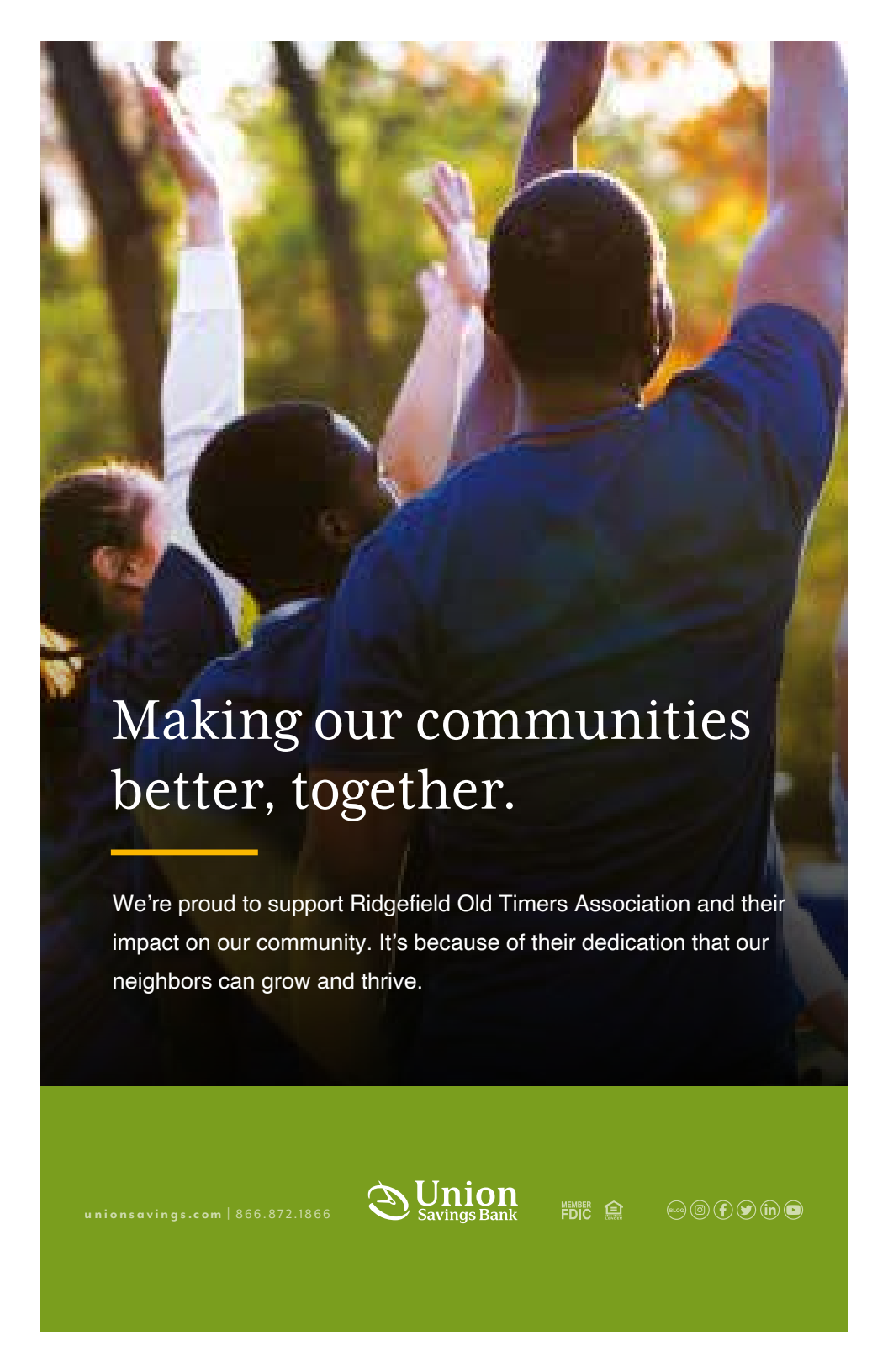


# RIDGEFIELD OLD TIMERS ASSOCIATION



31ST ANNUAL DINNER  
OCTOBER 19, 2024



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## A Message from Our Chairman

As the Chairman of the Ridgefield Old Timers Association (ROTA), I would like to offer congratulations to tonight's ROTA Scholarship winners: Ridgefield High School 2024 graduates: Steven Hergenrother, Aveline Pomposello, Luke Pereira, and Abigail Seal! Steven and Aveline are receiving the ROTA Scholarship (\$1,000.00 per year for all (4) years). Luke and Abigail are receiving the George Hanlon Memorial Scholarship in memory of George; a past ROTA Chairman who exemplified the best qualities of a Ridgefield Old Timer.

These (4) scholarships each year would not be possible without the support of so many people and local businesses over the past 31 years, and those that contributed to the Silent Auction, which has also been very helpful. Please do what you can to help support ROTA.

Tonight's annual recognition dinner is being catered by Ridgefield Prime as it has for several years and we would like to again thank St. Mary's Parish for allowing us to use their beautiful hall once again.

The purpose of tonight's dinner is to honor Ridgefielders for their past accomplishments on the athletic field, in the arts, and in the classrooms along with honoring those who have dedicated countless hours for the benefit of our town. This dinner also helps us raise money to fund our scholarships. We are one of the few organizations which give scholarship recipients a check for each of their four years of undergraduate studies.

I would like to thank all the members of ROTA for their continued hard work throughout the year by coming to meetings, organizing this wonderful event, writing the bios for each of the recipients, organizing/collecting the ads and bios and putting them into the program, setting up the ticket sales, running tonight's silent auction and so much more! Those members are: Gregg and Manette Hutchings, Mark Fitzgerald, Peter Nichols, John Pieriandri, Trish Larosa, Darla and Ben Shaw, Trish Gernert, Dave Kiley, Rich Pereira, Dave Kiley, and Linda Hutchings.

I would like to encourage anyone that is reading this to get involved with this wonderful organization tonight or in the near future. Find out more about us at [Ridgefieldoldtimers.org](http://Ridgefieldoldtimers.org) and thanks so much for coming and enjoy the evening!

— *Mark Lionetti, Chairman*



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# 31st Annual Dinner

## Ridgefield Old Timers Dinner

Saturday, October 19, 2024

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### Who's in charge of the Old Timers?

**The Officers:** The Officers: Mark Lionetti, Chairman; Trish LaRosa, Secretary;  
Dave Kiley, Vice Chairman; Manette Hutchings, Treasurer

**Awards Dinner Committee:** Mark Fitzgerald, Andree Fitzgerald, Trish Gernert,  
Terry Hughes, Gregg Hutchings, Manette Hutchings, Linda Hutchings, Dave Kiley,  
Trish LaRosa, Pete Nichols, Rich Pereria, John Pierandri, Darla Shaw, Ben Shaw

**Former Chairmen:** Paul Baker, James Belote, Tom Belote, George Hanlon,  
Frank Lancaster Sr., Rudy Marconi, Andy Montanari Sr., Jay Montanari, John Pierandri,  
Mark Fitzgerald, Pete Nichols

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CIVIC AWARD

## Deb Beal Ahle

### *A Legacy of Service and Community*

At age six, Deb Beal Ahle moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut, from Syosset, Long Island, NY. She attended Veterans Park School, East Ridge Junior High, and was part of the first graduating class from the new Ridgefield High School in 1976.

