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*Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County*

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## **Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame**

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15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

July 2013

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### **CHAUTAUQUA SPORTS HALL OF FAME** **INDUCTEE OF THE MONTH**



**Craig "Swanny" Swanson** was born on June 10, 1965. He quickly developed an affinity for baseball and, by the age of 5, began participating in the Farm League in 1970, followed by Little League play in 1976-77. By the age of 11, he was already making headlines as an all-around player, but showed exceptional promise as a talented left-handed pitcher. In 1978, Swanson helped lead his Vac-Air team to the division title in East Lake Babe Ruth action and, later on, was the starting pitcher for the 1983 16-18 Upstate New York tournament team that finished in second place.

During his high school sports career at Frewsburg, Swanson's name became synonymous with success and leadership while playing football and basketball for the Bears, in addition to building his reputation as one of the area's top baseball players, both in pitching and as a first baseman. He was an all-league selection and an all-star performer every year until his graduation with high honors in 1983.

During that time span, Swanson also participated in the all-star baseball game at the old War Memorial Stadium in Buffalo in 1983 where he pitched two scoreless innings while striking out four. Additionally, he was named as an all-star in the Lions-Topps All-Star Football Classic during the same year. Prior to that, Swanson was named as the Offensive Player of the Year in football in 1982.

He was offered an opportunity to play baseball for Jamestown Community College, but instead chose to accept an athletic scholarship to Canisius College, where he excelled on the mound for the Golden Griffins from 1984-87. He was named most valuable player in the 1985 St. Bonaventure Fall Classic and also had the opportunity to play in the regional playoffs in Rhode Island.

In addition to his success in college, Swanson also produced more memorable performances while playing in the County-Grape Belt league from 1985 to 1991 and was named a league all-star every season. He also was an outstanding softball player from 1984 through 1991 and played for several teams, including the Nic-L-Inn, Ecko Tool, VFW and the Keg Room.

After graduating from Canisius, Swanson joined Chase Lincoln Bank and was elected as a bank officer and also served as a senior sales coordinator at the Falconer branch office. He was also a member of the Board of Governors of the American Institute of Banking and the M.E.D. Banking Network.

He was also active in the community and was a volunteer for the United Way's Pacesetter campaign and the Chautauqua County Fund for the Arts, along with coaching Little Hoopers basketball.

Swanson had hoped to coach Little League baseball, but that dream was tragically cut short on September 28, 1991, when he died from injuries suffered in an automobile accident. He was just 26 years old.

To honor his memory, the [Craig "Swanny" Swanson Memorial Scholarship Fund](#) was established shortly after his death and since 1992, one or more Frewsburg Central School college bound seniors who best exemplify Swanson's qualities of leadership, a will to win and gregariousness receive scholarships.

Craig Swanson died in 1991. He was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 2001.

## **Swanny Tournament is August 24**

The 22nd annual Craig Swanson Memorial Golf Tournament will be held August 24 at Cable Hollow Golf Club.

The playing format is a four-person scramble and proceeds from the tournament benefit the Craig "Swanny" Swanson Memorial Scholarship Fund that annually awards scholarships to Frewsburg Central School seniors and alumni in college who most exemplify the qualities Craig Swanson possessed. Since its inception in 1992, this tournament has raised \$60,286 for the scholarship fund.

The event will open with a shotgun start at 1 p.m. and the after-golf picnic will begin around 6 p.m. at the American Legion, Samuel Derby Post No. 556 in Frewsburg. The picnic features cook-your-own steaks, baked potato, salad, fresh steamed corn, desserts, beer, wine and soft drinks.

Costs for the tournament are \$70, which includes golf, cart, lunch, dinner, prizes, and a donation to the scholarship fund. A \$24 package is also available for non-golfers that includes dinner, beverages, and donation.

Reduced golf prices are available for Cable Hollow members.

All dinners for golfers and guests must be pre-paid before the tournament.

The tournament committee is seeking hole-sponsorships from businesses and individuals at \$75 per hole to help support the tournament. Anyone seeking further information about the tournament or any business or organization interested in a hole sponsorship should contact Steve Centi at 499-4929.

Entry checks and donations should be mailed to Centi at 199 McDaniel Ave., Jamestown, NY 14701.

The entry deadline is Aug.16, but entries are welcome anytime prior to the deadline and are recommended as early as possible.

## **Postscript to Ernie Hrovatic Story**



The June newsletter from the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame contained a story about Ernie Hrovatic, the first Jamestown Falcons player killed in action during World War II. If you missed

the story, go to [www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org](http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org) and click on the newsletter tab.

2012 CSHOF inductee, **Greg Peterson**, stopped by the hall to say that in 2000 the Jamestown Jammers had presented him with the Ernie Hrovatic Male Fan of the Year Award. To his knowledge, the award was given only one year and then was discontinued for unknown reasons. Peterson, then, graciously donated his plaque to the hall of fame.

## Recent Donations to the CSHOF



**Kristina (Damond) Townsend** (center in photo) and her parents, Denise and Tim Williams, have donated the soap box derby car Kristina drove to the 1994 Stock Division Championship in Akron, OH. Then 13-years-old, she was the first Jamestown to win a national title in the All-American Soap Box Championship.

Now living in Virginia Beach, Townsend said upon gifting the vehicle, "This is where it should be and where it all started for me. It's where I'm hoping people can see it and shoot to get more victories for Jamestown."



**Ted Wyberanec Jr.** (right in photo) made a trip to Chautauqua County from his home in Florida and brought along a baseball uniform his father, Ted Sr., had worn while playing for the Jamestown Merchants squad in the 1950s. He presented the gift to CSHOF treasurer Russ Ecklund on behalf of the Wyberanec Family.

Ted Sr., a native of the Bronx, came to Jamestown to play for Falcons in 1942. After a three-year hitch in the Navy, he played again for Falcons in 1946 and 1947.

When his professional career ended six years later, Ted returned to Jamestown and became a well-known athlete and official in baseball and basketball. For more about Ted see <http://chautauquasportshalloffame.org/tedwyberanec.php>.