

**Delaware County Old Timers  
Athletes Association  
50th Anniversary**



**Delaware County Athletes Hall of Fame  
A Sports History**

COMPILED & WRITTEN  
by RICHARD PAGANO  
1989

This History Was Compiled  
And Written By  
Richard Pagano



Acknowledgements

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I am also grateful for the expert reporting by the Delaware County Daily Times and especially to writers: Matt Zabitka, Bob Finucane, Bob Franklin, Richard Westcott, Ed Gebhart, Gene Gomolka, Harry Chaykum and Chic Riebel.

Finally, this writer is deeply grateful for Matt Zabitka's eight-part series chronicling the first eighteen banquets. The series appeared in the Chester Times in January, 1958 and covered quite extensively those early years.



Tom Blythe  
Executive Director



Joe Cirilli  
Club Chairman

That banquet in 1940 was the birth of the Old Timers organization that exists today.

However, it was the second affair which was held on February 6, 1941, that supplied the spark to propel the Old Timers' banquets into the spotlight.

The Times sports section, commenting on the second annual banquet, reported, "It was a most momentous occasion, and out of the pleasurable affair may come a novel organization known as the Delaware County Sportsmen's Association to promote and encourage athletics of all kinds. Out of the newly planned association will come the sponsoring of the annual Sports Dinner at which time the outstanding athletes of our vicinity will be honored."

The advance sale of tickets for the second annual affair was so great that at the last minute it was switched to the more spacious Masonic Temple.

Bill Burk, sports editor of the Chester Times, served as toastmaster while Crosby Black, Jr. was banquet chairman. The guest of honor was Phillies executive, John Ogden. He was honored for his outstanding accomplishments in 25 years of baseball. Ogden was presented with a gold wrist watch by Charles (Pard) Larkin, on behalf of the Old Timers.

Dr. Leroy Mercer, the director of athletics and dean of men at the University of Pennsylvania, also gave a talk in which he spoke highly of Ogden. Mercer had coached both Ogden and Larkin during his days as director of athletics and coach at Swarthmore College.

Chester's Bill Dyer, one of radio's ace sportscasters, also spoke. He praised the remarkable turnout of great athletes and later interviewed six local stars who were being honored that night. All six had just broken into organized baseball. They were: Mickey Vernon, Danny Murtaugh,

Johnny Podgajny, Addis Copple, Larry File and Harry Mooris. Each one was presented with a portable radio.

Twelve members of the Chester Times boxing team were also introduced and honored. They included Johnny Drulick, Johnny Ackerson, Len Johns, Joe Aurillo, Wilson Bozman, Pete Ward, Mickey Ratay, Johnny Aillio, Lou Renai, Charles Burley, Lou Brooks and Eddie King.

The affair, attended by 300 people including Chester Mayor, Cliff Peoples, was such a success that its future was assured forever.

## CHAPTER II - THE EARLY YEARS

The third annual banquet was held on Tuesday, March 24, 1942. Joseph W. DeFuria was the banquet chairman, and his committee included Gordon MacDonald, Jack Booth, Tim McCarey, Bernard Gallagher, Charles Schenk, Newt Myers, Willard Reese, Howard Plummer, Crosby M. Black, Jr., Stephen Cloud, Addison (Bing) Wells, Joseph Pew, Ed Hilditch, Ray Shallet, Jack Lawson, Tom Briggs, Les Aaron, Thomas C. Cockill, Jr., Leach Baxter, Adam Smith, Andy MacMurtrie and Jack Logan.

The principal speakers were Pard Larkin, Chester High basketball coach, Ellis Dwyer and Times Sports Editor, William J. Burk.

The Chester Y.M.C.A.'s Physical Director, Adam Smith and the outstanding local schoolboy swimmer, Don DeForrest, were honored. Also honored were the most valuable players in the Chester Church and Sunday School Basketball Leagues.

Toastmaster Larkin and Chairman MacDonald were both honored at the fourth annual affair on February 10, 1943.

Also honored that night for outstanding accomplishments were boxers Dan Yokis and Manley (Tiny Tim) Laurence, swimmer Don DeForrest, Cross Country star Fred Wiley, bowlers Sam (Hap) Evans and Frank

The sixth annual banquet, held on Monday, February 5, 1945, was sold out two weeks in advance. Jack Stetser served as toastmaster, and the speakers were Mayor Ralph F. Swarts; Chester Times publisher Alfred G. Hill; Victor Boell; Emery Nelson and MacDonald.