Active from a young age, Deb participated in Girl Scouts, took piano and violin lessons, sang in the school choir, and explored theater and dance. Her family, including her late parents, Audrey and Roger Beal, and younger sister, Sandy Beal Carpenter, cherished traditions such as Swedish Christmas smorgasbords and vacations split between Maine and New Jersey.

Her high school years included playing field hockey, working on the school newspaper, and being the only female on the math team. Her volunteer work spanned local blood drives, Special Olympics, and Keeler Tavern. At 16, Deb began working at Altnacraig Nursing Home, where she had the privilege of serving as the private aide to Alice Paul, a towering figure in the fight for women's rights. This experience inspired Deb's lifetime devotion to civic service.

Deb pursued a BS in Biology at Bates College and a Master's in Physical Therapy at Duke University. Her studies in physical therapy took her across the country, including roles in California, Texas, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut.

She met her husband, John Ahle, at Stamford Hospital, where they both worked. They have a son, JT, who works in music management in Brooklyn. Deb and her family have deep roots in Ridgefield, where she continues participating in various activities.

Her civic responsibilities are extensive. At Jesse Lee Church, Deb has been involved in handbells, leading JAM (Jesus and Me), teaching Sunday School, serving on various committees, and leading the women's Bible study. She was also the Music Director for SPHERE (Special Persons Housing, Education, Recreation & Employment) for several years. She has been active in the Alice Paul Equal Rights Amendment initiative by touring and speaking about her time with Alice.

Deb's deep passion for service is evident in her long-term involvement with the Appalachian Service Project (ASP), where she has dedicated 15 years to helping with home repairs in the Appalachian region and broadening the horizons of Ridgefield youth. Her leadership roles within ASP include serving on the Ridgefield ASP Council and helping as the Executive Director, a Center Leader, and an Orientation Team Leader. During Deb's tenure, thanks to her leadership and tireless effort, over 2,500 volunteers have participated in ASP.

Deb's life is marked by a profound dedication to community service, guided by her belief that "if you cannot do great things, do small things in a great way." ■



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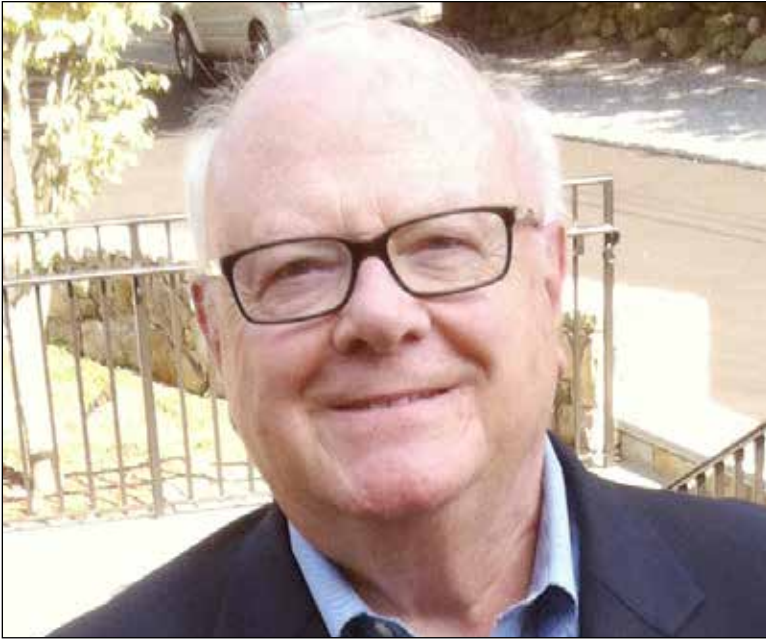


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CIVIC AWARD
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## Joel Third

It was a lucky day for Ridgefield, over thirty years ago, when Joel Third and his wife Bettie Jane decided to move here. Joel, reared in Ohio, graduated from Case Western Reserve, and was first employed by International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT), then the Harris Corporation. Joel retired after a 47- year international career in engineering and marketing. His first assignment was on the DewLine radar system in the Arctic to detect USSR intrusions. He then assisted installation of a USAF system from Spain to Eastern Turkey, then projects in Vietnam and South America, as well as designing statewide PBS TV networks in Ohio and Mississippi.

On coming to Ridgefield, the Thirds quickly became involved with community affairs. Bettie Jane became a docent at the Keeler Tavern Museum and Joel got involved as well. In 2012, Joel became president of the board of the Museum for four years, making significant improvements with the executive director and board that have propelled

the Tavern to the popular active teaching museum that it is today. As president, he led the procurement of the Dr. Mead property next door, expanding the campus to four acres, establishing the Visitor's Center, and providing additional parking. Joel stated, "I had to obtain the financing which was quite a challenge." He and the board oversaw numerous capital improvements to the property. An extremely important contribution was working with a committee to hire a professional staff to manage the increasingly complex organization. He is currently on the Development Committee. Joel has established a memorial scholarship in Bettie Jane's name for a RHS senior. He has been recognized for his contributions several times by the Keeler Tavern, most recently at their gala this spring.

Joel has served Ridgefield in numerous capacities. An active volunteer in both the Rotary and the Ridgefield Men's Club, Joel has acted as president of both clubs. You have probably seen him marching to represent them in Memorial Day parades. He has led both the nominating and the stewardship committees at St. Stephen's Church where he is a member. Joel has just retired from the board of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra. Many of us have seen him greeting and handing out programs at the concerts. You may also have met Joel at Founder's Hall where he has been a facilitator in several classes.

One of Joel's interests is art. He is a collector of Audubon bird prints, Currier and Ives prints, and antique maps. At the Keeler Tavern he has taught fifth grade students about old maps, using some from his collection. He has organized exhibits at the Ridgefield Library of antique maps, Audubon prints, Currier and Ives prints and currently one of flower prints. Joel generally offers a program or lecture during these exhibitions, discussing his experiences with print collecting.

At present Joel is also an active member on the Graveyard Committee which looks after the old cemeteries in Ridgefield like the ones on Mapleshade and Old Town as well as others. It is clear that Joel has adopted Ridgefield and Ridgefield has adopted Joel. For over thirty years he has shared his talent and knowledge with this beautiful town and we are all the richer for his gifts. ■



## **Congratulations to Joel Third**

Our gratitude abounds  
for all you have done in  
the community and the lives  
you continue to uplift daily.

