



# DELAWARE SPORTS MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DELAWARE SPORTS MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME  
WINTER · 2022

## DELAWARE SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTS 10 NEWEST MEMBERS

**WILMINGTON, Del.** – A nationally-celebrated writer, two college basketball stars, six distinguished coaches and a multisport impresario were inducted to the Delaware Sports Museum & Hall of Fame at a spectacular evening at the Chase Center on the Riverfront on November 10.

In an event delayed by 18 months by the pandemic, large in numbers but carefully spaced, sports figures from all three counties, born from 1935 to 1985, shared memories, anecdotes and emotions.

A crowd of over 400 attended the annual event. Tables of memorabilia highlighting outstanding careers in the world of sports were on display for each inductee and a lively social hour was followed by acceptance speeches from newest members of the Hall of Fame.

It was worth the wait.

### The DSMHOF Class of 2020-21 included:

**Mel Gardner** - A member of both the National High School Baseball Hall of Fame and Delaware Baseball Hall of Fame, he enjoyed outstanding success as head baseball coach at William Penn High School for 30 years and coached several major leaguers.

**Jack Gregory** – The first organizer and administrator of the Delaware Blue-Gold High School Football All-Star Game, he was a standout coach at the P.S. DuPont HS before moving to the college head coaching ranks at East Stroudsburg, Villanova, and Rhode Island and as athletic director at Bowling Green. He passed away in 2014. He was represented by his son, John.

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The DSMHOF Class of 2020-21. Seated (left to right): Mel Gardner, Tom Lemon, Tyresa Smith, Jerry Kobasa, Charles Rayne; Standing (left to right): George Kosanovich, Lou Romanoli, Gary Smith, Art Madric, John Gregory (representing Jack Gregory) (Photo by Mark Campbell)

## 46<sup>th</sup> Annual Banquet Scheduled for May 12

The 46th class of the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame is scheduled to be inducted on Thursday, May 12, at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington.

Like the 2021 banquet that proved successful, convivial and safe, the 2022 gala will be carefully planned, so that visitors to Delaware's biggest sports banquet can safely enjoy the company of each other, the new inductees, and sports personalities from across generations. Proof of vaccination and proper masking were popular and successful in November, and will be part of this spring's protocol.

Above all, there will be a new generation of inductees with stories and emotions to share.

Details on the banquet will be posted in the coming month on the Hall of Fame website at [www.desports.org](http://www.desports.org). Tickets will be available for purchase online at the website or by mailing in a check. Advertising opportunities will also be available for our always popular banquet program. Please contact DSMHOF Hall of Fame Executive Director Scott Selheimer at [desports@desports.org](mailto:desports@desports.org) for details.

## Membership Deadline Extended to Feb. 3rd

Membership in the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame must be procured or renewed by February 3rd (note deadline extension) for the member to be able to vote for the 2022 class that will stand for election in February.

Membership is just \$30 and can be secured online on our website at: [desports.org/membership](http://desports.org/membership). Those who prefer to pay by check can mail it to the Hall at 801 Shipyard Drive, Wilmington, DE 19801. Checks can be made out to DSMHOF and must have a postmark no later than Feb. 3rd.

Sustaining memberships, beginning at \$150, entitle you to give gift memberships to others.

All membership payments are tax-deductible charitable contributions.

Please contact DSMHOF Hall of Fame Executive Director Scott Selheimer at [desports@desports.org](mailto:desports@desports.org) with questions.

**Jerry Kobasa** – Enjoyed outstanding success as an athlete, coach, and administrator at the high school and college levels in Delaware in the sports of football, basketball, and baseball over a half-century. He is a member of four other athletic halls of fame within the state.

**George Kosanovich** – Over a span of 42 years as a high school football coach, won 264 games at Wilmington, McKean, and Concord to rank third all-time in state history. His teams won three state titles, made 11 tournament appearances, and several of his players went on to NFL careers.

**Tom Lemon** – A member of the St. Mark's High School and Delaware Baseball halls of fame, he served as baseball coach at St. Mark's for 16 years and led the Spartans to four state titles and eight championship game appearances.

**Art Madric** – His name is synonymous with success in track & field. He helped found the successful Wilmington Track Club, led Howard and Glasgow boys' and girls' high school teams to 11 state titles, and was named state Coach of the Year eight times.



A sellout crowd of over 400 guests, friends, and families filled the Chase Center (Photo by Mark Campbell)



Inductee Art Madric (third from right) celebrates with friends and family (Photo by Mark Campbell)

**Charles Rayne** – One of the top high school basketball players in state history, he led Indian River HS to two state titles, earned All-State honors three times, and was a four-year standout in college at Temple University, eventually being drafted by the NBA Phoenix Suns.

**Lou Romanoli** – Made his mark as a standout baseball player at UD and the Wilmington Semi-Pro League, in football with the Wilmington

Football League, as general manager of the Wilmington Blue Bombers in basketball, and as a marathon runner. Also contributed as a high school basketball official and officer with the DSMHOF.