The following schoolboy athletes were honored: Lee and Bill Garling of Ridley Township; Len Kleinman, Johnny Iacono, Jim Masticola and Bill Preston, all of Chester; Henry Sullivan of St. James; and Russ (Vic) Marler of Eddystone.

Others who received special awards included: Eddie Rosenberg, Chester's bowling champion; boxers Freddy Sammons, Frank Parramore and Leon Szymurski; expert shooter Hardy Wilbank and Wally Oglesby.

At the seventh annual show, held on Thursday, February 7, 1946, Dick MacDonald introduced the Old Timers individually and urged that Chester do something for its youth in the way of providing more playing space.

Guest speakers included President Judge MacDade, Judge Sweney, Mayor Swarts, Stetser, Clarence Conner, Walt Layer and Ellwood J. Turner, who proposed that the City of Chester get busy on building a huge sports palace.

The presentation of awards to the following athletes were: Joe Ward, Franny Desmond and Henry Sullivan, all of St. James; Ollie Thorpe of Chester; Jimmy Talbot; Jack Carr, ex-amateur boxing champion; bowlers Bill Gallagher and Jack Reed; Mickey McElwee, Eddystone High basketball star, and Joe Howanaki, All-Delco football player from Ridley Township.

Mickey Vernon, who won the American League batting title in 1946, was honored at the eighth annual dinner on Monday, January 27, 1947.

Also honored were five outstanding athletes, who were singled out for their extraordinary accomplishments. They were: Noah (Slick) Gethers

The "Most Outstanding Sportsmanship" award was inaugurated at this dinner by its founder, Daily Times writer Matt Zabitka. Zabitka even paid for the first award himself. The first winner was Sun Village's Eddie Dodds. The presentation was made by Bill Burk. Burk was also honored with a plaque in recognition of his service through his "Sports Shorts" column in the Chester Times. The column was dedicated to young men of Delaware County who served in World War II.

Scrolls were presented to 11 outstanding county athletes. The recipients included: Earl Wentzel, Eddystone basketball player; swimmer Don DeForrest; bowler Hal Messick, Media High all-around athlete Cliff Moat; Sol Tollin, Haverford College basketball star; St. James distance runner Jim Dugan; St. James bowler Jim Vershiuski; State skeet champion Skeets Watson, and Chester High athletes Joe Tiburzi, Ted Varano and Dick Parramore.

The guests included: Mayor Ralph F. Swarts, Woody Ludwig, Dick Madison, Danny Murtaugh, George Alston, Bris Lord, Bob Shultz, Kenneth Dale, Bob Finucane, Clifford Peoples, Dr. Edward Manning and George White.

William (Punch) Devenney did not attend the banquet because of an illness. It was the first affair he had missed since its inception.

The second "Most Outstanding Sportsman" award was given to the Rev. I. Walter Nall at the 10th annual banquet, held on Monday, February 7, 1949. Rev. Nall was the rector of Our Lady of Peace Church in Milmont Park.

The main speaker was George Earnshaw, who was a former pitcher for the Philadelphia Athletics. At the time of his talk, he was the pitching coach for the Philadelphia Phillies.

Earnshaw stated, "Baseball is not keeping pace with the challenge of T.V. It has not progressed with other forms of entertainment. Baseball must make the game more interesting and the surroundings more comfortable

Eddystone High swimmer; Robert (Buzzy Powell), All-Delco tackle from Eddystone High; Larry Pierce, All-Catholic end from St. James; Joe McNicholas, three sport star at Ridley Township High, Jim Arrington, Lloyd A.C. boxer from St. James; Don Fryer, Chester High's District I cross country champion; and John P. (Jack) Crawford, Chester High track coach.

The toastmaster for the 12th annual banquet on February 5, 1951, was again Pard Larkin. The principal speaker was Cy Perkins, bullpen coach for the Philadelphia Phillies.

The highlight of the evening was a tribute to the Seaboard Baseball Team of the 1904-12 era.