*Ginger Smith and  
Chris Svendsen*

## **Congratulations Joel!**

Your kindness, dedication  
and leadership roles, with  
so many organizations, is  
deeply appreciated by all  
you have helped in our  
community.

*Kathy Graham*

## **Congratulations Joel!** **And so well deserved.**



**From your friends and fellow Rotarians at  
The Rotary Club of Ridgefield**



EDUCATOR AWARD

## Jan Siegel

Jan Siegel is ROTA's choice for the 2024 Education Award. A much loved and well-remembered kindergarten and elementary school teacher, "She never lost her enthusiasm for teaching, and never lost her passion," so reports her husband, Paul.

Jan took her bachelor's degree at Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts, and earned her Master's in elementary education at the University of Bridgeport. She began her career in 1969, teaching grades 1, 2, and 3 at Ridgebury School and later moving to Scotland School. A supportive teacher, she creatively taught her curriculum. Students loved being in Jan's class, and she had a natural touch for helping special needs youngsters and encouraging the rest of the class to include and honor these students. She had a talent for teaching and encouraging kindness, honesty, and compassion.... important but non-academic lessons.

In 1985, Jan took the next twelve years off from teaching to do the “Mom Thing” and bring up her two boys. During this time, she was an enthusiastic volunteer at the Congregational Church in town, teaching Sunday School, helping to maintain the Memorial Garden, and delivering food packages for Hillside in the Ridgefield and Danbury areas. Jan worked overnight at homeless shelters, at Dorothy Day, and at HOME, a shelter in Maine for adults and youths, where she cooked and did carpentry. During this time, she created the “River Program Walk,” which focused on ecology and environmental protection.... basically about preserving the river.

In 1997, she began to teach again in Ridgefield, starting as a part-time kindergarten teacher at Veteran’s Park School, soon moving to full-time by popular demand. Her favorite grade was kindergarten because “You grabbed them early.” She began her day with morning meetings where she encouraged friendliness and cooperation. She especially liked teaching the fundamentals of reading and constantly adjusted her lessons, so students never got bored. Students loved her because she was kind and encouraging and made the class enjoyable. Today, when former students run into her, they often say, “I remember you; you were my favorite teacher.”

Jan retired in 2012. She was in her sixties and satisfied with a wonderful teaching career of over thirty years. She was concerned about not taking young teachers’ jobs, typically thinking about others. She positively influenced hundreds of Ridgefield youngsters. Thank you, Jan. ■





ALL SEASON COMFORT

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GEORGE  
HANLON





POSTHUMOUS AWARD

## George Arthur Hanlon

*December 7, 1945 – June 23, 2023*

George Hanlon, a past president of the Ridgefield Old Timers Association, is being posthumously recognized for his outstanding civic contributions. The George Hanlon Memorial Scholarship is being awarded to one boy and one girl in his memory.

A true Ridgefielder at heart, George moved to town when he was eleven years old. He was a 1965 graduate of Ridgefield High School where he played guard on the football team, ran track, was on the student council, worked on the school newspaper and had a major role in the school musical, *Bye Bye Birdie*.

When his father unexpectedly died, George was a 19-year-old freshman at Waynesburg University. To help support his young siblings, he stepped into his father's shoes as a sales representative for Stamford Insulation, taking over his entire territory.



Through hustle and hard work, George earned the respect of every contractor he did business with. He eventually partnered in several companies including being a founder of New England Building Products and US Insulation. Over the course of a career that spanned nearly six decades, George also built twenty-five homes and insulated many, many more.

While he never fully retired, George managed to find time to give back to the town he loved. He served on the Planning and Zoning Commission for ten years and along with his wife Carol, started Ridgefield's smoke detector program.

George knew every back road and short cut throughout Fairfield County, was an avid reader, was talented enough to replicate any painting he saw, had a passion for history and never hesitated to recount his "hole in one" golf story to anyone willing to listen. His greatest passion, however, was for his family and friends. He and Carol Palmer Hanlon were married for 42 years. He had four children, George Hanlon, Jessica Clifford, Christine Ryan and Caroline Hanlon along with eight grandchildren.

While George is being honored for his accomplishments, he will always be remembered for his sense of humor and his ability to make people smile. Friends say that being with George was like traveling with the Pope. He knew and liked everyone. ■

REMEMBERING GEORGE HANLON,  
WHO WARMED THE HEARTS OF ALL HE MET.  
WE MISS YOU!  
DEC 1945 - JUNE 2023

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take a minute to sit on a bench in  
our Dad's memory:*

*We Miss You Dad,  
George, Jessica, Christy and Caroline*



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*Missing You, George!*

*I've seen fire and I've seen rain  
I've seen sunny days that I thought would never end  
I've seen lonely times when I could not find a friend  
But I always thought that I'd see you again...*

*James Taylor*



Remembering a guy who was a friend to all, and more than that to us.  
We miss you every day, George.

Bob and Gerri Lewis

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ARTS AWARD

## John Voorhees III

H. John Voorhees III is a seasoned photojournalist and documentary photographer with nearly five decades of experience in capturing compelling visual narratives. Born in the Bronx and raised in Ridgefield, Voorhees has spent the majority of his career documenting life through his lens, primarily working for newspapers in Connecticut. He currently serves as a staff photographer for Hearst Connecticut Media, contributing to The News-Times and The Hour.

Voorhees' journey into photography began in Ridgefield, where his family settled after his grandparents established a home there in the 1950s. He graduated from Ridgefield High School in 1974 and, after a prolonged academic journey, earned a BA in Economics from Western Connecticut State University in 2012—alongside his eldest daughter.





*George Bush at 1988 Republican National Convention in New Orleans*

---

In his career, Voorhees has received numerous accolades, including the Connecticut AP News Photo of the Year Award in 1986 and several honors from the New England Associated Press News Executives Association and the Society of Professional Journalists-Connecticut. His recent awards include multiple first-place finishes in the Connecticut SPJ Excellence in Journalism Contest, recognizing his excellence in feature photography and photo essays.

He met his wife, Patricia, while attending WCSU, and together they have three adult children: Katie, a data scientist for the Bronx Defenders; Doug, a restaurant general manager; and Jake, a digital producer for CBS Sports. Despite his extensive career, Voorhees remains dedicated to the craft of visual storytelling, continuing to earn recognition for his work across various genres, from news to sports and feature photography. ■

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*Heidi Howkins looking out from sleeping port on the face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park*

#### SPECIAL AWARD

## Heidi Howkins Lockwood

Heidi Howkins Lockwood is a Ridgefield native and member of the RHS Class of 1985. Her parents, Nan and Stu Howkins, were lured away from University of Chicago research positions by an offer from Schlumberger Doll Research in 1970. They moved first to Aspen Ledges Road in Ridgebury, and then, after the impromptu preschool that Nan started was too large for the house, they moved it to the site of “My” Nursery School, the red house on Farrar Lane, in 1976.

