

## WCSHOF 2021 Full Bios

### Living

#### Brice Allen, Track and Field/Cross-Country/Coaching (Eisenhower)

Brice Allen was a multi-sport athlete at Eisenhower, graduating in 1997. He earned three letters in basketball, three in track and field, two in football, and one in cross-country. He excelled mainly in distance running. He was the District-10 champion in the 3200-meter run, medaled at States, and twice won medals at States in the 3200 relay. He then went on to have a successful running career at Allegheny College, being named the team captain of both the track and cross-country teams.

After college, Brice had an extensive coaching career. He obtained his master's degree and coached at Northern Arizona University. He was the assistant track coach and the assistant cross-country coach for three years. Then he went on to the University of Louisville where he was the assistant track coach and assistant cross-country coach for seven years. His final coaching job was at the Ohio State University where he was associate head coach for both track and cross country for five years. In the fall of 2016, the Buckeyes excelled under the tutelage of Allen. The Scarlet and Gray won a team title at the season opening Queen City Invite, and they won a second-consecutive team title at the All-Ohio Championships.

On the track, Allen tutored Jared Fleming, a budding mid-distance athlete in the spring of 2015. At the 2015 Big Ten Indoor Championships, Fleming clocked the third-fastest time (1:49.28) in program history to swipe bronze in the 800m run. During the 2016 outdoor slate, Fleming etched his name in the record books once again claiming the third-best readout in program history in the 800m run with a time of 1:48.07 at the NCAA East Preliminaries. In the fall of 2015, Allen also signed the No. 4 mid-distance athlete in the nation in Alex Lomong of Fork Union, Va.

In the fall of 2014, Allen led a young Ohio State cross country team to a 10th-place finish at both the Big Ten and Great Lakes championships after losing No. 1 and No. 2 runners Nick Pupino and Jordan Redd to injury in the preseason. In his second season, Allen guided the cross-country team to an eighth-place finish at the Big Ten championships and a seventh-place finish at the NCAA Great Lakes regional championships.

In his first season at Ohio State, Allen helped guide Donny Roys to an NCAA-championship appearance during the cross-country season and Chris Fallon to the NCAA indoor and outdoor championships in the mile and 1500-meter events, respectively. Under Allen's training and coaching Fallon became just the 390th American to run a sub-four-minute mile. He finished with First Team All-America honors in the mile at the indoor championships.

### **Matt Benson, Track and Field/Basketball (Sheffield)**

A 1992 Sheffield High School graduate, Matt Benson's name has since been synonymous with the PIAA state championships and high jumping. Each year at the state track and field championships, Benson's name has been listed as the meet's record-holder at 7-foot-1; that's the height Benson cleared in May 1992 as a high school senior to win his second straight PIAA title. The previous year, as a junior, Benson won his first state title in Class AA with a high jump of 6-foot-8. That same year, Warren's Seth Meyers won his school's first individual state championship with the same height in Class AAA. Meyers is currently in the Warren County Sports Hall of Fame. Benson set the school and D-10 record in high jump the same year he set the state meet record.

"Since I had already won, I wanted to beat the Double-A state record, so we went to 6-10 1/2," Benson said of states in 1992. "I cleared ... easily. I wanted the best jump in the state next, so we went to 7-1. I was ready, but a little too excited. I missed twice... I got everything together and cleared it without touching the bar. That meant I would have been over at 7-2 or 7-3."

When Benson won his first state title, he had qualified by finishing third at 6-foot-8 at the District-10 meet. As a senior, he broke the D-10 and state record with a 7-foot jump to win the D-10 AA title.

Benson also excelled at high school basketball, finishing with 1,036 career points at Sheffield. He attended Wake Forest University on a track scholarship, setting the Wake Forest indoor track high jump record with a leap of 6' 9" in 1993.

### **John Bulicz, Football (Sheffield)**

John Bulicz was an outstanding football player for the Sheffield Wolverines in the mid-1960's. He was the star running back under coach Lou DeRubies during their 1964 undefeated season. Bulicz has very successful years during his high school career, but the 1964 season is where he really stood out. In 1964, Bulicz was named the Pennsylvania co-player of the year, and was 1<sup>st</sup> team All-State of the Associated Press poll, and 1<sup>st</sup> team on the United Press International Poll that year for the running back position. He was a 1964 High School All-American mention, the Big 30 player of the year, and led the entire state of Pennsylvania in points scored that year.

However, Bulicz's success did not end there. The 6-foot tall, 205 pound running back earned himself a full football scholarship to Syracuse University. Wearing number 46, Bulicz played tailback for the Orangemen and was a 3-year letter winner under legendary coach Ben Schwartzwalder. Bulicz played in the same backfield as Hall of Famers Floyd Little (Pro Football Hall of Fame, Class of 2010) and Larry Csonka (Pro Football Hall of Fame, Class of 1987). During his senior year at Syracuse, Bulicz received the Outstanding Senior Student Athlete Award. During his senior season at Syracuse, Bulicz had 46 rushing attempts for 244 yards (5.3 yards per carry) and 17 receptions for 167 yards, as well as averaged 12.8 yards per catch during his junior year. He played in every game during both the 1967 and 1968 seasons.

In addition to all of his football achievements, Bulicz was the 100-yard dash holder at Sheffield High School, was involved in the Hot Stove Baseball League, and graduated from Syracuse with a degree in History.

## **James Curren, Basketball (Warren)**

James Curren comes from a family that participated in sports. Football, basketball, wrestling, and running, just to name a few. By his sophomore season at Warren Area High School, James was intent on leaving his mark on the hardwood by carving out his own niche both within his own family, as well as at WAHS. As a senior in 2000, James received all-state recognition for his well-rounded game. He could pass, rebound, defend, and score while also being recognized as an unselfish player.

Whereas some athletes peak as seniors at their high school, James was just getting started, Warren County fans knew that he could play basketball at the next level. The AMCC Conference was about to find that out as well. Four years at Penn State Behrend (PSB) resulted in repeated recognition from his team, from the AMCC conference to the Great Lakes Region. From AMCC Newcomer of the year as a freshman, through four all-conference selections, to ultimately being selected Penn State Behrend's male athlete of the year his senior season, James steadily climbed up Behrend's all-time leading free throw, field goal, field-goal percentage, rebounding, and scoring lists.