George Wallace, safety engineer at Penn Steel Castings Co., introduced the members of the team. They were: Tippy Martin, Skeets Watson, Lenz Boulden, Willard Kerr, Harry Hanby, Ernie Vinson, Grover Lane, Dick Berry, Jukie Ford, Vernon Touchstone, Al Hillborn, Doc Smith and Tinney Turner, who came from Ponca City, Oklahoma for the honor.

After the tribute, Wallace presented a silver trophy to Tippy Martin, who was the catcher on that fabulous team. Wallace had received the trophy when Seaboard won the championship of the Big Four League in 1911.

Otto Rosenblatt presented the "Most Outstanding Sportsman" award to Henry Fenza.

Also, William B. McClenachan, Jr. presented scrolls to local athletes. They included: Jimmy Lee, Chester High track star; Stan Woerth, Media basketball star; Jim Urey, five-sport star at Eddystone High; Jim Royer, All-Delco tackle at Ridley Township High; Jack Donnelly, All-Delco and All-Catholic guard from St. James; Jody Ambrosino, three-sport star at Chester High; Ralph Whittaker, fullback on the undefeated Upper

Ed Murphy, a well-known blind sportsman, made a surprise appearance at the dinner.

Norman A. Abrams, Assistant Postmaster General of the United States, was the main speaker at the 15th annual banquet. Three hundred people attended that dinner on Wednesday, January 20, 1954.

Abrams, a former outstanding local athlete, described the playing field as the "crucible" which develops our real leaders.

The seventh annual presentation of Delaware County's "Sportsman of the Year" award went to Prospect Park's Frank P. Witmer, Jr., for his outstanding contribution to sports for the young athlete.

A special award was given to General Chairman, Dick MacDonald, for his efforts in promoting the Old Timers and for his more than 50 years of work toward the advancement of sports.

Ed Murphy, who managed the great West End teams of the 1930's and is now blind, was honored as the "most courageous contributor to county sports."

Again, a trophy was presented to Mickey Vernon for leading the American League in hitting in 1953.

Also, the following members of the 1953 All-Delco football team were presented with scrolls. The recipients included: Dick Christy, Don VanHorn, Joe Pullekines, Henry Nacrelli and Tom DeFosse, all of St. James; Horace Hudnell and Dan Reid, both of Chester; Bob McElvey of Lansdowne, Paul DiPangrazio of Clifton Heights; R. F. (Bob) Johnson of Nether Providence, and Billy Ashton of Collingdale.

The Honorable John V. Diggins, associate judge of Delaware County, delivered the main address at the 16th annual banquet, held on Wednesday, January 19, 1955.

George Faulkner of Trainer was named "Sportsman of the Year."

The Delco Baseball League made the following presentations:



1960, the largest crowd ever.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of the 13th annual Andrew W. MacMurtrie Award to Joseph (Apples) Najmola. At 29 years of age, Najmola became the youngest recipient of the award.

Also honored were John (Skip) Gamble, a starring pitcher for the state championship Chester Suburban Little League team, the youngest athlete ever honored, and Hughie Coakly, the Grand Old Man of Baseball, who was inducted into the Distinguished Category of the Hall of Fame.

The main speaker was Frank Bettger, who, at the time, was billed as "Mr. Enthusiasm". Bettger had played baseball locally with Bill Alexander's Media team and Frank Poth's old Chester Club. He also had a fling in minor league ball for the St. Louis Cardinals.

At the age of 29, he became the amazement of the insurance business, and by the age of 41, Bettger was able to retire on the profits from his sales success.

The 22nd annual affair, held on Wednesday, February 1, 1961, was unprecedented in attendance (577 persons). The banquet was labeled "Pirates Night", because the Pirates' manager, Danny Murtaugh, and Pirates' coach, Mickey Vernon, were saluted.

There were also other professional athletes there including: Phillies pitcher Robin Roberts, Kansas City A's scout Lewis B. Krausse, Jr., Bobby Walston of the Philadelphia Eagles and New York Yankees batting practice pitcher Meredith (Spud) Murray.

The main speaker was Pard Larkin and Mike Thursttic was the winner of the "Outstanding Sportsman" award.

However, for the first time in 22 years, Dick MacDonald was unable to perform. He did attend but only for a few minutes. After receiving a standing ovation, the 80 year old MacDonald walked out the door and with him went the magic that he always contributed to the previous



BILL PRICE  
Program Chairman



PERCY HALL



Bill Maitland



Wm. Hewlings



EDWARD MORRELL  
Secretary



MANAGER DANNY MURTAUGH

sports in one capacity or another.