The 1970s-era Ridgefield Old Timers may remember Stu jogging to work, from Ridgebury to the center of town cycling, in an era when cars still stopped him to ask what was wrong and who he was running from. He completed the Boston Marathon in 1976.

The 1980s-era Ridgefield Old Timers may remember Stu cycling 20 miles to work in Brookfield, in all weather, with a car battery connected to 20 lights mounted on his bicycle in all directions. A Ridgefield Press article from that era called him a “Christmas tree on wheels” and urged drivers on Pope’s corner in Ridgebury to “believe their eyes” if they encountered him en route home after dark. He qualified for and then completed the Ironman Triathlon in Hawaii in 1988.



*Heidi on top of the summit of Karakoram Gasherbrum II. It's World's 13th highest mountain with a summit elevation of 8,035 m (26,362 ft.) above sea level.*

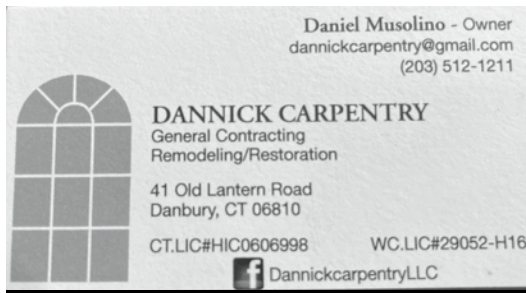
The 1980s- and 1990s-era Ridgefield Old Timers will remember Nan rescuing the Town after the YMCA pulled out of Barlow Mountain. She assumed an enormous personal financial risk and took over the lease for one-half (10,000 square feet) of the building for a childcare center she called “The Children’s Corner.” Between 1970 and 2015, Nan provided childcare for more than 8,000 Ridgefield families. She wrote a book in 1994 on the art of offering flexible childcare to families with “New York City schedules.” There was a 3-year wait list for her preschool in the 1990s.

After studying at Wellesley College (1985-89) and MIT (1989-91), Heidi returned to Ridgefield to raise her family in 1998. She matriculated as a PhD student in Philosophy at Yale in 2003. She completed her dissertation in 2009 and is now a Professor of Philosophy at Southern Connecticut State University, specializing in the ethics of technology and AI. She has also been actively involved in the Title IX movement and serves as the Graduate Coordinator for the Women’s & Gender Studies Program at Southern.

Heidi spent the ten-year hiatus between MIT and Yale climbing in the Himalayas as a professional high-altitude climber with support from the National Geographic Expeditions Council. Her achievements during this period included leading alpine-style expeditions to Everest and K2

(on both the south side, in Pakistan, and the north side, in the Xinjiang province of China); the publication of a book, *K2 One Woman's Quest for the Summit* (2001, Books/Simon & Schuster); filming and climbing for documentaries aired on NBC, CNBC/National Geographic Explorer, and the National Geographic Channel; and completion of an international lecture and multimedia show tour for the Everest IMAX movie. Various outdoor equipment companies also sponsored her during this period, including Mountain Hardware, Leki, Gregory, Bolle, and PowerBar.

After a pandemic job transfer, Heidi and her husband Bill are raising their youngest child (age 14) in Norwich, Vermont. Heidi continues to serve as a professor at SCSU in New Haven and continues to think of Ridgefield as her hometown. ■



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SPORTS AWARD

## Darrell Diniz

Darrell Diniz grew up with soccer his whole life. How could you not if you were the son of Al Diniz, the legendary “father of Ridgefield soccer” who coached Ridgefield High School for 30 years - 1973 to 2003. You could say that soccer was in Darrell’s DNA.

Darrell’s family moved to Ridgefield in 1968. He attended Farmingville Elementary school and participated in many youth sports in town. In his final year of Little League baseball, Darrell was teammates with John Hughes ‘79 and Keith Kreisher ‘79. While watching their baseball games, their fathers - Al Diniz, Jack Hughes, and John Kreisher created a plan to start the first youth soccer program in Ridgefield.

In the Fall of 1972, Darrell, John and Keith would be part of a small group of pioneering soccer players that helped start and become the foundation for the Ridgefield soccer program. In 1975, Jack Hughes, John Kreisher and Darrell’s father would together create the Soccer Club of Ridgefield (SCOR) and for this achievement were honored in 2016 by the ROTA.

In 1973, Darrell’s father took on the huge challenge of being the head soccer coach at Ridgefield High School. Since joining the very competitive FCIAC program in the early 70’s, the high school soccer team had lost 39 straight games. However, the 1975 season would change that.



Darrell was a starting sophomore on the 1975 varsity soccer team. With help of freshmen John Hughes, Keith Kreisher, and a group of upperclassmen, the 1975 team went 8-2-3, and was the first team in RHS history to qualify for the state tournament. The '75 team would make it to the Quarterfinals, earning RHS's first state tournament win defeating Simsbury 1-0 with Darrell having the assist on the winning goal.

The success of the 1975 would not be repeated in Darrell's junior and senior years, but RHS soccer teams were competitive in the FCIAC and cemented Ridgefield's foundation for many successful RHS soccer teams and players in the future. In his senior year, Darrell was co-captain of the team. During one memorable game that season, Darrell scored 4 goals and an assist in a 6-0 win over Andrew Warde of Fairfield. Upon concluding his soccer career at RHS, Darrell held all of RHS's offensive records for most goals and assists in a season, most goals and assists for a career and most goals in a game. Darrell was the first soccer player in RHS history to be named All FCIAC First Team honors, but many, more would follow in his footsteps.

After graduating RHS in 1978, Darrell attended the University of Rhode Island, and was a member of the U.R.I. Freshman and varsity soccer teams. He graduated with a B.S. in Business Administration and minor in accounting. Shortly after college, Darrell moved to Massachusetts and married his wife Barbara. They raised two children in Milford, MA - Christopher who graduated from UMass Amherst and lives in Medford MA, and Courtney who graduated undergrad and graduate school from Worcester State University. She lives in Mansfield, MA. Darrell was active coaching Christopher in Little League baseball, youth basketball and head coached in-house and youth Travel soccer teams for Milford. Darrell was employed as a senior commodity specialist by Raytheon Corp. for 13 years and Bose Corporation for 19 years.

Darrell is currently retired and resides in Milford, MA with his wife Barbara and will celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary in October. Their daughter Courtney is engaged and will be married June 2024. ■



SPORTS AWARD

## Dr. Julie Perrelli

1994 RHS graduate, Julie Perrelli, moved to Ridgefield at age 11 and has considered it her hometown ever since. Always known for her athleticism and positivity, Julie attributes her love of sports to trying to keep up with her older brother and her parents' continued encouragement to play sports.