In January of 2004, James broke the Penn State Behrend all-time leading scoring record on his home court at the Junker Center in Erie, PA, with numerous Warren County faithful in attendance. Many players went through Coach Dave Niland's successful program prior to James' arrival; none of them scored more points and few played on the same all-around level as James did throughout his career. James capped his senior season as the AMCC Player of the Year, as well as First Team All Great Lakes Region status. His 1726 career points still rank second all-time as of 2020. James is also a member of the Penn State Behrend Athletics Hall of Fame.

### **Michelle DiPenti, Track and Field/Cross Country (Warren)**

Michelle DiPenti earned 8 varsity letters (track and field 4; cross country 3; basketball 1) during her athletic career at WAHS from 1996-1999.

She played basketball during her freshman, sophomore, and junior years, earning a varsity letter her junior year.

Michelle ran cross country her last 3 years of high school, earning varsity letters each year. As a senior, she was a member of the WAHS girls' team that placed 2<sup>nd</sup> (lead by teammate Cindy Dunham) at the District-10 XC Championships which earned them a trip to the PIAA state championship race. Michelle finished 103<sup>rd</sup> out of 272 runners, helping the Dragons finish 16<sup>th</sup> of 23 total teams.

Michelle competed and lettered in track and field all 4 years of high school. As a freshman, she qualified for Districts in the 4x800m relay (finished 2<sup>nd</sup>) and the 1600m (finished 3<sup>rd</sup>). As a sophomore, she was a District qualifier in the 4x800m relay, 1600m, and 800m. Michelle qualified for Districts in those same events as a junior. She was a member of the winning 4x800meter relay team and set a school record of 9:41 that still stands today. Michelle won the 1600m with a time of 5:10, setting a new school record. She went on to place 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 1600m finals at the PIAA Championships and broke her own record with a 5:01 that still stands today.

She earned a Division-1 track and field scholarship to George Mason University. Michelle competed in XC and indoor/outdoor track all four years while at GMU. During her sophomore year, Michelle qualified for the Indoor ECAC Championships in the 4x800m relay. In 2002, she placed 10<sup>th</sup> at the Colonial Athletic Association Conference Cross Country Championships, which earned her All-ACC honors. In 2003, Michelle was on the winning 4x800m relay team and placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1000m at the GMU Collegiate Indoor Open in February 2003. Also, during her senior year at GMU, she qualified for the Outdoor ECAC Championships in the 4x800m relay.

## **Hallie Bunk-Dubia, Golf, Basketball, Softball (Warren)**

Hallie (Bunk) Dubia has been in the sports spotlight since she was eight years old. From youth swimming at the YMCA, a very successful high school sports career, going on to letter in three varsity sports at Penn State Main Campus, and being a double-digit club championship winner, Hallie is one of the most successful multi-sport athletes in Warren County sports history.

Hallie was so successful during her time at Penn State University (Main Campus) that she has a commemorative “brick” in the Penn State Sports Museum for lettering in three sports- basketball, golf, and softball. During her college years, Hallie started on the women’s basketball, golf, and softball team for the PSU Lady Lions. In basketball, Dubia lettered as a 3-year starter (including her Freshman year) on the Penn State Lady Lions team. She averaged just shy of 10 points a game and was the Co-Captain her Junior year. She also notched two 27-point games (career high) during her time at PSU. Hallie’s golf career at PSU was also fantastic. She lettered as a 3-year starter for the Lady Lions Golf Team and competed in 2 National Finals Tournaments in 1976 and 1978. Dubia also lettered one season as a regular on the PSU Lady Lions Softball Team.

Post-college, Hallie has won 10 Ladies Club Championships at Conewango Valley Country Club since 2005 and has also won the Warren County Open 4 times (one at each golf course in the county). She has won the Ladies Club Championship at the Patrick Air Force Base Golf Course 5 times. Dubia also holds the course record on both golf courses at the Chautauqua Institute (2-under par 70 on the Hill Course, and 6-under par 68 on the Lake Course). In 1999, Hallie broke the course record at the U.S. Army War College golf course in Carlisle, PA (4-under par 68).

In high school, Hallie was a force on the basketball court- scoring 400 points during her 16-game senior season (1973) for an average of 25 points per game. Dubia also won the District Title in the shot-put event her senior year, and was a standout youth swimmer at the YMCA, capturing numerous District events. She had a 4<sup>th</sup> place finish at the State finals in the freestyle event, and at one point held numerous freestyle record in the Prep and Junior Divisions at the (old) Warren YMCA. Hallie (Bunk) Dubia’s athletic career is outstanding to say the least. Today, you will find her golfing almost every day at Conewango Valley Country Club with her husband Colonel Don Dubia.

## **Kelly Fredericks, Football (Warren)**

Fredericks was a natural athlete, the kind that was so good that, after watching him play, you would swear that everything was so *easy* for him. Indeed, at Warren Area High School, Fredericks was a three-sport star who could run over, or away from, anyone on the gridiron, hit a baseball as far as anybody and posterize a defender on the basketball court with an in-your-face jam.

At 6-3 and over 200 pounds, Fredericks was the starting quarterback on Toby Shea's undefeated 1976 Warren Dragon football team. He completed 27 passes and threw for 9 touchdowns on a team that featured the run and had 5 interceptions as a defensive back. He was named to the Northwest Conference first team as quarterback and was an honorable mention on the all-state team. In 1977, his senior season, Fredericks was selected as second team all-state as a defensive back and was a Big 33 nominee. His record as starting QB was 20-1. He had outstanding speed and rushed for 15 touchdowns his senior year. He was also the Dragons' place kicker.

A blue-chip prospect, Fredericks was recruited heavily by several Division 1-A schools and accepted a full scholarship to play football at Penn State. There he saw action on special teams and as a linebacker. In the 1980 Blue/White Game, Fredericks was selected as Most Valuable Player. He graduated from Penn State with a degree in Civil Engineering.

