



Presents The
2014
Boys and Girls
State Basketball Championships

Dedication Ceremony

Saturday, March 22, 2014

Cabaret Theatre

Mohegan Sun, Uncasville

9:00am-10:15pm

Dedication Ceremony Program

Welcome

Dr. Karissa Niehoff – CAS-CIAC Executive Director

Robert Hale, Jr. – Principal, Westbrook High School
Chair, CIAC Board of Control

Sheila Riffle –Principal, Old Saybrook High School,
Chair, CIAC Girls Basketball Committee

Introductions

Sue Homrok-Lemke – Assistant Superintendent, Simsbury

Walter J. Zalaski – Chair, CIAC Boys Basketball Committee

2014 CIAC Boys & Girls Basketball Merit Awards

Dean DeAngelis – Official

Arthur Hamm – Official

Michael Pitruzzello – Athletic Director

Chris Manfredonia – Athletic Director

Tony Falzarano – Coach

Paulla Kolnaski Solar – Coach

Dedication Award

Matthew Fischer - Director of Technology Services
CAS-CIAC

Dean DeAngelis - Official

In his role as a basketball official, Dean DeAngelis has contributed significantly to high school basketball for forty-four years. He was born and raised in Hartford, CT, he was a member of the first graduating class at South Catholic High School where he was the school's first three sport letter winner in football, basketball and baseball. He continued his education at Fairfield University, majoring in accounting. A resident of Windsor for the past thirty-five years, Dean's family includes his son, James, brother, Dennis and his wife Lois, and their sons Carl and Matt.

Dean began his officiating career in 1971 at age 24. Joining IAABO Board #6, he first served with Board #6 commissioner, Walter Akerley, then Gerry McGrath and now with Ed Lynch.

In a short time, Dean developed into one of his Board's outstanding officials, often being assigned to key games in Hartford County. His professionalism is recognized and applauded by his peers. Dean is highly respected for the assistance and encouragement he continues to provide for officials, particularly in his long service as a member of the Board #6 Training Committee for new officials. Dean has been a member of the Board #6 Executive Committee for nine years and served as the Board's President during the 1998-1999 season.

As a CIAC tournament official for twenty-eight years, Dean's officiating skill and knowledge have contributed greatly to tournament games. His calm and professional demeanor create an atmosphere of confidence for players and coaches alike that the game will be administered with great competence and fairness. Dean has been

Dean DeAngelis - Continued

assigned to six CIAC finals, three in the girls tournament and three in the boys tournament. In his first tournament in 1985, Dean was assigned as the alternate official to work with legendary Board #6 officials John MacDonald and Walt Zalaski. Reflecting on his tournament experiences, Dean identified two games that are particularly memorable for him. One was officiating in his brother's first tournament game and the other was officiating the first CIAC final played at the Mohegan Sun Arena. Reflecting on his long career as an IAABO official, Dean said, "I have made many lifelong friends during my 40-plus year journey and I wouldn't trade that experience for anything."

IAABO Board #6 Commissioner, Ed Lynch, said, "Dean has been a mentor and friend of many over the past 40 years of officiating high school basketball. Dean has assisted schools in achieving their educating goals and the ideals of basketball for all student-athletes. Besides educating and training to become one of a few Board #6 greats, Dean possesses the quality of friendship with his brother officials."

Ed Batogowski, former Board #6, NBA and high level college official, once said of Dean, "I have watched Dean officiate for many, many years and what I admire most about him is his hustle, fairness and consistency each game I have seen him officiate."

Arthur Hamm - Official

Arthur Hamm's involvement in athletics has spanned five decades and has been marked by excellence and a remarkable record of service and sportsmanship. He is a 1963 graduate of Terryville High School, where he participated in baseball and basketball. Art attended the University of New Haven, playing basketball and baseball for two years before transferring to Southern Connecticut State University where he earned a bachelor of science degree in education in 1968. He holds two additional degrees from Southern Connecticut State University as well.

In the Terryville school district, Art taught sixth grade math for thirty-five years and served as the high school's varsity basketball coach for ten seasons, leading the Kangaroos to five Berkshire League titles and two state championships. Between 1988 and 1993, Art was Terryville's athletic director. Art earned the George Ganem Sportsmanship Award twice for his coaching. He was a member of the CIAC Boys Basketball Committee from 1980 and 1986.

Today we recognize Art as a stellar basketball official whose service to high school basketball and CIAC is extensive and impressive. He is a charter member of the Connecticut Association of Interscholastic Officials and the CIAC Sportsmanship Committee. He has been a member of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials (IAABO), Litchfield Board #7 since 1982 and served as its President from 1995 to 1997. Art was selected by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association to officiate its Senior All Star game in 1991 and 1998. In 2008, the Association named him Basketball Official of the Year. Art has officiated nine CIAC boys basketball finals.

