They live in Lake Worth, Florida and have three children: T.J., 25, Danny, 23, a recent graduate of Northwood University where he was a scholarship baseball player, and Carly, 20, who is currently enrolled at Indian River State College and is on the softball team. This fall Carly will be playing softball for Florida Atlantic University on scholarship.

In 1998 Barbara Mellen-Speerin was voted into the Clarkstown North Sports Hall of Fame.



MARGIE SAHLSTROM- JAXEL Nanuet High School

When a freshman gets selected to play on the varsity basketball team, usually it's a big deal. But by the time Margie was a freshman that was old hat; she had already played seven varsity games as an eighth grader. As a ninth grader, Margie began her four year run as a starter on the varsity team. And what a run it was: she made a clean sweep of All league, All County, and All Section I accolades each of the four years. In her junior year Margie was named fourth team All State in Class C, and she capped her brilliant high school basketball career by garnering first team All State laurels her senior year.

Sophomore year brought Margie her first team MVP award, an honor she would receive in her junior and senior years as well. During her sophomore year, Margie attained her career high of 20.2 points per game. She averaged 13.8 as a freshman, 17.7 as a junior, and 16.8 as a senior. By the time Margie graduated from Nanuet, she was one of the top five scorers in Rockland County girls' basketball history with 1,514 career points. She also topped Nanuet's charts in single season assists (150) and single game steals (13). Margie was named the Rockland County Small School Player of the Year and The Journal News Player of the year in 1992, her senior year. The 1991-92 team, of which Margie was the captain, finished the regular season undefeated and held the Number 1 ranking in New York State heading into the postseason playoffs.

Nanuet's lone blemish that season was a loss in the Section I Class C championship game to Our Lady of Lourdes of Poughkeepsie, a perennial state power. Down by only 2 points at halftime, Nanuet started the third quarter with confidence when the unthinkable happened. While going up for a layup, Margie went down with a serious knee injury, a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). For all intents and purposes, Nanuet's hopes for a sectional title went down with it. "That was devastating," says



Dave Powers, who was Margie's coach in both basketball and soccer. "We lost our best player. Psychologically the team couldn't recover from that."

After graduating from Nanuet, and following months of rehab for reconstructive knee surgery, Margie went on to play four years at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Sparkill, where she was a 1,000 point scorer. Margie attributes her prowess on the court to playing with her older brothers and their friends in front of their house growing up. "My brothers and their friends never gave me any mercy," she says. "I'd say they gave me my toughness, if I really have any, and I learned how to really play."

Basketball was a sport in which Margie made headlines, but she also enjoyed an outstanding soccer career at Nanuet with a pattern similar to her basketball achievements - playing varsity as an eighth grader, starting on the varsity team all four years of high school, and serving as captain her senior year. Margie played on the Golden Knight team that advanced to the Section I Class C championship game four straight years, including the 1988 team that made it to the New York State quarterfinals, where they lost in a shootout to Highland. Margie became only the second player in Nanuet girls' soccer history to score more than 100 points in her career. Ironically, she tied her older sister, Susan (a star