Fredericks was also a starter on the Warren Dragon basketball and baseball teams. Even if statistics were available about his scoring or batting averages, they wouldn't do justice in describing his talent. Fredericks was dominant inside the paint and could just as easily pull up and hit a 15-foot jumper or outrun everyone else on a fast break. His slugging percentage in baseball had to be one of the best in Warren history. When he made solid contact, the ball was going over the fence. *Way* over the fence. And anyone who witnessed it would talk about what they saw years after the fact. Likewise, on the football field, people might not recall how many tackles he might have made, but if you saw him play, you would recall how *hard* he could hit people, and how *easy* he made it look.

### **Elisha Jones-Kushner, Basketball/Track and Field (Eisenhower)**

Now 32 years of age, Elisha Jones-Kushner graduated from Eisenhower High School in 2007 as one of the most decorated high school athletes in Warren County history. Jones led the Knights' girls basketball team to multiple state playoff berths as a multiple-time region player of the year (2006 and 2007) and District-10 and all-state all-star. Along the way, Jones — playing for coach Dave Allenson — became Warren County's and Eisenhower's all-time scoring leader with 1,822 career points.

As accomplished as Jones was in basketball, she may have been even more so in track and field. She was a 4-time PIAA state medalist in track, including a 2005 state champion in javelin, runner-up in 2006, and third in 2007. She also earned a state medal in discus for finishing sixth in 2007. Jones was a 4-time D-10 track & field champion (3 times in javelin, once in long jump), and a three-time region athlete of the year in track and field. Jones holds Eisenhower school records in javelin (146 feet, 4 inches), long jump (16-10 1/4), and triple jump (35-5), and broke Warren County and District-10 records in javelin. She was awarded MVP in the field all four years she competed in the All-County Track Meet. On state and national scales, Jones was Penn Relay champion in javelin in 2005, and runner-up in 2006 at the Nike Outdoor Track & Field Championships. That was winter and spring. In the fall, Jones was a four-time region all-star in volleyball.

After high school, Jones participated in both basketball and track and field at Division 3 Waynesburg University. In hoops, she was named first-team all-Presidents' Athletic Conference in 2011, second-team in 2009 and 2010, and Honorable Mention in 2008. She finished with 1,372 career points, fourth all-time at Waynesburg, and broke the school record with 150 blocks as a four-year starter.

In 2014, Jones was named to the PAC 60th Anniversary Women's All-Time Team. In track and field, Jones was named an NCAA D3 All-American twice in javelin and was a 3-time conference champion and NCAA qualifier. She broke Waynesburg University's javelin record with a throw of 44.40 meters in 2010. Jones was a PAC Academic Honor Roll recipient all four years. After college, Jones would play cornerback for the Pittsburgh Passion women's professional football team (2013).

### **Aaron Lanzel, Track/Coaching (Eisenhower)**

Aaron Lanzel had a very successful career as an Eisenhower distance runner. He was the 1999 PIAA state champion in the 800-meter run for AA schools with a time of 1:56.97. Where Lanzel really made his strides was when he attended the Naval Academy.

Lanzel started his running career at the United States Naval Academy in the Fall of 1999. He was the captain of the 2002 cross country team and of the 2003 outdoor track and field team. One of his most significant accomplishments was being a member of the fastest indoor distance medley relay team in Navy history with a time of 9:39.17 and is even a top 10 time holder in the 1500-meter run with a time of 3:44.25. Upon concluding his collegiate career, Lanzel was awarded the Class of 2003 Naval Academy Athletic Association Sword. Receiving this sword meant that Lanzel contributed the most to athletics during his four years at the Naval Academy.

But Aaron Lanzel was just heating up. He ran a sub-4:00 mile to make time to compete in national track and field events. Perhaps his most significant individual achievement was earning his way into the semifinals of the 2004 Olympic Trials for the United States in the 1500-meter run. Lanzel is just one of eleven United States Naval Academy graduates to have competed in either the Olympics or the Olympic Trials for the United States.

Lanzel has also competed on the U.S. Military World team in cross country in 2006 (in Tunisia), 2008 (Switzerland), 2010 (Belgium), and in track in 2003 (Italy) and 2011 (Brazil). In 2018, he became Naval Academy's 5<sup>th</sup> ever cross-country head coach. His coaching accomplishments include coaching the 2019 squad to the Navy Invitational title, Army-Navy Star Meet title, and a second-place finish at the Patriot League Championship. Lanzel was awarded the 2020 USTFCCA (United States Track Field and Cross Country Coaches Association) Mid-Atlantic Region Men's Assistant Coach of the Year award.

### **Joe Letko, Coaching (Eisenhower)**

Coach Joe Letko was a staple in Eisenhower Athletics for many years. He started his coaching career at Eisenhower High School as an assistant coach for the 1972-73 season, later became the head coach for the 1978-79 season, and retired in 2003.

He got his 100<sup>th</sup> win on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1993. Letko coached the Knights to two undefeated seasons in 1994 and 1995, as well as placed in the top 3 in every tournament for those years. He was named the section coach of the year three times, the District-10 coach of the year two times, and received the District-10 Coaches Recognition Award.

In addition, he coached over 30 section champions, 2 District champions, and 1 regional champion. Letko coached two state-place winners (Travis Hummel and Matt Burlingame). His impact on his former wrestlers led some to coach wrestling including Kris Black, Travis Hummel, and Drew Wilcox.

A Lock Haven College graduate, Joe's passion in the sport paid off when he was awarded for his 100<sup>th</sup> victory with a plaque by the Pennsylvania Wrestling Coaches Association. His team's 27-win match winning streak came to an end at Warren High School in front of a capacity crowd that was ironically coached by Tony Ross, his mentor and friend.

During his tenure, Coach Letko had the fortune of coaching his son, Joe, who became the Knights' first 100+ match-winner. Letko went to the state championships eight times- coming away with two bronze medalists- Travis Hummel and Matt Burlingame.

Coach Letko left quite a legacy upon his retirement in 2003. His passion and love for the sport of wrestling was contagious- and his records and past wrestlers he coached are proof that one person's influence can impact so many people.