As a soccer official, Art's career is peerless. He has been a referee for CIAC soccer finals for 40 consecutive years. Art has officiated the NCAA soccer finals in 1980 (Division III), in 1981 (Division II) and in 1987 (Division I). He has officiated National Collegiate Division I Club Championships from 2000 to the present. All of the honors Art has received for soccer officiating are too numerous to mention here but they include Connecticut Soccer High School Officials' Official of the Year (1985), Hugh Greer Distinguished Soccer Officials Award (1992), National Federation of Interscholastic Officials Soccer Official of the Year (1995, 1996, 1990), Paul Bourdeau Outstanding Soccer Service Award (2009); and, Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association Referee of the Year (2003). He officiated in the World Special Olympics in 1995 and in the Connecticut Special Olympics from 1996 and 2002. Art was awarded life membership in the Western Connecticut Soccer Officials Association in 2006. The association's boys sportsmanship award was named for him in 2009.

Art has been a baseball umpire as a member of the Central Connecticut Baseball Umpires Association since 1968. He was selected to umpire CIAC baseball finals in 1984, 1989, 2002, 2005, 2007, 2011 and 2013. In basketball, soccer and baseball, Art has officiated a total of 56 CIAC finals, including all three sports in one year (2012-13).

Arthur Hamm- Continued

Art's family includes two sons, Brian, 33, who is head baseball coach at Amherst College and Greg, 31, who is a corporate lawyer in New York City.

Art Hamm is universally respected in Connecticut sports arenas and beyond as a superior official whose lifetime of service in competitive athletics has been exemplary. The CIAC Boys Basketball Committee is proud to honor Art for his many contributions to CIAC and high school athletics.

Michael Pitruzzello – Athletic Director

During his forty plus years as an educator, coach, and athletic administrator, Mike has had a profound and lasting impact on the students, coaches, colleagues, programs and schools he has touched. He has earned the respect and admiration of all who know him and is most deserving of this recognition.

A 1967 graduate of Middletown High School where he excelled in football and baseball, Mike went on to play professional baseball in the Baltimore Orioles minor league system. After retiring from baseball, he earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at Central Connecticut State University and his administrative degree from Sacred Heart University. In 1973, he began his teaching and coaching career in the Cromwell Public Schools where he was a physical education teacher at Edna Stevens Elementary School before moving to Cromwell High School in 1990.. Mike also enjoyed an illustrious and successful career coaching soccer, basketball and baseball at Cromwell High School. He served as head boys soccer coach for twenty-six seasons (1980-2005) and amassed a 342-120-48 won-lost-tied record that included winning two CIAC state championships and seven league championships. As Cromwell's head baseball coach (1992-2005), Mike's squads won 220 of 321 games while garnering three league championships and appearing in two state finals. His tenure as head girls' basketball Coach (1980-1989) included a won-lost record of 152-67, one league championship and one state final appearance.

Mike became the athletic director at Cromwell High School in 1993 and served there until 2006 when he accepted the same position at Middletown High School. Under his leadership, Cromwell High School was awarded the Michaels Achievement Cup in 2005. In his role as athletic director at both schools, Mike has served on numerous CIAC, CHSCA and CSCA committees. He is a past president of both the Connecticut High School Coaches Association and the Connecticut Soccer Coaches Association. He is a member of the CIAC Boys and Girls Soccer Committees. In recent years, Mike has graciously hosted and served as site director for numerous CIAC tournaments at the outstanding Middletown High School athletics complex.

Mike has been recognized on numerous occasions for his coaching and administrative skills and efforts. In 2013, Mike received the Robert Duncanson Meritorious Service Award from the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors. In 2011, Mike was selected as the CHSCA's Outstanding "Athletic Director of the Year" and was a national finalist for the National High School Athletic Coaches Association's "Athletic Director of the Year" Award.

He was inducted into the Cromwell Athletic Club Hall of Fame and the Middletown Sports Hall of Fame in 2001. He was the CHSCA's Boys Soccer "Coach of the Year" in 1996, the CSCA's "Coach of the Year" in 1995 and the NHSACA's Boys Soccer "Coach of the Year" in 1999. Mike was inducted into the CHSCA Hall of Fame in 2003 and the Connecticut Soccer Hall of Fame in 2006.

Mike and his wife Monica live in Old Saybrook and have been married for forty-one years. They have two sons, Michael and Stephen.

Mike continues to go above and beyond to ensure that student-athletes have the best athletic experience possible and, for his many years of dedicated service, Mike is presented with a CIAC Merit Award for 2014.