**Gary Smith** – One of the nation's most prominent sportswriters, the Dickinson HS graduate has won four National Magazine Awards, the highest honor bestowed on magazine writers, the magazine equivalent of the Pulitzer Prize. He joined Sports Illustrated in 1982.

**Tyresa Smith** – A two-time All-State pick at Polytech High School, she went on to a Hall of Fame career at the University of Delaware where she earned all-conference honors, set numerous school records and led the team to the NCAA Tournament. She played in the WNBA and overseas.



## DELAWARE SPORTS MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME

Official Newsletter

Volume 1 / Edition 2

WINTER - 2022

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Willy Miranda, Mark White

Scott Selheimer, Executive Director

### OUR MISSION

The mission of the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame is to celebrate the history, preserve the legacy, and honor the heroes of the sports within Delaware and those who have brought recognition to Delaware by their accomplishments elsewhere. The membership strives to educate young and old about athletics, sportsmanship, and work ethic while providing inspiration to maintain active and healthy.

## IN MEMORIAM

Three inductees with distinguished records of community service and national renown have died.

**Dorothy Baker (right)**, for 21 years the Delaware State Chair for the U.S. Olympic Committee, died on September 2 at 91.



Under her stewardship, Delaware was the leading state in the nation in donations per capita in the campaigns to support the 1976, 1980, 1988, and 1992 Olympics. Dottie served on the USOC's board of directors for nearly a decade.

**Bill Thomson (below)**, one of the nation's leading track coaches and officials, died at 93 on November 5. The U.S. national women's hurdles coach from 1974-80, he was the head coach of the American men and women in their 1976 meet with the Soviets immediately after the Montréal Olympics, among many international competitions over two decades.

He refereed virtually every major American track meet, from the Penn Relays, where he was head high school referee for years, to NCAA and AAU championships, and with **Bob Behr**, established women's track in Delaware.

He received two of the sport's highest honors, the Jesse Owens Award and The Athletics Congress Presidential Award, and received the Herm Reitzes Award for Public Service from the Delaware Sportswriters and Broadcasters Association in



2010. Joining him as a fellow referee was Anne, his wife of 70 years.

**Ruly Carpenter (at left in photo below)**, an all-state athlete at Tower Hill and all-region baseball player at Yale who steered the Phillies' rise from the bottom of the National League to the World Series championship, died on September 13 at 81.

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## INDUCTEES IN ACTION

**Delino DeShields** (at center in photo at right) is entering his fourth season as first base coach of the Cincinnati Reds. He worked his way through the Reds' instructional circuit as manager of the Triple A Louisville Bats, Pensacola Blue Wahoos, Dayton Dragons and the Billings Mustangs. Delino was voted Delaware's athlete of the year in 1990, and followed with a 13-year major league career. All-state in three sports at Seaford, he graduated in 1987 as Delaware's all-time leading high school basketball scorer.



The Seaford School District Board of Education voted to name the Seaford High School gymnasium after **Ben Sirman**, its longtime athletic director, who continued to volunteer in the district after his retirement. A Laurel High School and Swarthmore College alumnus, Ben was athletic director for 20 years after building Bridgeville High school into a basketball powerhouse.

During his two decades as athletic director, the Blue Jays won 99 division, conference or state championships. Ben received the Herm Reitzes Award for service to sports from the Delaware Sportswriters and Broadcasters Association in 2009.



**Len Leshem** has been undertaking a virtual Lewes-to-Orlando Ride on his stationary bike at the Sussex Family YMCA to raise funds for Special Olympics Delaware, and its 29 athletes scheduled to compete in the Special Olympics USA Games in Orlando in June.

Len plans to cycle 930 miles in place, in his 34th year of raising funds for Special Olympics. Contributions to Special Olympics Delaware can be sent to Len at 209 Lakeside Drive, Lewes, DE 19958.

University of Maryland head coach **Missy Meharg** (at center in photo at right) became just the third NCAA Division I field hockey coach to attain 600 victories last October.

The former Tatnall School standout and University of Delaware All-American and Hall of Fame inductee has led the Terrapins to seven national championships, 26 conference titles, 19 trips to the Final Four and a 34-year record of 605-156-9.



## PURZYCKI, REILLY AND CEPHOUS HIGHLIGHT FOOTBALL GATHERING

Delaware's football fans enjoyed a preseason treat when inductees **Joe Purzycki**, **Kevin Reilly** and **Frank Cephus** discussed their careers and the state of the game at an August 24 gathering at the Ed Oliver Golf Club in Wilmington, organized by the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame.

Purzycki, who distinguished himself as a captain and All-American defensive back and football assistant coach at the University of Delaware, state champion coach at Caesar Rodney, and successful head coach at Delaware State and James Madison, described his tenure at Delaware State "the best four football years of my life."