### **Ben Maljovec, Football/Track and Field (Warren)**

Ben Maljovec was a multi-sport athlete during his time at Warren Area High School. He was a standout in every sport he played: football, basketball, and track and field. During his junior year of track, he made it to the final heat of the 2003 PIAA 110-meter hurdles event with the 4<sup>th</sup> fastest time in the semifinals. He finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the state for class AAA that year. Ben was the 2004 110-meter hurdle D-10 Champion with time of 14.03 (which is also the fastest time ever recorded for the 110-meter hurdles at the D-10 championships) and was a PIAA state qualifier in the event his senior year. In addition to winning the 2004 110 hurdles event, he doubled down and won the 300-meter hurdles that same year with a time of 40.18. He also competed in the high jump, had a personal record jump of 6 foot 4 inches, and finished 12<sup>th</sup> in the state of PA in class AAA his senior year for the event.

Ben was also a standout on the football field. In high school he was a 2003 first-team all-state, made the PrepStar All-East Region team, and first-team all-conference on offense and defense as a senior. Maljovec was rated Pennsylvania's 29th-best prospect by SuperPrep, threw for five touchdowns and rushed for 1,386 yards and 23 touchdowns while averaging 9.6 yards per carry as an option quarterback in 2003. He recorded 47 tackles, three interceptions and 10 pass breakups as a senior and was named 2002 first-team all-conference as a quarterback and second-team all-conference as a cornerback. He set single-season school record with 25 touchdowns in 2002 and was the team captain as a senior. His career statistics include: 4,134 yards of total offense, including 2,970 rushing yards (8.4 yards per carry), 1,092 passing yards (21.4 yards per completion), 72 receiving yards (18 yards per reception) and 60 touchdowns (44 rushing and 14 passing). He also recorded 153 career tackles, including 87 solo stops, and had two fumble recoveries and six interceptions

Ben also received a full athletic scholarship to play football at Syracuse University. During his junior year, he played in 10 games, including six starts. Against Washington, he had seven tackles, including four assists, in his first career start. At Louisville, Maljovec became the first SU player since Terrell Lemon (vs. Wyoming, 2006) to recover two fumbles in a game. At Miami (OH), posted a career-high 12 tackles, including seven solo. Lastly against Rutgers, he recorded his third career interception and returned it 52 yards, setting up SU's first touchdown of the game and finished with three tackles, including one for loss.

Ben's senior year at Syracuse included him playing all 12 games, on offense and special teams, and made one start. He moved to tight end from linebacker prior to the 2008 Spring Practice and earned his first start at tight end against Penn State University, recording one reception for seven yards.

### **Jimmy Olson, Baseball (Warren)**

An extremely talented and confident athlete, Jimmie Olson was a standout from the time he was in grade school, winning Punt, Pass and Kick trophies and making little league all-star teams. At Beaty Junior High School, he was an outstanding football and basketball player and pole-vaulter on the track team. He added to his resume at Warren Area High School as a starting quarterback who also made all-state honorable mention as a defensive back and punter. But it was on the baseball diamond that Jimmie Olson would really shine.

Olson was a pitcher and shortstop for the Warren Dragons and for the Warren Post 135 American Legion team. A 1981 WAHS graduate, he was a perennial all-star in Legion ball, won the Edward T. Hoak MVP award at Three Rivers Stadium in the Western Pennsylvania American Legion All-Star Game, and was voted MVP runner-up in Reading at the American Legion Pennsylvania All-State All-Star Game. He caught the eye of several major league baseball scouts, and was contacted by the Cincinnati Reds, Pittsburgh Pirates, Montreal Expos and Atlanta Braves. He signed a contract with the Philadelphia Phillies and pitched for the Bend, Oregon Phillies (1982), Spartanburg, South Carolina Spinners ('83), and Reading, Pa Phillies ('84-'85). Olson battled injuries but recovered, and closed out his career with the Burlington, Iowa Expos in 1987.

Most pitchers, especially pitchers who throw with a lot of velocity, stand at least 6-2. Jimmie Olson could throw some heat. What an arm he had. One scout described him as "overpowering." Olson's fastball was clocked at 95 miles per hour, though he was only 5-10 and weighed 165. But he had excellent mechanics and knew how to generate power from his hips and legs. Besides a blazing fastball, he also had a great slider. Olson was a dedicated and very outgoing player, and always gave credit to his teammates and coaches for helping him to be successful.

### **Todd Reynolds, Coaching/Wrestling (Warren)**

Todd Reynolds was a 1985 graduate of Warren Area High School. He excelled in wrestling and cross country during his tenure at Warren High. His high school wrestling career consisted of Todd being a 4-year letterman, 2-year captain, Section, District, and Region Champion. He also compiled over 80 career wins during a time when matches were limited. Todd had a 78% winning percentage and was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Region Champion in Warren High School history. During his senior year, Reynolds accumulated an undefeated record of 29-0, going into the State Wrestling Tournament, and won the Joe Kellog Award every year of high school (an accomplishment previously awarded only seniors). Todd also went on to wrestle for 3 years at Thiel College.

Todd's coaching resume is nothing short of fantastic. Todd is a 4-time National District coach of the year. He has coached for over 20 years in the state of Virginia. Reynolds has coached over 50 District Champions, over 15 Region Champions, and 5 State Champions. In those 20+ years, Reynolds has coached 5 State runner ups, coached the Virginia National Team, as well as 3 All-Americans. At the team level, Todd has coached 7 District Team Champions, 1 Region Team Champion, and 1 State Team runner up.

Todd can be seen running the scorer's tables at the NCAA Division 1 ACC Wrestling Championships. Reynolds also graduated Magna Cum Laude from Edinboro University with a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and has a master's degree from George Mason University in Instruction Technology.

### **Ed "Wink" Rickerson, Baseball (Warren)**

Where to begin with the athletic prowess of Ed 'Wink' Rickerson is hard to come up with. The Warren County legend enjoyed a brief professional career with the Cleveland Indians organization, also playing for the Warren Bombers, Ludlow Wildcats and Kinzua. It all started in Little League, where his first signature performance came for his Western Auto Team in striking out 20 of 21 batters in the league championship game.

