



Randy Anderson, Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame president, on left, with Bob Schmitt, 2012 inductee.

## Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame Yesterday's Greats – Today's Role Models

*Contributing Writer*

**Walt Pickut**

Some say the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame was really born nearly 30 years before it was officially founded in 1980, according to the Hall of Fame's current president, Randy Anderson.

Jamestown's old timers may still remember in mid-20th Century when Frank Hyde, then Sports Editor for Jamestown's Post-Journal, created the original Jamestown Sports Hall of Fame. Though a number of fine athletes were inducted, the organization eventually fell into hibernation.

On December 6, 1980, Russ Diethrick, one of the original inductees and later the Jamestown City Parks and Recreation Director, invited a team of about 15 local sports-minded people to meet at the Fenton Mansion to consider formation of The Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame. With a larger population to draw both athletes and fans from, a wider base of support, CSHOF has now become the Western New York's established Mecca for sports greats and aficionados.

"We've made a conscious effort to include the finest athletes, coaches and the most outstanding supporters of sports from Chautauqua County's north and south, east and west," Anderson explained to a recent Hall of Fame visitor. "And we'll never run out of great candidates. We have nearly 120 names in nomination right now, all outstanding nominees."

The Chautauqua County Sports Hall of Fame has established twin missions; recognizing and inducting great Chautauquans into the Hall of Fame and maintaining

a sports exhibit hall and a website open to the public to display memorabilia, photos, the members' inspirational stories and more.

"We proudly announce our annual inductees every December 1," Anderson said. "And on December 2 my phone rings off the hook with people wondering why their own personal favorites hadn't been chosen." The CSHOF committee's rule is that it is up to the public to send in nominations along with documentation of their most impressive achievements. Ballots are placed in Chautauqua County newspapers with a deadline date for submitting nominations. If someone isn't inducted, it is usually because nobody nominated him or her.

Readers of the Jamestown Gazette who would like to nominate a special candidate to the CSHOF are invited to log on to <http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org> and click on the "Nominate" tab. A list of all currently active nominee files can be found there along with a downloadable Nomination Form and Profile Form.

Each person who is inducted into the Hall of fame receives a plaque and a ring. If the inductee is deceased, the award is presented to a family member. Plaques and the inductees' photos are displayed at the

Sports Hall of Fame.

The Hall of Fame online Video Archive offers a tantalizing taste of the special memories and artifacts visitors can see in person at the Hall of Fame Museum at 15 West Third Street in downtown Jamestown, New York.

Go the on-line Archive and listen to a 10-minute interview of remembrances, for instance, with the 1948-1958 Brooklyn/LA Dodgers all-star pitcher, Carl Erskine, or a 10-minute highlight interview with Yankee relief pitcher and Cy Young winner and '96 CSHOF inductee Sparky Lyle or one of CSHOF's first inductees, Russ Dietrick for an insightful biographical interview with Jamestown's own "Mr. Baseball." More than 100 more videos will hold any sports fan spellbound while still only touching on what an in-person visitor to the Hall will experience.

Memberships, volunteer opportunities, newsletters and a chance to "Share Your Memories" are also available at the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame. Memories may include stories about sports in Chautauqua County and its Hall of Fame inductees, photographs about sports in Chautauqua County and local inductees and artifacts related to sports in Chautauqua County and their inductees.

"We want to be a role model for young athletes too," Anderson added. "It isn't only about developing finely honed skills, reflexes and muscles, though. We want our youth to excel academically too. The highest aim of athletics should be to help form the community's best citizens. That's one of the most important ideas the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame is about."

### Induction into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame Nomination Criteria

The nominee must have been born in, lived in, or achieved in Chautauqua County, New York a name in the world of sports. He or she must also meet one of the following criteria:

- ✓ Is or was an outstanding athlete in high school, college, amateur, or professional sports.
- ✓ Is or was a coach, manager, official or administrator who has made a significant contribution to sports.
- ✓ Is an individual who is performing or has performed an unusual or distinguished service in fostering, developing or effectively helping a sport to prosper.

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