

Great Eight

CSHOF Inducts Class Of 2018

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Scott Kindberg, Sports Editor



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame inductees, pictured in front, from left, are: Sheilah Lingenfelter Gulas; Lori Franchina; Phil Young; and Jim Riggs IV, representing his late father, Jim Riggs III. In back are: Clem Worosz; Dick Cole; Fran Sirianni; and Curt Fischer.

P-J photo by Scott Kindberg

LAKESWOOD — For decades, the late Jim Riggs III was a board member of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame and, in tandem with his job as the sports editor of The Post-Journal, the annual induction banquet meant that he would chronicle it all for posterity through his words and his photos.

He never wanted to draw attention to himself, because, well, Riggs was more interested in telling someone else's story than being the subject of one himself.

But on Monday night, before a packed house at the Lakewood Rod & Gun Club, Riggs, joined seven other athletes, coaches and contributors who were inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame at its 37th annual banquet.

“Jim simply loved sports,” said Riggs’ son, Jim Riggs IV, during his acceptance remarks. “It never mattered who was playing or — sometimes — what sport it even was. He just loved the game, and most everything he spent his life’s work doing was for the love of the game, especially in this community. He dedicated his entire adult life to shining a spotlight on athletics in the Chautauqua region, and this is what the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame recognizes tonight.”

Joining Riggs in the 2018 inductee class were Dick Cole, Curt Fischer, Lori Franchina, Sheilah (Lingenfelter) Gulas, Fran Sirianni, Clem Worosz and Phil Young.



Inductee Phil Young, left, is pictured with Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame President Randy Anderson, center, and 1994 inductee Pete Criscione.

P-J photo by Scott Kindberg

Following are snapshots from their acceptance remarks:

– Cole: From his basketball successes at Jamestown High School and Jamestown Community College in the 1960s to his dominance on golf courses near and far for six decades, Cole’s athletic resume makes him a worthy inductee.

“I’m a lifelong resident of Jamestown and I’ve had the pleasure to have competed with and against many current as well as future inductees of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame,” he said. ... “It really is a special honor for an athlete to be recognized for their accomplishments and then have these accomplishments preserved in the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame.”

– Fischer: The owner of a 221-45 record, including state championships in 1998 and 2008 during his tenure as the varsity football coach at Maple Grove, Fischer also coached the Red Dragons to state basketball titles in 2008 and 2010, and also played a vital role helping to guide Maple Grove’s 1992 baseball team to a state crown.

“If I could give advice to those considering a coaching career, it would be this: It’s more than just a game. At the end of the day, the number of wins and losses does not matter. It’s all about the friendships made and the bonds created that will last a lifetime. It’s about the student-athletes and what you can offer them that will ultimately go with them throughout life’s journey.”



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame board member Tom Heppeler, left, is pictured with 2010 inductee Art Asquith, second from left, board member John Bongiovanni and 1994 inductee Pete Criscione, right.

P-J photo by Scott Kindberg

– Franchina: A talented athlete and coach, the Falconer Central School graduate’s accomplishments on the softball diamond and basketball court have packed her personal resume to full and overflowing, a testament to her God-given talents as well as her desire to never give up.

“Just to give you an idea of how much I loved my life and athletic career in Falconer, I still talk about those years all the time,” she said. “I would say to many of my teammates, ‘You should have seen my small town. Everyone knew your name, both on and off the field.’ I still feel the support from my hometown today.

“I want you to know my love for Falconer is still so strong. As I get inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame and the USSSA Hall of Fame on March 10 in Massachusetts, I will always be grateful for the gift Falconer gave me.”

– Gulas: A 1979 graduate of Southwestern Central School, Gulas was inducted into the National Fastpitch Coaches Association Hall of Fame last December after a career that included stops at Allegheny College, Wittenberg and Ashland University. It was at the latter school where Gulas won more than 700 games.

“I truly felt many times in my career that I was in the right place at the right time and had some amazing opportunities,” she said. “A couple years ago I heard someone say, ‘Be where your feet are,’ and as I look back at my life this is so true. I especially lived this way in my last year of coaching and I enjoyed it more than any other season. Life is full of what-ifs. You will get the most out of life being in the present. Enjoy and be thankful for the space you are in, the places you go and the people you

surround yourself with.”



Jim Riggs IV is pictured with his father's Hall of Fame plaque and Scott Kindberg, current Post-Journal sports editor, at Monday's induction banquet.

Photo by Heidi Anderson

— Sirianni: A middle school teacher for 36 years at Southwestern Central School and a coach of football, basketball and track there for 45, Sirianni is also an inductee of the Clarion University Sports Hall of Fame. His dedication to his career at Southwestern was affirmed when the athletic facility on campus was named in his honor in 2015.

“It is very nice to be recognized by the Hall of Fame, but coaching and teaching are all about teamwork,” he said. “It takes all the parts working together to be successful. I was blessed to work with

some great coaches and teachers, and so many great athletes, many of whom are in the Hall of Fame. But not only were they great coaches and athletes, but they were also great people and friends.”

– Worosz: A gifted basketball player during his high school days at St. Mary’s Academy and Cardinal Mindszenty, the Dunkirk native also parlayed it into a fine collegiate career in the 1950s at Niagara University. The recipient of a full scholarship with the Purple Eagles, Worosz performed in two National Invitational Tournaments and two Holiday Festivals in Madison Square Garden and was captain of the team his senior season.

“If you were to ask me what I discovered ... 65 years ago about those who were my teammates, I would answer with this: They were great players, but no sophisticates,” Worosz said. “They were ordinary people who were extraordinary. They encouraged and supported each other.”

More than six decades later, Worosz felt that encouragement and support last night.

“We have this beautiful moment together, this beautiful moment that compels me to say thank you to all of you here,” he said. “Thanks to all those that worked so hard to make this event possible. Thanks to my family and friends. In some ways, all of you have had a part in shaping things that I have done.”

– Young: A prolific athlete at Mayville Central School, Young ultimately earned a four-year baseball scholarship at Syracuse University, highlighted by him being named the team’s Most Valuable Player his senior year. He later signed a professional baseball contract with the Philadelphia Phillies and played in the minor leagues from 1956-59. His greatest contributions, though, came during a teaching and coaching career at Westfield Academy and Central School that spanned more than three decades.

“Serving my community has been a joy and privilege that I am grateful for every single day,” he said. “I wouldn’t be standing here tonight if it weren’t for all the amazing people in my life.”

NOTES: Chip Johnson, banquet chairman, provided the welcome; Elise Blomquist of Jamestown High School performed the national anthem; the Rev. Ron Lemon of Koinonia Christian Fellowship gave the invocation and benediction; and CSHOF president Randy Anderson provided remarks.