He played with the Warren Bombers for two years, beginning at age 15, and briefly with the Kansas City Monarchs, where he played with Ernie Banks a week before Banks was signed by the Chicago Cubs. He pitched the Ludlow Wildcats (Penn York League) team to a league championship by firing a 1-hitter. He played for North Platte in 1957 and Batavia in 1958 in the Indians' organization, compiling a .273 batting average.

In basketball, as a freshman at Warren Area High School he broke a school record by scoring 39 points in a game. In 1959-60, he played with the House of David professional traveling team. The team had to grow beards, traveled through the south, and ended in Texas. They accumulated 122 wins and 11 losses.

As an adult, he played in several softball leagues throughout the years and was the Manager of the Warren Beverage Basketball team in 1963. He also played in the YMCA Y5 League, scoring 505 points during a season. He is a lifetime member of the Jamestown Old-Timers (Over 50) league, playing until age 65 and also coached American Legion Baseball in Warren County.

### **Lori Daff-Siggins, Officiating/Softball (Warren)**

Lori Daff-Siggins was a multi-sport athlete at Warren Area High School. Her athletic career started at a young age when she began swimming on the Warren YMCA Blue Devil swim team from age three until age twelve. During her time as a swimmer, she earned a variety of medals and awards in both team and individual categories.

Lori was also an important role player on the Warren Area High School girls' basketball team. She played alongside current Warren County Sports Hall of Fame inductee Kim Mong-Main (Class of 1995). She lettered in all four years of her playing career and played an important role in the team's successes. Lori also played and started on the women's volleyball team, lettering for three years.

But Lori's true passion was softball. She went beyond playing in high school to be a four-year starter on the Muskingum College's women's softball team. During her tenure, she earned all-conference and all-region honors. She was also nominated for the prestigious All-American status for softball her senior year. During her time at Muskingum College, Lori was also a three-year starter on the women's volleyball team and played a pivotal role during the team's success.

Last but not least, Daff-Siggins loved to umpire softball. She retired from umpiring after an 18-year career as a men's softball (fast pitch/slow pitch) umpire in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She was also an umpire during the Canadian Cup International Softball Tournament in Toronto, Canada (an event that featured some of the best female softball players around the world). She was also involved in the Pam Berry Memorial Tournament in Morgantown, West Virginia, as well as the Senior Olympics held in Pittsburgh, PA.

Lori currently has been a Financial Advisor, providing wealth management advice, since 2002. She is the creator of Lions Gate Wealth Management's Investment Process, Retirement Income Strategy, and Action Plan in Wexford, PA.

### **Dean Spiridon Jr., Trap Shooting (Warren)**

The list of achievements and accomplishments of Dean Spiridon Jr. are very extensive. Dean is a world-class trap shooter who has had success not only at the state level, but at the national level as well. Spiridon is a four-time Amateur Trapshooting Association All-American selection (1997, 1999, 2000, and 2001). He is also a five-time All-Pennsylvania State Trapshooting Team Junior Selection (1997-2001), as well as a six-time All-Virginia State Trapshooting Team Men's selection (2006, 2007, 2009, 2013-2015).

Dean's trapshooting major tournament victories include the following: Grand American World Trapshooting Championships: 2 championship event wins, 2 preliminary event wins and one team championship, Eastern Zone (U.S.) Championships; 5 Championship event wins, as well as 8 other event wins. He has also won the Pennsylvania State Championships: 17 Championship event wins and has won the Virginia State Championships: 5 Championship event wins, as well as 10 other event wins since moving to Virginia in 2005. Spiridon also captured 8 wins from the Northeast Satellite Grand American championships and went on to set the sub-Junior record in the Doubles Championship and High All-Around which stood for almost 20 years. He also has state championship titles in Ohio, New York, Maryland, West Virginia, and even Ontario, Canada including Southern (U.S.) Zone, Keystone Open, PA Grand, Colonial Classic: 15-18 championship event wins and 10+ other event wins. Adding to this, he has won numerous Bradford Case Knife and Zippo Shoots, as well as PA Western Zone: 8+ championship event wins, the Dixie Satellite Grand American: 2 other event wins, and lastly dozens of wins throughout the years of shooting at local clubs.

He has also been involved in the Warren County Summer Trap League, Chautauqua County Summer League, a Penn York Winter Trap League participant for Pine Grove Sportsmen's Club and Busti Trap Club, as well as top 10 in the league and several high sub-Junior and high-Junior throughout the years. He is the founder and current director of the Virginia Youth Trapshooting League since 2015.

Spiridon is a member of the Virginia Trapshooting Hall of Fame (board member since 2017), the founder of the Trap App (Trapshooting's first mobile phone app) and was even the President and Assistant Coach (2001-04) of the Penn State Baseball Club.

Dean has been selected to four Amateur Trapshooting Association (ATA) All-American teams and eleven all-state (PA and VA) teams, competing both at the youth and adult levels since 1993. He has shot over 112,000 ATA-registered competition targets, winning events at the local, state, regional, and national levels.

Not only are his skill and personal shooting accomplishments fantastic, but he has also taken an active role in giving back to the sport that he loves. In 2014, he started a youth shooting team at his local club and then grew that into a state-wide youth trapshooting league the following year. Dean has also been a board member of the Virginia Trapshooting Hall of Fame, which both recognizes successful trap shooters in Virginia as well as promotes youth trapshooting.

**Lonnie Styles, Baseball (Tidioute)**

Lonnie Styles is a 1976 graduate of Tidioute High School where he was a two-sport athlete. He was a 3-year letter winner in basketball along with being a three-time Upper Allegheny Valley League All Star. In baseball, he was a four-year letter winner and led his team to a league championship as a senior. (There was no UAVL all-star team for baseball).

Lonnie played three seasons for Tidioute in the Warren County American Legion baseball league. Styles was named to the all-star team every season and was selected to the Western PA All-Star team in his final season.

Lonnie was recruited by Penn State University and played baseball for three seasons and was a 2-time letter winner during his time at Main Campus. In his final season, he had a 3-0 record, 4 saves, and a 2.25 ERA. He also averaged 11.1 strikeouts per 9 innings pitched throughout his career.