Reilly, an all-state player at Salesianum, All-East linebacker at Villanova three-year NFL pro and longtime broadcaster, told of the special brotherhood among interior linemen, "the strongest bonds I ever experienced, even than what we had at Salesianum."

Cephus, all-state at St. Mark's, team-leading rusher at UCLA and NFL vet, told of his role in two Rose Bowl victories and the challenges of returning kicks for the New York Giants.

Purzycki and Reilly have co-authored dramatic books about pivotal points in their careers

Purzycki and Mike Gastineau wrote "Mr. Townsend & the Polish Prince," about the stress and success in Purzycki's tenure as the Hornets' coach, 1981-84, when DelState ascended from the bottom to the top of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference.

Reilly, with John Riley, wrote "Tackling Life: How Faith, Family and Fortitude Kept an NFL Linebacker in the Game" chronicling the challenges of rebuilding from the loss of left arm, shoulder, and five ribs to a desmoid tumor.

Stay tuned for future events celebrating Black History Month and Women's History Month as well as season preview events in football, basketball, field hockey, etc. as the DSMHOF looks to celebrate sports in the First State.

## PORKY OLIVER THE SUBJECT OF NEW BOOK

Inductee Ed (Porky) Oliver, Delaware's most celebrated golfer, is the subject of a new book by Delaware writer John Riley.

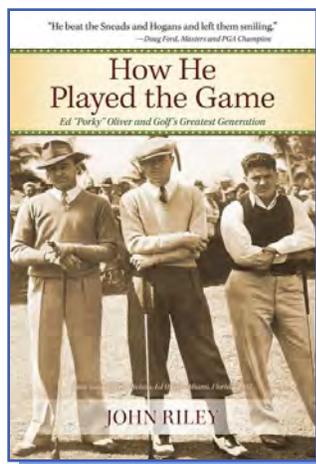
**How He Played the Game: Ed "Porky" Oliver and Golf's Greatest Generation**, available at <https://olivergolfbook.com/>, has earned favorable reviews since its December release.

Oliver, who learned the game as a caddy while a student at A. I. du Pont, was among the leading players on the pro golf circuit, "probably the greatest athlete to represent Delaware in national and international competition," according to *Morning News* sports editor Marty Levin, until his death at age 46 in 1961. Oliver was in the charter seven-member initial class inducted into the Delaware Sports Hall of Fame in 1976.

The book describes the development of the golf tour and provides insight to its legends and characters, through their all-night drives, roadside breakdowns and tragic accidents.

"Their ranks included hustlers, movie stars, Wimbledon champions, a World Series outfielder, and future legends of the game," says Riley, an award-winning writer since his retirement from the business world, "but the star *Sports Illustrated* called 'the most popular player on the circuit' was Porky Oliver."

Ken Venturi once called Oliver "the greatest ambassador to golf who ever played." Fellow touring pro Doug Ford recalled, "He beat the Sneads and Hogans and left them smiling."



## IN MEMORIAM

Continued from page 3

First-team all-state end for an undefeated football team, third-team all-state for a 15-1 basketball team and star pitcher for a 13-2 baseball team, Ruly was an American Studies major at Yale, where he lettered in football (all-Ivy Academic) and baseball (first-team all-New England leftfielder).

He returned home to become a key member of Brooks Armored Car's Semipro League champion team assembled by 2020-21 DSMHOF inductee **Lou Romanoli**, state handball champion and President of the Phillies, a last-place team when he assumed office, World Champions when his family sold the team in 1981.

He devoted himself as an evergreen supporter of Delaware sports, on the Boards of Trustees of University of Delaware and Tower Hill.

Three weeks after his induction into the Delaware Sports Museum and Hall of Fame, the Tower Hill team of which he was assistant coach won the state baseball championship. Shortly before his death, he was named as part of the initial class of the Tower Hill Athletic Hall of Fame.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

The Delaware Sports Museum & Hall of Fame would like to publicize all the great things its members and inductees are doing in their community and in the sports world. Have you been inducted into another Hall of Fame? Helping to lead a great community project that needs volunteers? We plan to feature a DSMHOF inductee in each of our quarterly newsletters moving forward.

So please reach out and let us know. Please contact us via email at [desports@desports.org](mailto:desports@desports.org).

## VISIT US

We would love to have you, your friends, family and colleagues visit us here at the Delaware Sports Museum & Hall of Fame this spring and summer.

We are located on the first base side of Frawley Stadium. Admission on gameday is always free. We are open two hours before each Blue Rocks home game. The Blue Rocks will open their 2022 season on Friday, April 8. As always, the Hall of Fame is open for guided tours throughout the year.

Contact us and reserve a spot by emailing [desports@desports.org](mailto:desports@desports.org) or by calling (302) 425-3263.

You can also visit our website at [www.desports.org](http://www.desports.org)