Chris Manfredonia – Athletic Director

Chris Manfredonia has been making an impact in the lives of students in Fairfield County for nearly twenty years in a variety of roles. After graduating from Newtown High School and earning his undergraduate degree from Mt. St. Mary College and his master's degree from Southern CT State University he began his career as both a teacher and a coach in 2007 working in the Westport school district. He started a nine-year tenure as an assistant for the Staples High School girls basketball program while also spending five years as a health and physical education teacher at Bedford Middle School in Westport.

Beginning in 2002, Chris transitioned to a full-time role at Staples. As the newly appointed chair of the health and physical education department he oversaw a department for a school with an enrollment of approximately 1,900 students.

In 2006, after four years at Staples, Chris moved to his first athletic department role assuming the position of athletic director at Fairfield Warde High School. As it was at each stop along his career, his time at Fairfield Warde would be marked by tremendous on-field success and recognition for the strong all-around work of the athletics program. His tenure at Fairfield Warde, which spanned from 2006-2013, saw the school capture fourteen CIAC championships along with ten FCIAC titles. The achievements of the school's sports program extended far beyond its impressive win-loss record. The school routinely demonstrated commendable achievements in sportsmanship as evidenced by the girls basketball program earning the IAABO #9 officiating board's Swathfield Award for outstanding sports on two separate occasions.

In 2013, Chris took on a different position within the FCIAC becoming the Director of Health, Physical Education & Athletics for the Darien Public Schools. Darien has continued the on-field success exhibited by these schools previously under his leadership, earning six CIAC championships including a State Open title and three FCIAC championships.

Chris' leadership, selflessness, commitment and dedication have stretched well beyond his own school. A willing and generous contributor to several organizations including the CIAC, he routinely made his facilities available for the hosting of CIAC tournament competition which is critical to the success of the organization and its competitions. He also has been heavily involved with the FCIAC at his various stops, again making his facilities readily available for league tournament contests. He is a valuable contributor to the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors and currently serves as the FCIAC representative to the CAAD Board of Control. He is also serving a term as the chairperson of the FCIAC Girls Tennis Committee. Chris' dedication to his profession, his students and the CIAC make him an extremely deserving recipient of the 2014 CIAC Merit Award.

Tony Falzarano – Coach

Tony Falzarano has been on the sidelines of Connecticut's high school basketball courts for nearly forty years, establishing an impressive win-loss record. During those forty years, his teams have earned numerous conference championships and a state title while he amassed more than 600 career victories.

Tony began his run as a boys varsity basketball coach at Putnam High School after graduating from Bridgeport Central High School and St. Leo College. He would spend thirty-three years on the sidelines for Putnam, earning 535 victories, seven Quinebaug Valley Conference Championships, five Eastern Connecticut Conference Championships, three CIAC Class S Region I Championships, and, most notably, a CIAC Championship (1986) along with a pair of CIAC tournament runner-up performances.

Tony continued his coaching career with the boys basketball program at Tourtellotte Memorial in 2008 and it was there he reached another significant coaching milestone: he became just the third boys basketball coach in Connecticut history to reach 600 victories, something he accomplished this January. Tony's many achievements earned him election into the Connecticut High School Coaches Association (CHSCA) Hall of Fame in 2005 and the New England Coaching Hall of Fame in 2006.

Tony Falzarano – Continued

Tony has also been a valuable and selfless contributor to the basketball community throughout his career. He served as a member of the CIAC Boys Basketball Committee for ten years and was also a two-time selection as a coach for the CHSCA Senior All-Star game.

A devoted family man, Tony shares all of his coaching success with his wife, Carolyn, and is the proud father of daughters Caren and Crista. A mainstay of the Putnam community, he has been serving as mayor of the town since the election in November 2013. He was also a member of the Putnam Board of Finance for twenty-eight years, including nine as chairman. He also served five years on the Putnam Zoning Board and three years on the Putnam Zoning Board of Appeals, with two years as chair of that committee.

Tony has made a tremendous impact on and off the court during his distinguished career and earned this award of merit for his lifetime of contributions to the sport and his community.

Paulla Kolnaski Solar - Coach

Paulla Kolnaski Solar has been a staple of the Stonington school system and athletics community for more than thirty years. During that time her teams won seventy-percent of their games and captured a pair of CIAC championships.

Paulla earned both her bachelor and master of science degrees from Southern Connecticut State University and worked as a physical education and health teacher in the Stonington school system for thirty-five years before retiring five years ago.

Her coaching career began in 1973 as she assumed the girls varsity basketball position at Stonington and her teams embarked on a remarkable ten-year run of success. The program won its first CIAC championship in 1980, capping a 23-0 season. The unblemished season was part of a sixty-game regular-season unbeaten streak that also included numerous league championships. Paulla's teams sported a sparkling 123-36 record during her ten-year tenure and she also earned area coach of the year recognition.