The Pittsburgh Pirates drafted Lonnie in the 35<sup>th</sup> round of the 1979 MLB Draft, following his junior season at Penn State. He played three injury-ridden seasons in their minor league system. His career ended in 1981 due to an elbow injury. Styles finished his pro-ball career with a 3-3 record, as well as 2 saves. Lonnie completed his career with 26 total professional games played in, and 36 total innings pitched.

Lonnie was the assistant baseball and basketball coach for Tidioute High School in the 1981-82 season. He was inducted into the Tidioute Basketball Hall of Fame in 2001. He currently resides in Windber, PA with his wife Becky, and is an assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at Saint Francis University.

### **Tyler Sweet, Track and Field (Warren)**

Tyler Sweet was a well-rounded athlete, but track and field, specifically the javelin event, is where he shined from a young age. As a high school junior in 2005, he uncorked a throw of 197-10, shattering the Warren Area High School record and ranking seventh in the nation. His high school career also included Keystone State Games record throw of 178-0, as well as a District-10 championship and a finalist performance at the prestigious Penn Relays.

After spending a year at Missouri Baptist University, Sweet enrolled at the University of Akron, where he enjoyed a stellar career. As a freshman in 2008, he won the Mid-American Conference javelin championship with a throw of 221-11, the second-best effort in Akron history and a NCAA Mideast qualifying distance. His efforts earned him Akron's Co-Paul Werner Newcome of the Year honors. He was just getting started.

As a sophomore he won his second consecutive MAC title and placed ninth in the javelin at the NCAA Mideast Regional. He managed to top that as a junior, matching his throw of 221-11 as a freshman at the Jesse Owens Classic. He finished third at the MAC championships with a throw of 211-02 and also won the Campbell/Wright Invitational, LSU Tiger Relays and Northeast Invitational javelin titles.

As a senior, he was a first-team All-Mac honoree, winning his third MAC championship in the process. He advanced to the NCAA prelims, where he placed 18th.

### **Fran Troyan, Coaching (Warren)**

An accomplished baseball and basketball player while at Warren Area High School (Class of 1982), Fran Troyan would go on to become a Division III All-American shortstop in 1985 at Allegheny College in Meadville. But what makes Troyan stand out is a nearly 30-year coaching career for Lehigh University's Division I softball program.

As head coach, Troyan has an overall record of 834-472-6, a Patriot League record of 355-83, and has led Lehigh to 19 Patriot League regular season titles, 11 tournament crowns, and 10 NCAA Tournament appearances.

Troyan guided Lehigh to 11 consecutive regular-season Patriot League crowns from 1999-2009 and has won nine of the last 17 tournament titles, falling in the championship game in 2021 to Boston University.

"I'm very proud of the whole program, given the fact that we were working with a limited roster and working against COVID all season," Troyan said. "We did not start out very strong at all, but we turned it around. The team that ended the season certainly was a much better, much more polished version than what we were putting on the field earlier in the season. I don't know if we've had a team that has made bigger strides from February 1 until the middle of May than this particular team."

Troyan is a 7-time Patriot League Coach of the Year (1997, 2005, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2017, and sharing it in 2007). As head coach, he has produced 44 All-Region performers, he has coached four Academic All-Americans, and 153 All-Patriot League selections.

#### **Andy Weilacher, Track and Field/Cross-Country, (Eisenhower)**

Andy Weilacher was another key component of the Eisenhower Knights long-distance dynasty. His success started back in 1998 when he cracked the top-10 at the PIAA cross country championships his freshman year. His sophomore year (1999) he was the PIAA state runner up for the AA class with a time of 15:50.5. During his junior and senior years of high school, Weilacher was nearly untouchable. He claimed the 2000 PIAA cross country title with a time of 16:25.1 as well as the 2000 state cross country title with a win margin of 29 seconds. He rounded out his high school career with eight all-state honors, five District titles, claimed numerous invitational titles, and was a 2002 Foot Locker finalist.

After high school, Andy attended Northern Arizona University on an athletic scholarship. At one point he was considered one of the fastest freshmen in the country. During his tenure at NAU, he helped the lumberjacks to a 2002 NCAA Mountain Region Title, a 7<sup>th</sup> place NCAA finish, and a 2003 Big Sky Conference title for indoor track and field. He also achieved All-American status in 2003 with a 43<sup>rd</sup> place finish during the 2003 NCAA Division 1 Championships.

Weilacher's running abilities could not be limited to just the United States. In 2003, he qualified with a fast enough time to represent the United States during the World Cross Country Championships in Lausanne, Switzerland. He competed against the world's best junior cross-country runners from countries all over the world including cross country powerhouses such as Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia. Out of 121 runners, Weilacher finished in 45<sup>th</sup> place.

#### **Heather Wilmoth-Hastings, Track and Field (Eisenhower/Warren)**

Heather Wilmoth-Hastings won a state championship and District 10 title in cross country at Eisenhower High School, and a District 10 title in track in the 3,200 in her one year attending Warren.

Heather was a 2003 graduate of Eisenhower and a multi-sport athlete at Eisenhower and Warren. She earned 4 letters in basketball (3 at Eisenhower and 1 in Warren), 4 in cross country, and 2 in track and field (1 at Eisenhower as a freshman and 1 in Warren as a sophomore; she didn't participate her junior and senior instead focused on road races).

Heather individually qualified for and ran at states as an Eisenhower Knight all four years of her high school career (placing 98th, 59th, 28th, then 1st). As a senior, Wilmoth won the District-10 Class AA cross country individual championship in 18:23.89 (5,000 meters). Eisenhower was second as a team. Wilmoth won the state title that year in 18:57 (258 runners). From this, she qualified to run in the Mid-East Conference (a race between PA, OH, MI, IN, IL's finest), and placed 13th.

In track, Heather was competitive in high jump, pole vault, and, of course, long-distance running. As a sophomore at Warren Dragon, she qualified to compete at districts in pole vault, 1600-meter run and the 3200-meter run. Wilmoth would win a District 10 championship as a sophomore at Warren in the 3,200 before finishing 13th at the PIAA AAA meet with a meet record time of 11:39.49, which she held until 2019.