At age ten, Julie was the only girl on the boys' Little League Baseball Team, as the pitcher. She was also the only girl who made the All-Star team. She continued her love of softball throughout her years in Ridgefield, playing in middle school, high school, college, and then in the Ridgefield Women's Softball League earning league MVP and league champions multiple times.

Although Julie was a three-sport athlete all four years of high school, most of her accolades, however, came from field hockey, which began in eighth grade when Cara Muscolo and her older sister Laura invited Julie to play field hockey in their backyard. Julie had never heard of field hockey but loved it from the start and went on to make the high school team. As a junior she was named All-FCIAC East team player, and as a





*Julie Perrelli applying the tag to Westhill player.*

senior captain, named First-Team All-FCIAC and First Team All-State. Recruited by several Division 1 schools, Julie decided to attend the Univ. of Delaware on a field hockey scholarship and major in Secondary Education: Math. The team was ranked 10th in the nation during her freshman year. Julie was first off the bench her freshman year as a forward, and then started as center midfielder in her sophomore year.

While at Ridgefield High School, Julie also played basketball. Her senior year, Coach Jim Muraski gave her the Coach's Award, not for her basketball ability, but for her sportsmanship, attitude, and work ethic. As a freshman, she received the award "given to the girl who goes the "wrong" way in games and tells the worst jokes on the team!" by her coach, Phil Santoro. She also played on the varsity softball team for all four years, under Coach Santoro, playing short stop, third base, and pitcher. Additionally, Julie was a member many clubs and activities including the Peer Educators Group, Key Club International, was named Senior of the Month, made the honor roll, and was also awarded Class Female Athlete by her peers in her Senior year.





In 1996, Julie transferred to Western Connecticut State University and played softball for 3 years, winning the ECAC North Championship in 1998. Unfortunately, WestConn did not have field hockey at the time, so instead she coached the RHS JV team. After graduating from WestConn in 1999, Julie worked as the assistant director for the Danbury Police Activities League and helped coach the RHS

varsity softball team one year. At that time, RHS Athletics Director Chip Salvestrini encouraged her to seek out a career in athletics administration, which drove her to attend Springfield College for both her Master and Doctoral Degrees in Teaching and Administration.

At Springfield, Julie then became a Professor teaching undergraduate, master, and doctoral degree students in Physical Education and Athletics Administration and was also the Head Coach of the Softball program. She was named Coach of the Year for the NEWMAC Conference in 2012. Her team won the conference Championship in 2013, was ranked 3rd in the country for highest team GPA of 3.57, and went to the conference finals seven times.

Julie decided to return home to Ridgefield after 14 years at Springfield and became a professor of Health Promotion and Exercise Science at WestConn. No longer coaching, Julie has stayed connected with athletics by being appointed the NCAA Faculty Athletics Representative. Julie has recently become the interim Dean of Student Affairs and is truly passionate about supporting all of her students to grow and develop into confident, resilient, kind individuals. ■

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SPORTS AWARD
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## Gregg Bechard

Gregg is a 1976 Ridgefield High School graduate who is remembered for his four years as a hockey player and four years in soccer under Al Diniz. He also had a short career in track in the long jump under the direction of Coach Medve. Important to his athletic career were coaches Pete McClellan, Ed Stevenson, Bill Dunn and senior hockey co-captains, Gregg Hutchins and Reed Whipple.

Regarding FCIAC recognition for hockey, Gregg won honorable mention in his junior and senior years and was named to the East West All Star Hockey Team in his senior year. In soccer, Gregg was named to the FCIAC second team.

Coming to Ridgefield as a fourth grader, Gregg attended V.P.E.S., Barlow Mountain and E.R.M.S. Growing up he spent a great deal of time in the Westmoreland Swimming Pool and taking part in Little League Baseball and Pop Warner Football.



*Gregg Bechard skating up the ice with the puck.*

---

After high school, Gregg's family moved to Maine and he played junior A hockey with the Maine Nordics. During this time frame, he was accepted to the prep school for the Air Force Academy. Gregg never got to play varsity hockey or soccer at the Air Force Academy, but he enjoyed participating in intramurals while he was a student there.

After graduation from the Air Force Academy, Gregg went to pilot training school in Del Rio Texas. He graduated receiving a slot flying C-141B Star lifters in San Bernardino, California. Gregg flew Star lifters for four years with many international destinations. While flying for the Air Force during conflicts in the Middle East, he flew several missions carrying troops, cargo, and munitions for Desert Storm.

In 1988 Gregg became a flying instructor for the 141 in Altus, Oklahoma and after that he applied to fly for Delta Airlines. Gregg then flew for Delta until he reached retirement age at 65. He left Delta in 2023 with 32 years of service and 20,000 flying hours, flying the following planes, 727, 757, 767-300, and the 767-400.



Gregg has been married to a Ridgefield girl, Sandy Riccardelli, for 37 years and has three children. Chad is 36 and lives in Los Angeles and twins, Hannah and Trent, are 34. Hannah lives nearby in Cape Elizabeth, Maine and Trent lives in Brooklyn, N.Y. Gregg has two grandchildren, Harriet 5 and Boone 3.

Athletically, Gregg likes to ski, bike, and golf. He played in the Portland, Maine men's hockey league for 14 years and still participates in pick

up games. He enjoyed playing in the Ridgefield High School Alumni Hockey Game in 2023 with his old co-captain, Reed Whipple.

Gregg continues to think of hockey and soccer as "we sports." It is not about what one can accomplish alone, it is what the team, working together, can accomplish. Gregg appreciates all the great coaching that he got at RHS. This coaching put him on the track for a truly exciting life's journey. ■

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SPORTS AWARD

## Lori Lidia McDevitt

### *Four-Sport Standout & Beyond*

A proud 1982 graduate, Lori McDevitt, formerly known to her fellow Tigers as Lori Lidia (pronounced Ly-dee) was known for her many sports, but probably best known as a Lady Tiger on the basketball court.

A recent transplant from California in the middle of 7th grade, Lori soon became known as a fast runner, 3rd baseman on her Ridgefield Softball League and a year-round swimmer on the Danbury YMCA Swim Team and summer swimmer for Mimosa in her early years.

Her four years at RHS is where she excelled and tried new sports. While lettering in four sports, basketball, soccer, softball and track, Lori continued swimming in the summer and attending basketball camps in the Poconos. She spent summers lifeguarding, teaching swim lessons and was an Assistant Coach for her Mimosa swim team. Her dream was to play college basketball.

Her basketball career at RHS was led by four separate coaches. She was captain her senior year and was awarded MVP her sophomore

year and made All-Tourney teams. She was a high point scorer in her Sophomore, Junior and Senior years and was awarded FCIAC 2nd team. In soccer, Lori was captain in both her Junior (first year RHS had a team due to Title IX) and Senior years. It was her Senior year that the team finished 3rd in the state! Three years of softball lead her to her Senior year of wanting something different. Lori was asked to “throw” due to her softball experience, and a new javelin launcher was born. She made it to States in both the javelin, the 100 yard dash and the 4 x 100 relay.