Paula coached the 1982-83 season while pregnant with her first daughter, Tiffany, and then ceded her role as head coach for Stonington until 2000 as she spent time with her husband, Neil, and other daughters Brittany and Kacey. One of her former players took over the reins as the varsity coach while Paulla remained involved in the program. She was an assistant coach for Stonington when it made back-to-back appearances in the CIAC championship and claimed the program's second title in 1994; and, she worked with the freshman girls program for one season. She then spent two years as the head coach of the AAU Connecticut Storm before returning to Stonington in 2000 for her second tenure as head coach. Her return to the bench was as successful as the first with the team claiming a third state championship in 2006 after another trip to the finals in 2005. She was voted the area coach of the year on two more occasions and, in 2006, was elected to the Connecticut Women's Basketball Hall of Fame.

Paulla's numbers entering the 2013-14 season are staggering, with a win-loss record of 327-143 and her teams reaching the CIAC tournament in 21 of her 22 seasons while claiming a pair of state championships. She coached numerous Division II and Division III athletes as well as a trio of players who went on to play Division I college basketball.

Her work with student-athletes was not limited to her time at Stonington. She worked at a variety of camps and clinics throughout her career and created and organized a women's basketball league in Stonington that is still running after 11 years. Paulla's contributions to basketball and the community have been enormous and, with this award of merit, she adds another well-earned distinction.

Matt Fischer – Director of Technology Services



Matt Fischer became a fulltime CAS-CIAC employee in 2005 but he's been involved with the association since the 1990's. Throughout that time frame, he has been responsible for wholesale positive changes that have been immensely beneficial to student-athletes, coaches, fans and the organization as a whole.

A native of southern California and graduate of Washington State University, Matt began his professional career as the sports information director at San Francisco State University. He went on to serve as assistant athletic director/sports information director at Chapman College and completed two different stints with the San Francisco Giants, first as an assistant public relations director, then as director of the Major League Baseball Club's media relations department. During his tenure with the Giants, Matt coordinated the media efforts for the club's hosting of the 1984 All-Star Game and the 1989 World Series, which was famously interrupted when an earthquake struck the Bay Area moments before the scheduled start of the third game.

Shortly after moving to Connecticut in 1994, Matt founded e-fish solutions, inc., a full-service graphic design and web solutions firm. His first association with CAS-CIAC came in 1997 when his firm was chosen to design and launch the association's first website, and thus began the association's now 17-year reign as a technology leader among state associations. A founding member of the National Federation of High Schools Technology Committee, Matt has presented at several NFHS national meetings on a wide variety of topics.

Over the nearly twenty years he has been working with the organization, Matt has revamped and computerized nearly all CAS-CIAC operations, making them more efficient for both the central office staff and the constituents it serves. He developed the online eligibility center, the membership and committee databases, the legislative bill tracking system, and the online meeting registration system. Over 18 months he spearheaded the division of the association's online presence into separate websites for CAS and CIAC with a primary focus on making the sites user-friendly while providing mountains of information to fans, administrators, coaches, student-athletes and parents.

Matt's fingerprints and impact are apparent throughout tournament play. He played a key role in the implementation of the new basketball success-in-tournament factor established this year, and also took the lead working with PlayOn! Sports to develop the CIAC Network (now part of the NFHS Network) to provide streaming video coverage of tournament events. Those are just a couple of many examples of his technological expertise and the systems he created to enhance CIAC competition.

Matt's dedicated service to Connecticut sports has earned him numerous awards prior to today's honor, including the CAS-CIAC Appreciation Award for Excellence of Service and the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors Distinguished Service Outside the Field of Athletic Administration Award. His contributions have also earned him recognition from the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance, the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association and the Southeastern Connecticut Chapter of the National Football Foundation.

A Type 1 diabetic for nearly thirty years, Matt and his wife Linda have dedicated themselves to fundraising for the JDRF (Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation) Ride to Cure program, which strives to improve the lives and treatment of those living with the disease and work towards finding a cure. This summer they will be participating in their second JDRF century (100+ mile) bike ride in Vermont.

Matt and Linda have a daughter, Lisa, who is currently a sophomore on the honor roll in the film program at Fairfield University, and a son, Brian, whose both a varsity student-athlete on the Cheshire High School volleyball team and a fixture in the press box at CIAC championships, where he's worked alongside his father assisting the media.

Matt's demonstrated commitment to improving interscholastic activities and experiences through his innovation and creativity and his service to athletics in general and basketball in particular make him incredibly deserving of this recognition.