There were three standing ovations at the 26th annual banquet, held on Saturday, January 30, 1965.

The first ovation was for Chester's 1964 World Champion Bidy Basketball players and coaches.

The second time was for the main speaker, Captain William Busik from the United States Naval Academy.

The third time the Old Timers got up clapping was for the "Sportsman of the Year", Ernie Trosino.

Again, Rev. Agan offered a prayer for departed members - Hughie Coakley, Warren Ogden, Bristle Lord, William Price, Jr., Warren Pierce, William Harkins, Edward Lewis and Howard Kinder.

Some 400 Old Timers drove through a heavy snowstorm to attend the 27th annual banquet, held on January 25, 1966.

However, the snow did keep many people away, including the main speaker, Rickie Ashburn. Danny Murtaugh, a last minute replacement for Ashburn, kept the crowd laughing with his witty stories.

Dallas Green, the only scheduled speaker in attendance, drove two hours to get to the banquet. Green conducted a question and answer period in which he commented on the Phillies.

Old Timers at the 28th annual dinner witnessed two new induction categories. James (Baron) Dougherty was inducted into the sports promoters category, and John Ryan became the first sports writer to receive the honor.

Willie DeJarnette was announced as the "Sportsperson of the Year" and carried home the Andrew W. MacMurtrie Memorial Trophy.

Harold (Tubby) Raymond, lead football coach at the University of

High in 1941-42. He played pro football for fourteen years with the New York Giants and Green Bay Packers. He retired in 1961, and not long after that Emlen was named safety on the All-N.F.L. team which covered the fifty years of the league.

Walker was one of the youngest ever to be inducted into the Delaware County Hall of Fame. The three reasons he played at Chester High were referred to as "The Walker Era". During that time, Chester had a record of 76-6 and played in two state championship games.

At Michigan State, Horace was All-Big Ten twice and an All-American his senior year. In head-to-head battles, the 6'3" Walker outrebounded 6'11" Walt Bellamy, 6'9" Jerry Lucas and 6'7" Terry Dischinger.

The 1971 banquet, held on Wednesday, January 28, was "A Salute to Danny Murtaugh" night.

He told the Old Timers that he had been many places and received many awards, but that there was nothing to compare with being honored by the folks at home.

Former Philadelphia Phillies' broadcaster Bill Campbell was the main speaker, and Sharon Hill's Bob Wiederwax was named "Sportsman of the Year".

Five hundred strong gathered at the Central Y.M.C.A. for the Old Timers 33rd annual affair, held on Wednesday, January 26, 1972.

John Podgajny, who went on to a 20-37 record as a major league pitcher, died during the last year at the age of 50.

Podgajny, Murtaugh and Vernon were all honored at the banquet in 1941. At that time, they were struggling baseball players in the Eastern Shore League.

However, at the 33rd banquet, Murtaugh and Vernon were back where they started. Danny had just recently retired as manager of the Pirates. After winning two World Championships, he was just as humble

category of the Hall of Fame, while Henry (Shag) Crawford was inducted as an official.