The Ridgefield Press honored Lori during her Senior year with an article titled, “Lidia: A Star in Any Sport” alongside one of ROTA’s past honoree, Pat Enright. She was also voted “Best Female Athlete” by her peers prior to graduation.

Fast forward to adulthood. After attending Fresno State University in California, Lori married, had three amazing children and took up another new sport, Tennis. The love of competition in her blood. Both of Lori’s parents continue to play tennis. Lori competes in tournaments and has qualified and competed in State and Regional competitions in California and Colorado. After two knee replacements, her drive and determination allowed her to compete again after 8 years off, even when her surgeon said “No more singles!”. She competed in the 55-plus National tournaments in Florida, Alabama, Arizona and California as a singles player. Last year, Lori finished 2nd Nationally. Currently Lori is ranked 1st in Colorado, 1st in her region (5 states), and 7th Nationally.

Sutter Hospital Foundation had done a story on Lori and her amazing triumph after competing successfully and can now be found on YouTube. She has served as a guest speaker for other knee replacement patients.

Her love of sports has also given her the opportunity to coach high school girls tennis and youth basketball. Watching the girls compete, enjoy sports and learn life skills make Lori happy and fulfilled, knowing Ridgefield gave her the start of her sports career. Lori has served on a Board of Directors for Elite Tennis, a nonprofit which funds National level and NCAA level tennis players for tournaments, as well as serving on the board of KidNuz.org, a children’s news podcast.

Ridgefield will always hold a special place in Lori’s heart. She gives back by organizing her last five class reunions.

Lori and her husband, Dave have established a Leadership scholarship to two deserving seniors each year where their own children attended. It’s important that today’s youth are recognized for their achievements, such as ROTA does for their own RHS Seniors. ■

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SPORTS AWARD
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## Bob Landers

Bob Landers was an outstanding Ridgefield High School athlete that graduated in 1976. He was known for his prowess in football, baseball and skiing and his competitive spirit.

Playing varsity football for four years, Bob was a starter for three years. He was captain of the team his senior year as well as FCIAC First Team as a senior.

For baseball, it was much the same for Bob. He played varsity for four years, being a starter for three years. He was also captain of the baseball team his senior year and named to the All-Area, All FCIAC First Team. In addition to this award, he was also named to the All-State Baseball Team for Connecticut.

During the winter Bob was on the Ridgefield High School ski team for three years. While on the team he made All FCIAC and All State during his junior year. Bob was active in the Little League in town. He coached Little League teams for three years and umpired Little League for three years.

After high school Bob went to Providence College in Rhode Island and was a football starter there for all four of his years. He started his freshman year on defense and then went to running back the next three years. From his sophomore to senior year, he gained the title of



All Conference and in his senior year he was awarded the title of MVP of the D-3 college football league.

As a running back Bob averaged 107 yards a game. He also played safety on third and long and ran back punts and kickoffs. Bob loved playing football at both Ridgefield High School and Providence. He found it a “fun” experience and he found his teammates became like family.

While at Providence, Bob also played baseball with a very strong D-1 Team, but he only stayed with this team for one year. He decided that with football and his workload, he could not put into baseball what he really needed to do to succeed. Whenever possible, Bob’s family would come to see Bob perform athletically while at Providence University.

For his entire career, Bob has been in the pharmaceutical field and now lives near Dallas Texas. Never known to do anything without giving it his all, Bob has been elected one of the top 25 Health Care-Technology Businessmen in his area. Using what Bob learned academically and athletically at both Ridgefield and Providence Schools, Bob has always risen to the top.

Like several of the top athletes from Ridgefield past, Bob has been married to a Ridgefield girl, B.J., for over 40 years. Bob and B.J. Have four children who are also outstanding athletes. The legacy lives on.

Ridgefield Old Timers Club is very honored to award Bob Landers tonight for his splendid athletic career. ■





*1983 Ridgefield High School Boys Soccer Team*

SPORTS AWARD

## Ridgefield High School Boys Soccer Team

*1983 + 1984 State Champions*

The Ridgefield High School boys' soccer team established itself as a powerhouse in Connecticut in the 1980s. The 1982 soccer team, in particular, was very talented and went to the State finals, only to lose to Staples. When the 1983 season arrived, local newspapers predicted that the RHS team had a "rebuilding year" ahead of them because the team had graduated nine seniors from their starting lineup.

However, this team knew they were capable of winning. The team's roster was filled with a group of players who had played together for many years and were led by one of the top coaches in the state, Al Diniz. Al had coached this team since the boys were 9 and 10 years old, seeing them qualify for tournaments and the Connecticut State Cup finals each year. This proved to be the difference. The team didn't mind being called an underdog while they recorded win after win, culminating in impressive back-to-back State Championship victories in 1983 and 1984.

Throughout their seasons together, the team showcased their prowess by defeating formidable opponents. Their journey to the title was marked by unforgettable moments, including defeating Staples for the first time in Ridgefield history during the regular season and then again in the



*1984 Ridgefield High School Boys Soccer Team winning state championship game.*

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playoffs. In fact, they recorded an undefeated season in 1983, not losing a single game, a feat that has not been repeated since.

Al Diniz was an integral part of the team's success. He focused on a style of play consisting of quick touches and possession soccer. He instilled in his players the right way to play soccer. His philosophy and coaching skills, along with the players' hard work and resilience, led the teams to a remarkable record over the two seasons. ■



*1984 Ridgefield High School Boys Soccer Team winning state championship game.*



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THE ROTA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS
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## Steven Hergenrother

Steven Hergenrother is a distinguished student-athlete who is attending Princeton University. His exceptional academic record includes being consistently on the High Honor Roll and achieving the top score in 11 AP classes, which

earned him a Johns Hopkins Junior Book Award and recognition as a Semi-Finalist in the State Essay Contest.

Athletically, Steven has anchored two national championship relay teams, earned 8-time All-American honors, and set multiple school records in track and cross country. His leadership roles include serving as captain of both the cross country and track teams, while his extensive volunteer work with organizations like Lion's Heart and the Kids Against Hunger Coalition highlight his commitment to community service.

Steven's dedicated work ethic extends to his personal life, where he has funded his college education through various jobs, reflecting his deep appreciation for the supportive Ridgefield community. ■



## Abigail Seal

Abigail Seal is a motivated student, who is pursuing her studies at the University of St Andrews in Scotland. Throughout high school, Abigail has been recognized for her academic excellence, including earning High Honor Roll status and the FCIAC Exemplary Scholar-Athlete Award.

