

JIM PROCOPIO

From the outset of the 20th Century, baseball had been king of sports in Amherst County. Typical of most rural areas, baseball games could be found on makeshift fields at fairgrounds, family or community gatherings, and schools. Success in high school baseball around the county had long been established, and more recently at the consolidated ACHS, having already experienced undefeated teams and district championships. The leap into consistent contention for state titles occurred under Jim Procopio's leadership.



An acclaimed athlete in high school and at West Virginia University, in both football and baseball, he pursued of his dream in professional baseball and, in years prior to his life in Amherst County, he and his wife, Susie, had had more than 20 addresses. They spent both their wedding day and 50th anniversary at the ballpark. It was as a player with the Lynchburg White Sox that Procopio was drawn to Amherst to establish more permanence for his growing family and to assume the reins of the ACHS baseball team.

Procopio brought his skill, determination, and enthusiasm to ACHS in 1968. After 19 years, he had led the Lancers to a position as annual contenders at the state level and had sent over 40 players to collegiate baseball and about a dozen to the professional ranks. Three teams brought state championships to Amherst.

His teams featured sound fundamental skills, aggressive play, and solid preparation. A former player recalled his experience on Procopio's team as that of always feeling in control of a game. Team tryouts were described as being akin to a professional training camp. Players knew the game thoroughly, played it the right way, and never panicked.

While at ACHS, Procopio completed his master's degree at Lynchburg College; he was also coaching or assisting in varsity football as well as 8th grade basketball. The junior varsity and junior high programs commenced under his guidance, while he was also serving in various capacities with the Dixie Youth and athletics booster programs. Procopio considers his time in Amherst to be the best of times, with camaraderie among the coaching and teaching staff, support of families, and strong community involvement in youth baseball.

James Joseph Procopio – September 30, 1941

Career Highlights

- St. Mary's HS, W.Va.: 4-sport athlete; All-State, football, baseball; scored 7 TDs in one game; leading scorer in conference, football; All-American HS Football; Mid-Ohio Valley Sports Hall of Fame; Alumnus of the Year
- WVU: All-Conference, baseball; Southern Conference Player of the Week, football; baseball records still standing – single-season and career, 1st in stolen bases and 2nd in triples for catchers
- Professional baseball: player, 6 seasons, mostly AA and AAA, catching and outfield; manager, scout, and position coach for major league affiliates
- ACHS: Baseball state championships, 3; 10-year period, winning rate of 90%; District Coach of the Year, 4; Virginia All-Star Coach, 3; Speaker, Virginia State Coach's Clinic, 6; only high school coach on Olympic Selection Committee