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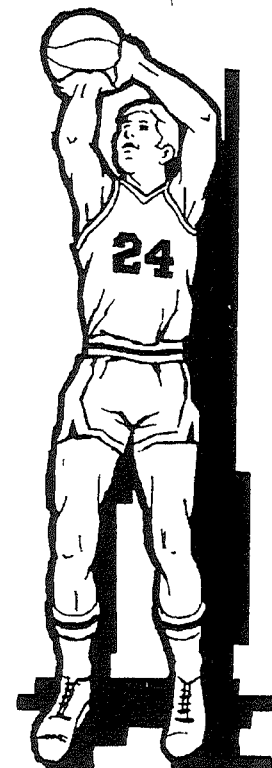
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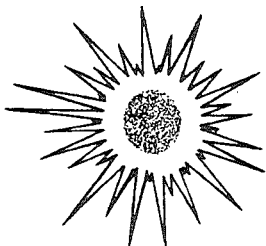


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A Message from the Chairman

Good Friends,

The Ridgefield Old Timer's Association welcomes you to our Sixth Annual Awards Banquet. Those athletes we honor this evening made great contributions to Ridgefield Sport's History. Our Civic Award Winners are honored for their many contributions to this community. We also take pride in those we honor posthumously and we remember former honorees who have since passed away.

Due to the popularity and success of our annual banquet, for the first time this year, we are pleased to be able to provide an additional \$1000 scholarship to a Ridgefield High School graduate. Our hearty congratulations to our 1997 recipients, Kerry Bennett and Charles Bliss.

I am honored to again serve as this year's chairman. As I have said previously, this event not only gives us an opportunity to honor long time Ridgefielders for their civic and athletic achievements, but also represents a celebration of "our roots" in this great town. Tonight, we again gather to reminisce, celebrate, meet old friends, laugh, and renew our common bonds.

My thanks to all of the members of The Ridgefield Old Timers Association who have worked so hard for the success of our banquets.

As you view this Program, please take special note of our contributors. They make it possible for our organization to continue awarding our annual Scholarships. All proceeds from this and all future dinners go and will go exclusively to our Scholarship Fund. Please think of them when you are in need of goods or services.

Finally, I encourage all of you to become active in the organization. Only with your participation can we continue this event which has become so special to all of us.

Congratulations to all our honorees.

Respectfully,
John Pierandri, Chairman

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CIVIC AWARD



Matty Pambianchi Family

When Armando "Matty" Pambianchi returned from World War II and opened his first business, an auto body repair shop on Bailey Ave., little did he know the impact his family would have on his hometown of Ridgefield, Matty teamed up with his brother Harry and together they started Pamby Motors which has now grown to largest automotive business in town. About the same time Matty and his wife, the former Gilda Santini, started their family having three sons, John, Michael and Fred. Today these three men carry on the business following in their father's footsteps.

Matty, Gilda and the boys have all worked hard to make their business a success but have never forgotten that without the support of the community it would have been impossible, it is not surprising that, with this success, the Pambianchi family has always given back to the community as much as they could.

The list of organizations aided by the Pambianchis is almost endless. Matty began sponsoring sports teams in the fifties, softball teams, bowling teams, little league and Babe Ruth baseball teams, and Townies basketball teams to name a few. Matty and his sons all became members of the Italian American Mutual Aid Society and supported their club whenever and however possible.

With Matty's untimely death in 1986 the Pambianchi family's commitment to their community not only did not end but grew stronger. Gilda and the boys were very active in the Western Connecticut Regional Hospice, giving their time and raising funds. The list of organizations they have helped include the Lions Club, The Kiwanis Club, The Ridgefield Symphony, the Ridgefield Library and the Ridgefield Boys and Girls Club.

The family has also set up a scholarship called the Matty Pambianchi Scholarship that is awarded to a Ridgefield High School graduate each year who is intending to pursue an academic program that is automotive related. John Mike and Fred have all given their time to the Ridgefield Little league as coaches and managers and John and Mike are currently coaching Pop Warner Football.



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— **POSTHUMOUS AWARD** —

COACH BILL ALLEN



It was exactly 50 years ago this September that Bill Allen came to Ridgefield and began a career in education. It was a life that brought him much personal satisfaction as well as the admiration of those who came to know him. In 1979, Coach Allen retired after 32 years of service to our town. His legacy as a teacher, coach and athletic director, included expanding the high school athletic program from 3 to 24 inter-scholastic sports and from one head coach (himself!) to 38 coaches and assistants. He was also the founder and first president of the Ridgefield Little League.