Her leadership skills were showcased as a student representative at the FCIAC Leadership Conference. Athletically, Abigail has excelled in field hockey, tennis, softball, and gymnastics, serving as a senior captain in field hockey and demonstrating strong teamwork and dedication. She has been actively involved in student government, serving as a Senator and President.

THE ROTA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS
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Her extensive community involvement includes roles in student government, the Appalachia Service Project, Safe Rides of Ridgefield, and the Molly Ann Tango Memorial Foundation. Abigail's diverse work experience and her deep-rooted values from growing up in Ridgefield shape her readiness to embark on her studies abroad. ■



## Aveline Pomposello

Aveline Pomposello, from Ridgefield, Connecticut, is a well-rounded student-athlete who has excelled in academics and sports at Ridgefield High School. Known for consistently achieving High Honor status, Aveline has also earned an All-State Honorable Mention in skiing. As a three-sport athlete in soccer, skiing,

and lacrosse, she served as the captain of the ski team in her senior year, showcasing her leadership and athletic prowess.

Aveline's commitment extends to community involvement and extracurricular activities, reflecting her strong character shaped by her experiences in Ridgefield. She will continue her educational journey at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, carrying forward the leadership and community values she has developed. ■



## Luke Pereira

Luke Pereira, a dedicated student-athlete from Ridgefield, Connecticut, is attending Xavier University. Throughout his academic career, Luke has consistently achieved High Honors. As a varsity captain in ice hockey, he earned All-State and All-FCIAC honors in hockey.



THE ROTA SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS
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As a varsity golf player he earned the Most Improved Player Award. His extensive community service includes four years with the Appalachian Service Project on the orientation team and Ridgefield Young Life, highlighting his commitment to service and leadership.

Luke's diverse work experience ranges from lifeguarding to working in his family's flower business, showcasing his connection to and love for his hometown. His accomplishments and dedication make him a standout student ready for the next chapter of his life. ■



Congratulations to all the ROTA  
Honorees and Scholarship Winners.







## Ridgefield High School Ski Team Booster Club

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Congratulations to last year's winners, especially  
our own skier Aveline Pomposello



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# RHS SKI TEAM

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# Past Old Timers' Awards

## Posthumous Awards

1994: Ralph Crouchley, Kip Holleran, Francis Martin; 1995: Chuck Walter, Charlie Ashbee, Frank Minnerly; 1996: Lou Girolmetti, John Sullivan, John Bacchiochi; 1997: Alex "Lick" Santini, Red Delugo, Bill Allen; 1998: Joseph Venus, Art Sfondrini, Bob Stolle; 1999: Alan Crowley, Don Ligos, Harold Hilton; 2000: Art Bellagamba, Stubb Cummings, Margaret O'Sullivan; 2001: Tony Deluca, Walt Ryba, Bob Seymour; 2002: John Sturges, Jimmy Warner; 2003: Scott Nye, Fred J. Romeo, Sr., Mario Scala; 2004: Steve Lancaster, Bernie Leighton, Pete Carboni; 2005: Charlie Ritch; 2006: Roy Cogswell, Hank Wilson; 2007: Tony Del Biondo; 2008: James Principi, Jeanne Timpanelli; 2009: Bradford Mortensen and Edward Zandri; 2010: Richard Ligi, Richard McGlynn, Richard Serfilippi; 2011: Robert J. Morganti, Erik Hoag, Andrew Lecher; 2013: Gary Beaudine; 2014: Harold Finch, Percy Marshall Bouton; 2015: Stephanie Boles-Kavanagh; 2016: Tom Belote; 2017: Doris Ventres; 2018: Jack Herr; 2019: Steve Carboni; 2022: Doug Clewell, Jack MacDonald, Bill Owens, 2023: Sally Ruggles

## Civic and Special Awards

1992: Richard Venus; 1993: Bob Tulipani; 1994: Beth Yanity; 1995: Aldo Tulipani; 1996: Ferdinand Bedini; 1997: Matty Pambianchi Family; 1998: Dr. Peter Yanity; 1999: Charles Coles; 2000: Kitty Rosa; 2001: Lewis Finch; 2002: Edith Meffley; 2003: Kay Ables; 2004: Chuck Dean; 2005: Doug Main, Renee Franks; 2006: Jack Sanders; 2007: Ancona Family; 2008: Maureen Kiernan, Dave Scott; 2009: Vincent Pannozzo, Jeanne Cook; 2010: Christine and Philip Lodewick; Chuck Camp; Reed Whipple; 2011: Mary and Nelson Gelfman; Terry Hastings. 2012: Martha and Dave Campbell; Joseph Consentino. 2013: Richard and Deirdre Aarons; George Besse 2014: Darla and Ben Shaw; Joy and Hank Kutcha; Joyce Ligi; 2015: Liz & Steven Goldstone, Bill Craig; 2016: John and Elaine Couri; 2017, Janice Pauly; 2018: Barbara Manners and Eugene Healy 2019: Peter Seirup, Mike Bedini; 2022: Denise Qualey, Amy & Scott Russel, 2023: Larry & Nancy Bossidy, Walter & Anne Beatty

## Educator Awards

2013: Dr. Harold E. Healy and Dirk Bollenback; 2014: Dr. Philip Pitruzzello; 2015: Bob Cox; 2016: James Muraski; 2017: Joan Voss; 2018: Bill Monti 2019: Bob McDonald; 2022: Jean Jaykus

## Arts Awards

2019: Kevin Briody; 2022: Tina Sturges; 2023: Denise Charboneau; 2023: Mark Salzman

## Sports Awards

1992: Tabby Carboni, Lynce Carboni, Leo Pambianchi, Tom Clark, Charlie Frattini, Joe Forcelli, John Carboni; 1993: Gene Casagrande, Bob Mulvaney, Vin Petrini, Charly Stolle, Joe Tulipani; 1994: Lyman Anderson, Harry Bennett, Aldo Girolmetti, Evo Principi, John Tulipani; 1995: Peter Casagrande, Dino Cicolani, Joe Brunetti, Ray Eppoliti, Bud Mahoney, Reno Severini; 1996: Ben Bedini, Fabio Biagiotti, Jack Leary, Harold Mead, Romeo Petroni, Janalie Severini; 1997: Primo Baldaserini, Dante Brunetti, Frank Lancaster, Sr., Walt Evans, Navio Ligi, Fred Mazzi; 1998: Gino "Jinx" Baldaserini, Dr. Phil Martin, Dr. Joe Moylan, Andy Montanari, Julius "Bugsy" Santini; 1999: Dick Bellagamba, Si Bellagamba, Gene Lavatori, John Lavatori, Gene McMahon, Harry Pierandri; 2000:

Glen Anderson, Bill Elliot, Booker Jackson, Tom Mitchell; 2001: Ned Carboni, Paul 52 Carboni, Jim Costanzi, John Fossi, Artie Frattini, Nick Reid, Gloria Sharkany; 2002: Ed Dowling, Jack Jones, Jack O'Keefe, Jim O'Keefe, Mike Ryba, Aldo Travaglini, Harry Zandri; 2003: Aldo Biagiotti, Chip Bliss, Bob Carboni, John Forcelli, Jim Mullen, Vince Paccadolmi, Fred Romeo; 2004: Faust Verna, Lou Bellagamba, Chip Salvestrini, Alley Frulla, Rudy Marconi, Jim Tulipani and the CYO Girls Championship Basketball Team; 2005: Tom Cesca, Tom Santini, Richard Polverari, Bob Pambianchi, Gregg Hutchings, Carol Torcellini, Dave Campbell, Bill Polverari, Renzo Falcinelli, Jimmy Bacchiochi; 2006: Larry Bossidy, Jr., Isabel Caporale, Frank Lancaster, Jr., Carl Scala, John Stolle, Dave Sturges; 2007: Dave Landers, Jay Contessa, Chip Dean, John Devendorf, Marie Frulla, Steve Martin, Alan Wallace; 2008: Richard Lavatori, Judy Laslo, Craig Saltzgaber, Frank Serfilippi, Paul Vaughn, Chip Wilson; 2009: Robert Leary, Robert Lewis, Patricia Girolametti, Richard Miller, Peter Santini, Michael Principi, and Dr. Richard Scala; 2010: Abe Morelli, Tom Fossi, Michael Bowman, Amy Fredericks, Christopher Winnes, Janel Jorgensen, Michael Dell'Aquila, Tony Wilmot; 2011: Lee Pasquarella, Harland Brooks, Janet Yanity, Harry Geary, Thomas McDonald, Joseph Korczynski, Lea Ann Schmidt, Gary Bellagamba; 2012: Michael Conroy, Anthony James Forcelli, Beth Ondrick Gattey, Terence Hughes, George R. Mulvaney, Phil O'Brien, Walt Valentine; 2013: William 'Sandy' Allen, Paul Bossidy, Dorene Almgren DeCecco, Mike Harris, Mike Maiolo, Ed Stone, Nicole Colanari Twomey; 2014: John Lorenzini, Peter Stuart Jongbloed, Brian Sullivan, Thomas Scala, Sandy Beal Carpenter, Nicole Muschett DiAntonio, Neil Ringers; 2015: Don Innamorato, Richard Dingee, Susi Mang McDonald, Guy Welton, Karen Dingee Leibowitz; 2016: Al Diniz, John Kreisher, Jack Hughes, Jim Croce, 1967-68 Football Team, Chip Wood, William Van Orman, Cliff Onolfo, Kate McMorran Leavey, Sue Ellis; 2017: Dr. Joseph Connelly, Nancy Ruhl Hurley, Bo Beatty, Danny Geary, Amy Walter Hillenbrand, Dr. Theodore Librizzi; 2018: Stan Engelhardt, Bob Phalen, Mike Bossidy, Lena Onyshkewych; 2019: Bridget Stearns, John Hughes, Kevin Morris; 2022: A.J. Martinich, Sarah Townsend Pomposello, Pat Cozens, Miles Tullo, Mike Bellagamba; 2023: Bob DeCosta, Kristy Webster Liesegang, Katie O'Toole, 1983 State Champion Football Team, 1977 Boys Relay Track Team

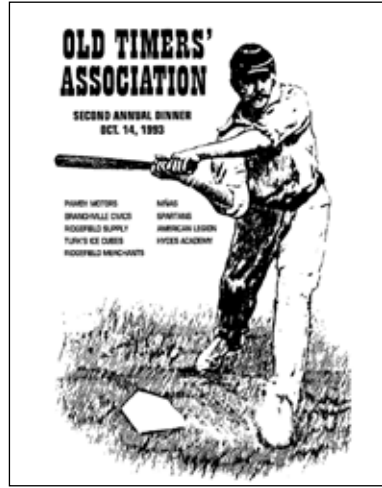
# Ridgefield Old Timers Association:

*Honoring Ridgefielders since 1992*

About 30 years ago, a group of friends got together with the idea of forming an old timers group for Ridgefield. Paul Baker, Julie Petrini, John Tulipani, and Joe Brunetti met at a dinner and decided to model the new organization after old timers groups in Danbury and Norwalk, which had honored several Ridgefield athletes over the years.

The original purpose of the new organization was to honor great athletes who were unable to continue their education past their school days, and set up a scholarship to assist current athletes. The organizers held several meetings and drew in 18 other supporters. They elected a board of officers with Paul Baker as the first chairman. Walt Evans was elected treasurer, and Julie Petrini, the first secretary.

The Ridgefield Old Timers Association began to have awards banquets in October 1992. Seven Ridgefielders were selected to be the honorees and the first Special Award went to Richard E. Venus. The first scholarship recipient was Thomas B. Gareau. He had been accepted at the University of Virginia.



**The 1993 dinner program's cover.**

The guest speaker at the first banquet was Spec Shea, a pitcher for the New York Yankees. The advertisement book for that first gathering was only 20 pages, cover to cover. The event was a success and money was put into a scholarship fund.

The first award of the scholarship to a female Ridgefield High School graduate occurred in 1996. Janine Murphy was involved in three sports and many civic endeavors. A year later, it was decided to annually award scholarships to both male and female recipients, and the winners in 1997 were

Charles Bliss and Kerry Bennett. The amount of the scholarships has grown over the years as a result of the advertising placed in this book, as well as other fundraising efforts — especially the annual golf outing and pig roast, which took place in June at the Ridgefield Golf Course.

In the association's second year, it introduced the Civic Award, and the first recipient was Bob Tulipani. The next year, Beth Yanity became the first female recipient of the Civic Award. In 1999, Sandy Pierandri Warner became the first female member of the board of directors; she was also the association's third secretary.

The motivational guest speakers, once thought necessary for a good event, began to make the banquets stretch late into the evening. Members and guests wished to hear more from the award winners. After the event ran until 11:10 p.m. in 1999, the association decided to drop the guest speakers and to feature the honorees, as well as the emcee, often founder Paul Baker, who had a long career as a radio and television broadcaster. In many later years, Tom Belote was emcee.



The Ridgefield Old Timers Association has continued to meet annually in October to honor athletes and others, and to award scholarship. In 2006, the bylaws were updated to allow Ridgefield residents who have lived here at least 25 years to become members. Before this, members had to be natives and/or graduates of Ridgefield High School. And to paraphrase the United States Marine Corps, “we are always looking for a few, very good, hard-working new members.” ■

**You don't have  
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page 4.*



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A black and white photograph of three men in business suits standing in front of a bookshelf filled with books. The man on the left is smiling, the man in the center is looking directly at the camera, and the man on the right is also smiling. The text is overlaid on the bottom right of the image.

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