Heather Wilmoth-Hastings went on to Edinboro University and was a three-time all-PSAC performer in cross country. As a freshman she would lead her team at DII Nationals, placing 50th. She earned her All-American certificate as a sophomore in 2004. She placed 27th (out of 188) in the nation (22:50.8/6,000 meters), and Edinboro's women's team placed second to Adams State and captured all East-East Region honors that year. As a junior, she again earned all-PSAC and would run at nationals. Unfortunately, her senior year she suffered an injury and could not perform.

As an Edinboro Scot, she competed in the 10k PSAC outdoor track championships in 2005, finishing in 38:05, and in the 5k outdoor championships in 19:12. Wilmoth-Hastings, now of Edinboro, has been running competitively in countless 5k-marathons and triathlons for over 20+ years. She has competed in just about every distance race in Warren County, including the Nyla Luvison 5K in Sugar Grove just about every year of its existence. She was the top female finisher on July 21 of this year in 20:32.68. She has completed five half-marathons (one being the first stretch of the Kinzua Country Tango on Superior Tire's team), including her best time of 1 hour, 34 minutes in the PA Grand Canyon Half Marathon, and in five marathons, including 3 hours, 10 minutes in the Anthem Richmond Marathon. She continues to stay active, including running up to eight months of both of her pregnancies. She is married to Cody Hastings and has two daughters, ages 3 and 1. She is in training for her 3rd Boston Marathon (one being disrupted by Covid) in which she qualified 6 months after having a child.

If you were to ask her what she finds most important in sport, she would say "grit," and that you need to love to practice as much as compete. If you were to ask her what she is most proud of, it's not a specific race, but that she still has a love or need for running and winning.

**Jeff Zaffino, Bowling (Warren)**

Bowling is a sport that requires tremendous concentration, laser-beam focus, and nerves of steel. It is purely about skill. At the professional level, it is an individual sport. There are no teammates to blame for dropping a pass or credit for the block which sprung you for a touchdown. The point is, it's all on you. Being an exceptionally good bowler, and being consistently good, is very difficult. Especially when your professional career does not even begin until you are 35 years of age.

Jeff Zaffino enjoyed bowling as a youngster. He did not have anyone to coach him in the sport; he was self-taught. In high school he carried a 160 average, and then got better and better as he bowled recreationally in Warren area bowling leagues. In 1994, Zaffino decided to enter a prestigious 4-day regional amateur tournament in Rochester, New York. He won each individual segment and was the overall champion. It was this experience, he said, that gave him the confidence to turn professional.

That same year, he got his Professional Bowlers Association card, and has proved that he is good enough to compete with the best bowlers in the world. Zaffino has gone on to win 29 Regional PBA tournaments since then and was featured as the tournament leader in the nationally televised ABC-TV finals of the Greater Detroit Open in 1996, losing the title to Doug Kent. He would later go on to defeat Kent in head-to-head competition. Zaffino has appeared on ESPN's Pro Bowlers Tour three times. He has also rolled fourteen perfect games on the PBA tour.

One of only a handful of professional athletes to call Warren, Pa home, Zaffino is anxious for the current Coronavirus pandemic to end so that the PBA can resume tournaments and he can go after a 30<sup>th</sup> Regional Championship!

**Deceased**

### **Kelly Allen, Football/Track and Field (Warren)**

When Tom Landry was coaching the Dallas Cowboys, he had a sign in the locker room that said, "Call on a thoroughbred, and he will give you every ounce of strength and heart and courage in him. Call on a mule and he just kicks and brays." Kelly Allen was a thoroughbred with size (6-1, 180 pounds) and speed. Lots of speed.

Allen starred in two sports at Warren Area High School. He was a sprinter and a hurdler on the track team and qualified for the state track and field championships in the 120-yard high-hurdles and 330-yard intermediate hurdles in 1978. He ran the opening leg for the Dragon 440-yard relay team which won the District qualifier. While Allen was outstanding with a baton in his hand, he was even better holding a football.

As a member of the 1976 undefeated Warren Dragon football team, he was the back-up tailback to Joe Wozneak, who was an all-state selection. But Kelly Allen was too good *not* to play, and his coach, Toby Shea, found a spot for him. Actually, he found *several* spots. Besides running back, Allen lined up at slotback and receiver, could throw the option pass, returned punts and kick-offs, saw action as a defensive back and was on every one of the special teams. His versatility earned him the nickname, "Multi-Man." Coach Shea, aware of his elusiveness and breakaway speed, designed special plays to get him the ball. Allen had a 97-yard touchdown run that season.

During his senior year, he rushed for 1,645 yards, averaging over 7 yards per carry, and scored 12 touchdowns on a 10-1 team. Allen was named to the Northwest Conference first team as a running back, received honorable mention on the all-state team, and received a Pennsylvania Big 33 nomination as well. He was offered a full scholarship to play football for coach Jim Tressel at Baldwin-Wallace but suffered a career-ending injury when he broke his foot. Allen passed away in 2009. He was a wonderful husband, father, and friend.

As good an athlete as Kelly Allen was, he was even a better person. Coach Shea called him one of the most selfless players he ever had, and Allen's former teammates would agree. He did whatever he could to help his team win. He genuinely cared about people and went out of his way to make everyone feel like part of the team. Kelly Allen, The Multi-Man.

### **Tom Craig, Coaching (Youngsville)**

Tom Craig played basketball for Youngsville High School in the late 1950's. It's remarkable that he could play basketball at all. He had only one eye. A childhood injury took one eye, and he was fitted with a glass eye. Despite his handicap he persevered and developed a highly accurate jump shot contributing many points to the team.

Tom is primarily known for his coaching career: After college he taught and coached football at Geneva, Ohio from 1964 to 1968. Then he returned to Youngsville and coached football for 13 years with two playoff appearances. His team ended Ridgeway's 34 game winning streak, longest in the state at the time. He was fortunate to coach his son Shawn and to see his grandson Corey Craig quarterback Youngsville to an undefeated season.

Tom coached varsity baseball for 4 years and led the team to its first and only playoff win. He coached Hot Stove Little League and his teams won 3 county championships. He coached Senior Legion Baseball and teams in women's softball league. He was Athletic Director for Youngsville High School for over 10 years.