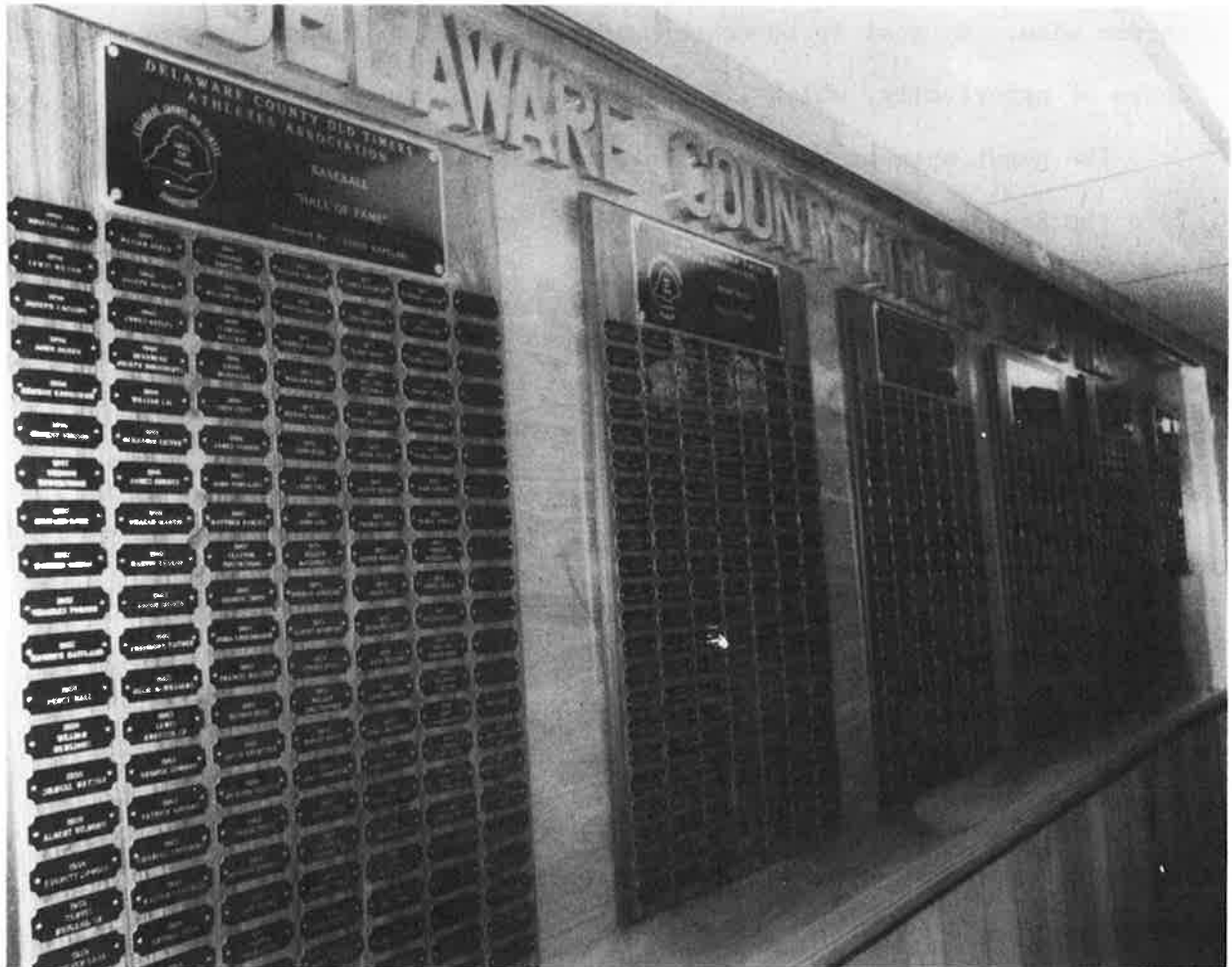
Bill Burk, who was scheduled to be the main speaker at the 36th annual affair, was in Good Samaritan Hospital recovering from a stroke. Burk was the former Chester Times sports editor.

More than 500 sportsmen were present in Widener College's MacMorland Center to witness a special tribute to John Ogden. Ogden was introduced by Dallas Green, manager of the Philadelphia Phillies farm system.

The "Outstanding High School Athlete of the Year Award" was given to Paul Pollock of Chester High, and Parkside Boys Club president, Tony Cornacchia, was named "Sportsman of the Year".

Also honored were the members of Chester High's 1936 undefeated football team and Ridley Township's 1948 undefeated football team.

Howard Painter announced that the Old Timers were sponsoring a member to the Dick MacDonald Memorial scholarship.



## CHAPTER VIII - THE FIRST WOMEN ARE INDUCTED

The 39th annual banquet was really special because it was the night that Virginia Allen and Helen Manchin became the first women inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Allen, who was inducted posthumously, helped introduce lacrosse in Delaware County after gaining All-American honors at Temple University in 1935. While coaching lacrosse at Swarthmore High School, her teams accumulated a string of 27 undefeated seasons.

Manchin was one of the first basketball players ever to play in the Philadelphia Catholic League. She led Notre Dame to the Philadelphia Gold Medal Tournament championship, earning Most Valuable Player honors for the tournament and leading the tournament in scoring.

