

Terry Ransbury, 89, coached football teams to undefeated seasons at three high schools

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Terry Ransbury had a winning formula as a high school football coach.

In the 1960s, he led teams from three different schools – Silver Creek, Jamestown and Clarence – to undefeated seasons.

Two of his players went on to have professional careers. Silver Creek basketball star George Carter went on to play in the ABA and NBA and Clarence football standout Mark Murphy had eight seasons as a safety with the Washington Redskins and now is president and chief executive officer of the Green Bay Packers.

“Getting along with the players is what’s key, no matter how tough you are on them,” he told sports blogger Cameron Hurst at the 50th anniversary reunion of his fabled 1964 Jamestown Raiders squad. “If you can do that, you’ll make it work.”

Mr. Ransbury died Jan. 15 in Pittsboro, N.C., after a three-year struggle with dementia. He was 89.

Born in Dunkirk, Terrance John Ransbury was a 1945 graduate of Silver Creek High School, where he lettered in football, basketball and baseball. After two years of post-high school studies, he enrolled at Brockport State Teachers College, where he lettered

in football, basketball and track and was a member of the leaders and officials club. He earned a bachelor's degree in health and physical education in 1951.

He completed a master's degree in health and safety education at Indiana University in 1952, then served in the Army in the 82nd Airborne Division, attaining the rank of first lieutenant.

After a year of teaching elementary school physical education in Rochester, Mr. Ransbury returned to Silver Creek as assistant coach in 1956, then became coach of the football and basketball teams the following year. His football team was winless that first season, then posted 7-1, 6-1 and 7-1 records the next three years. In 1961, they went undefeated for the first time in school history.

His basketball teams had a 64-4 record over five seasons, including a 34-game winning streak, and captured the Section 6 or Western New York Class B title in 1958, 1959 and 1961. His 1961 baseball team also went undefeated and he coached the track team to titles, as well.

He spent a year at Monmouth Regional High School in Eatontown, N.J., coaching football and basketball, then was named football coach at Jamestown High School. In 1964, in addition to the undefeated football team, his track team also went undefeated.

He went to Clarence High School in 1966, led the football team to an unbeaten season in 1968 and was honored as Coach of the Year.

The next season took him to the University at Buffalo, where he coached the running backs and was an assistant basketball coach. When UB discontinued football after the 1970 season, he stayed on as assistant basketball coach.

He returned to Clarence in 1973 and coached Blue Devils football through the 1978 season. He also was freshman basketball coach. He retired as a physical education teacher in 1983.

Mr. Ransbury served as a part-time scout and a film grader for the Buffalo Bills from 1978 to 1985 and returned to UB as an assistant football coach from 1986 to 1989. He also scouted for the Chicago Bears.

Inducted onto the Clarence High School Wall of Fame in 2007, his citation says that he “set the standard for excellence in teaching and coaching.”

He also was inducted into the SUNY Brockport Athletic Hall of Fame in 1994, the Chautauqua County Sports Hall of Fame in 1996 and the Silver Creek High School Black Knights Hall of Fame in 2014.

He received UB’s Dick Offenhamer Award in 1988.

A longtime resident of the Dana Heights neighborhood in Amherst and a member of St. Gregory the Great Catholic Church, he and his wife moved to North Carolina in 1996 to be near their children and grandchildren.

In retirement, he focused on his golf game and shot three holes-in-one in North Carolina, said his son, Terry Ransbury Jr.

“He golfed his entire life,” said Ransbury Jr. “He was able to shoot his age, which isn’t easy. When he was 75, he shot a 74.”

Mr. Ransbury met the former Judith Marie Reimann, a secretary at her family’s demolition business, Reimann and Sons, one summer at their cottage in Sunset Bay. They were married in 1960. She died in 2015.

Survivors also include another son, Martin; a daughter, Robin Gray; a brother, David; and three grandchildren.

A celebration of his life will be held in the Buffalo area in the spring.