Tom had great love and enthusiasm for Youngsville and all sports. He treated his players as family. On game trips he would buy meals for players lacking money. He would wash practice gear for players lacking laundry. He would give rides home to stranded players. He coached during a teacher's strike to support his players. He stressed academics and tutored some players. Tom was a positive motivator who kept track of his players after graduation. When they returned to see him, he was concerned about how they were doing in life.

### **Lou DeRubies, Coaching (Sheffield)**

Lou DeRubies left a legacy behind that is still talked about to this day. Coach Lou DeRubies was the head football coach at Sheffield Area High School from 1957-1966. After those eight years, DeRubies had an extensive list of coaching accomplishments, and possibly his greatest one was leading the 1960 Sheffield Wolverines to its first ever undefeated/untied 8-0 record in school history. DeRubies was quoted in the November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1960 Warren Observer saying this about the 1960 season, "Loyal football fans shall never forget this fruitful performance during the 1960 season."

Also in 1959, DeRubies was the head coach for Sheffield during a 1959 game that defeated St. Mary's to stop their 33-game winning streak. This game was dubbed the "State's upset of the season."

DeRubies had yet another undefeated football season in 1964 and was the A.M.L. (Allegheny Mountain League) Big 30 Coach of the Year for the 1964 season, as well as the 1960 season. DeRubies coached the Wolverines to three Allegheny Mountain League Championships in 1960, 1961, and 1964. DeRubies also has the most wins in a nine-year span in Sheffield Area High School history, as well as the best winning record (44-20-1).

### **Mark Garrett, Pool/Officiating (Warren)**

Mark Garrett was a five-time State Champion Pool player. He has won four team State Championships in '01, '03, '06 and 2009. Mark won the individual 8-Ball State Championship title in 2001. Having won over one hundred tournaments since 1994, Mark was among the best players in the area and the state. He won several league championships and has titles in 8-ball, 9-ball, and 3-cushion billiards. He has participated in many national events to include Las Vegas and other large venues. He pocketed 387 balls in a freelance run and 106 balls in a straight pool run.

For seventeen years Mark donned the pin stripes as a basketball official and as a softball umpire in the PIAA. He worked hundreds of basketball games to include several District-10 and State Tournaments. Officiating for college men and womens' basketball for the past six years, Garrett was also a little league umpire as well as being ASA and NSA softball certified. As a girls' high school softball umpire, he had called for several District-10 play-off games, three D-10 Finals, and two PIAA State Championship games. In addition, Mark Garrett served as a rule interpreter for girls' softball for eight years. Since 2005, Mark umpired several college women's softball games in the ECAC, AMCC, PAC, GLIAC, PSAC, and MAC Conferences.

Garrett was the founder of the Kinzua Classic pool tournament which brought in 300 players from the tri-state area for a weekend tournament which benefits the Warren Cancer Center. Garrett was the tournament director from 2005 through 2007.

Garrett began and learned to shoot pool from his grandfather, Warnie Lefty Check, (HOF class '02) known for his football prowess and competitiveness. At the age of fifteen, Mark suffered from kidney stones the size of golf balls and damaged his kidney. While undergoing dialysis and waiting for a transplant, Mark began playing competitive pool and he umpired high school and little league baseball. He credits the positive mental attitude that he learned through pool in getting him through his kidney transplant.

Though the operation limited his athletic involvement in high school sports, Mark lettered in basketball and track. Seth Meyers (HOF class '08) asked Mark to go out for track his senior year. Mark qualified for Districts with a 5'10" leap and finished off with a 6'2" jump at the District-10 Championship meet.

**Charles Musante, Promoter (Warren)**

“The man whose vision and community spirit laid the foundation of baseball in Warren as we know it today.” Charles W. “Charlie” Musante was born Feb.11, 1909, passed away July 1, 1990, and was a lifelong resident of Warren County.

A 1927 Warren High School graduate, Musante was a 28-year police officer in the borough of Warren, but served his community in many other ways, including starting the Warren Hot Stove League in 1949, later transitioning to Little League baseball/softball.

He is remembered as a ball player and founder of youth baseball in Warren County with Musante Field dedicated in his honor currently at Betts Park. Musante gave back to his community through St. Joseph Roman Catholic Church, Fraternal Order of Police, Knights of Columbus, Boy Scouts, and American Legion, to name a few.

Musante served as the local Hot Stove League president for many years after its founding, with an organization that built 13 brand new ball fields to help field the inaugural 29 teams. In early 1949, the Warren Hot Stove League received its charter and plans were made for the first season. Charles would one day note, “As I patrol the streets from one section to another and see the boys in Hot Stove uniforms loaded in cars being transported to their fields; as I watch them play, some good, some not so good; and then passing groups and overhearing their conversations, elated over a home run or his team winning, and then watch their parents become as excited over the game as the boy, it gives me that wonderful feeling of satisfaction for having a part in the wholesome development of our youth... May Hot Stove live as long as there are young people living.”

### **Andy Randas, Coaching/Officiating (Warren)**

Andy Randas was heavily involved in sports in Warren County from roughly 1966-1988. Randas was a head coach, assistant coach, a PIAA official, and even a promotor of Warren County sports.

Perhaps Randas’ biggest accomplishment was coaching the 1982-83 Warren Dragon basketball team to its first ever District-10 championship title. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, 1983, Randas and the Warren Dragons defeated Erie Tech Memorial 35-30 in a close semifinal matchup. Three days later on March 12, 1983, Coach Andy Randas led the Dragons to a 7-point 4<sup>th</sup> quarter comeback against the Cathedral Prep Ramblers and defeated them in overtime. This was Warren Area High School’s first ever District-10 title for boys’ basketball.

Randas was also named the head Warren High track and field in July of 1967, was the director of the Summer Basketball league in Warren that promoted basketball to the young boys and girls of Warren County. He was also the Sheffield boys’ basketball coach from 1974-79, and the assistant basketball coach alongside WCSHOF member Joseph Massa Sr. for 14 years. In addition to coaching, Randas was a PIAA football official for 32 years, a PIAA softball umpire for 5 years, and a Warren Rec League softball umpire for over 20 years.