Former National League umpire Tom Gorman was the main speaker at this historic banquet, held on Wednesday, January 11, 1978.

Gorman, who umpired in five World Series and five All-Star games during a 26 year career, had the crowd howling with his baseball tales.

The 2nd annual "Most Courageous Athlete Award" was presented to Cardinal O'Hara's Jim Boyd, who overcame a serious knee operation to gain a position in the O'Hara lineup after being told he would never play football again.

Jeff Newlings presented the William P. Hewlings Memorial Award to Sun Valley's Jeff Owsley.

The main speaker at the 40th annual banquet was Jacques Beauchamp, editor-in-chief of the Philadelphia Journal. Beauchamp had spent 30 years in the newspaper business. He worked for years at the editor of the Montreal Journal, and that was where he had met Mickey Vernon and Danny Murtaugh.

Beauchamp said, "The Montreal Expos were founded in 1969 and Mickey

High's William Hunsberger, while the William P. Hewlings Memorial Award was presented to A. J. DiPietro of Ridley High School.

Also, Joe Saltzman presented a salute to all of the Marcus Hook Old Time Athletes.

Some of the honored and invited guests were: Coach of the Year, Bob Ewing; Widener's head football coach, Bill Manlove; Temple University's Steve Joachin; Heisman Trophy winner, John Cappelletti and Joe Klecko of the New York Jets.

The guest speaker at the 42nd annual dinner, held on Saturday, January 31, 1981, was Jim Crowley. Crowley was one of the famous four horsemen at Notre Dame.

The high school awards went to Cardinal O'Hara's Marty Cull, who won the William P. Hewlings Memorial Award, and Penncrest's Barbara Jordan, who received the "Most Courageous Athlete of the Year" award.

The Delco Youth Association sponsored the "Sportsman of the Year" award, and Edward Gebhart made the presentation to Bernie Miller of Chester.

Some of the guests in attendance were: Football Coach of the Year, Hal Bauer; Tom Toner, All-American from the University of Delaware; William Grimes, General Manager of B.P. Petroleum Company and H. J. Schaefer, manager of B.P. Company.

The program for the 43rd annual affair was dedicated to Joe Klecko, the former St. James football player who had just come off an All-Pro season with the New York Jets.

The main speaker was Pat Williams who at that time was general manager of the Philadelphia 76ers.

Ridley's Dennis Borcky received the William P. Hewlings Memorial Award, and Danny White took home the Danny Murtaugh Memorial Award.

Also honored was Bill Manlove and his 1981 Widener football team

of Resurrection C.C.

Both of the high school awards went to Ridley High School products. Pat Randolph won the "Most Courageous" award, and Richard Deaver received the "Most Outstanding Athlete" award.

Some of the departed Old Timers were: John Valenti, John Imburgia, Percy Hall, Bernie Miller, Ralph Cella, George Lentz, Thomas Lykens, Tony Cornacchia and Pete Jaworski.

This would be the first banquet since 1940 that Pard Larkin would be absent from the head table. Because of his death, the duty of master of ceremonies was awarded to Ed Gebhart.

Former Eagles' player Pete Retzlaff, and Eagles' cornerback Randy Logan were the guest speakers at the 45th annual banquet held on June 6, 1984.





Award to Ted Dugan.

The following members died during the year: Cyril Beard, Jr., Daniel E. Clendening, John H. Fryer, Alfie Hannum, Lou Renzi and Anthony Tomasco.

The former Philadelphia Warrior's great, Paul Arizin, was the 2nd All-Time Great Pro Athlete honored at the 47th annual sports dinner, held on April 10, 1986.

Charles Steinmetz of Penn Wood High School received the "Most Outstanding High School Athlete" award, while Toselli Silvestri won the Danny Murtaugh Memorial Award.

Silvestri was a wrestler from Gallandent College. Gallandent, established in 1864, is the world's only liberal arts college exclusively for deaf students.

Daniel Bunel received the Andrew W. MacMurtrie Memorial Award. The guest speaker, Dick Jackman of Sun Oil, was unable to attend. Daily Times writer, Bob Finucane, filled in as speaker and had the crowd laughing until it hurt, recalling his two amateur fights.

The following Old Timers passed from the scene in 1985: John A. Hulme, Carl A. Ranck, Joseph Barrett, Patsy Marziotti, Bobby Burman, Walter J. Luzak, Edward Dodds, Sr., Fred Bort, E. R. Siegel, Michael Camillo, Robert M. Wiederwax, Frank "Lefty" Nye, Ruben Reed, John Bentley and Anthony "Chick" Kruszewski.

On November 12, 1986, the Delco Athletes Hall of Fame Club was incorporated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a non-profit organization.

Marcus Hook's pride and joy, James Barton "Mickey" Vernon was selected as the "All-Time Great Pro-Athlete" at the 48th annual banquet, held on Thursday, April 9, 1987.

Mickey, who retired at the age of 42, is one of fifteen major leaguers to have played in four different decades.

Ed Gebhart presented the Andrew W. MacMurtrie Memorial Award to both Gene and Camille DiSciullo.

A number of Old Timers did not make it through the year to experience the 50th Anniversary banquet that you are enjoying tonight. Those unfortunate members were: "Ducky" VanHorn, Robert L. Gibson, Jack McGillain, Joe Thunder, Samuel B. Pennington, Joe "Apples" Najomla, Harry E. Roberts, Jr., Joe Breen, James E. Gallagher, "Rube" ElPaso and Thomas W. Wilkins.

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary tonight, hopefully the writer and researcher of the future will record the highlights of tonight's banquet and future banquets.

What will he find during the 100th anniversary in 2039? Hopefully, he will find an organization that still bridges the understanding between the athletes of today and the athletes of yesterday.

May the writer of the future record accurately, so those who follow can build upon the rich heritage of the past.

By MATT ZABITKA  
The News Journal



The first Old Timers banquet I attended, which I believe was the last held in the cramped quarters of the old Chester YMCA, atop the Adams Clothes store at 7th & Edgmont Avenue, was in the early '50's.

It was quite a revelation, the memories of which have never left me.

The banquet hall, no larger than the size of three-four dozen city jail lockups, was jammed with people sitting on uncomfortable folding chairs. Tables had to be set up in an adjoining hallway to accommodate the overflow crowd.

It was a very hot evening and the Y had no air conditioning. Windows were opened to catch a breeze that wasn't there. Banquet goers loosened ties and fanned themselves with whatever means available as speaker after speaker droned out.

Many in the audience were spotted tip-toeing out of the room as the affair dragged on, unable to endure the heat and the oratory.

Finally, it came down to the final speaker of the evening, Dr. Karl Agan, and there was an explosion.

In a booming voice that bounced off the walls, rattled the windows and could probably be heard in the vicinity of the Stanley Theater many blocks away, Dr. Agan delivered one of the most inspiring talks I've ever heard at an Old Timers banquet.

Those who had exited earlier missed a classic.

Dr. Agan, his voice rushing over the audience like a tidal wave, extolled the virtues and richness of being an old timer. Too bad the

years earlier.

Straightening up in his chair, Murtaugh quipped, "If the Baron gets up I'm getting the hell out of here."

For me, it was just another in a series of wonderful remembrances I have stored in my memory bank.

Who would have ever thought that when the first banquet was held a half century ago, started I believe as a testimonial to former big league pitcher/scout/club owner John Ogden, it would be continuing into the 1980's and looking ahead to the '90's.

The Old Timers organization has welded the once-proud, and still proud, sports realm of Delaware County, Pa., into a strong bond that has kept alive the wonderful memories of yesteryear and not forgetting the present.

The organization is like a shining beacon in the darkness, the glue that has kept memories of yesteryears sports heroes come alive, even if only for one night a year.

It's people like Joe Cirilli, Tom Blythe, Ed Gebhart, Frank Pardusky, Walter Coppock, Frank Agatone, Joe Diggins, William "Hock" Greaves, Frank Holland, Henry Tipp, Frank Marzolla, John Miller, Dick Millichap, Howard Plummer, Joe Sweeney and Howard T. Painter that the organization has been able to continue.

A few of the aforementioned have passed away. Many of the others were still in grade school when the first banquet was held.

It is only because of the work and dedication of the few people behind the scene that a 50th anniversary banquet has become a reality.

I doff my hat in salute to those few who have done so much for so many through the years.

May there be at least 50 more banquets to follow, so that those in grade school today will some day benefit from the camaraderie that comes about in the golden years that follow.