An avid baseball enthusiast, Coach Allen was a pitcher in the semi-pro baseball league on Cape Cod for several summers. Baseball was his forte and baseball was the last sport he coached. During his tenure at RHS, his teams won five consecutive league championships. One of his fondest memories was of the 1966 season, where the team went undefeated, winning 15 games in a row. In 1971 he retired from active coaching after directing football, basketball and baseball for 25 years.

In 1983, Allen was inducted into the Connecticut Coaches Association Hall of Fame. Nick Zeoli, a Hall of Fame committee member and former coaching rival of Allen's said: "He was a doer. He didn't sit back and criticize. You can't say a bad thing about him." One of his former players is Ridgefield High's current baseball coach, Frank Lancaster who said: "He gave everyone a fair shake. Everyone played despite the fact we were always fighting for the championship. He was a quiet, compassionate coach. I only saw him get mad twice." On his coaching philosophy, Allen said, "I was low key. A kid goes through high school once, if he doesn't play then, he might not have another chance. Winning was important, but it wasn't the paramount issue."

Coach Allen died in 1993. He is survived by a son, William Jr., two daughters, Barbara and Nancy, seven granddaughters and a grandson.

Congratulations
To
Ridgefield's Old Timers

Thank You
For Being
Such A Great Part
Of Ridgefield

John & Sylvia Sturges

— POSTHUMOUS AWARD —

ROBERT "RED" DLUGO



Born in Bridgeport CT, in 1919, where he received his schooling, Robert "Red" Dlugo was to become one of Ridgefield's memorable athletes. During WWII he joined the Army, was stationed in Alabama, South Carolina and served in the European Theater. While stationed in South Carolina, he became star pitcher on the Base's State Champion fast pitch softball team.

After the War, Red got a job at Gilbert and Bennett, married "local girl" Helen Heibeck and moved to Georgetown. In 1952, the Dlugos moved to Ridgefield where the "city boy", much to his amazement, took easily to country living.

Red became friends with the "Branchville Boys" (Fibber Biagiotti, Tony DeLuca, John Forcelli, Vin Petrini, to name a few) and played with them on the Branchville Civic's baseball and softball teams. He was their top pitcher. In a radio interview with Paul Baker, Red told the story that during his no-hitter against Brewster, he was heckled throughout the game by the furious, Brewster fan "peanut lady" ('5¢ a bag!') for throwing illegal pitches.

After hanging up his baseball glove, Red became an avid bowler and golfer. Bowling in many of the area's leagues, he was an excellent bowler with a lifetime average of about 187.

Red's interest in golf began in high school as a caddy. At the Fairfield County Club, he regularly caddied for and played with Julius Boros, whom he credits with teaching him about the game. For many years, he held the club championships at Vail Grove in North Salem and at Ridgefield's Dilly Ridge. Red had holes in one at Vail Grove, Dhly Ridge and Ridgewood. A big straw hat that he wore became his golfing trademark.

Red retired from Gilbert and Bennett in 1989. He died in 1990 and is survived by his wife, Helen, daughter, Carol, son, Donald and three grandchildren.

Congratulations!

1997 Ridgefield Old Timers



YOUR PARTICIPATION IN & ENTHUSIASM FOR
SPORTS IN RIDGEFIELD
HAS ADDED A WONDERFUL PAGE TO
OUR TOWN'S PROUD HISTORY.

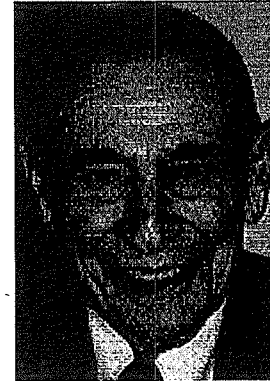


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PRIMO BALDASERINI

When the Ridgefield old Timers honor Primo Baldaserini on October 16th, they'll be bringing back memories of one of Ridgefield's all-time sports chapters. "Preem" was a member of the Ridgefield Spartans football team that dominated local sports in the early 30's.

The Spartans played teams like the Stamford North Ends; Bridgeport Western-Jacksons, and teams from Norwalk, Springdale and others. Their most notable victory was cause for celebration into the night and even for days afterward. The opposition was the Danbury Shamrollers . . . representing a merger of the Danbury Shamrocks and Steamrollers, considered to be much better than the locals.

The Spartans upset the Shamrollers 14-0 in Danbury, the first touchdown coming on a sleeper play to Lynce Carbone. (Danburians have difficulty remembering the game.) The sleeper play was a Spartans special . . . hiding Lynce behind the crowd along the sideline.

One other game Preem may or may not remember, but the story was told years ago by Herb Shaw who coached sometime after Earle Gillespie. Seems like "Preem" was among those who over-celebrated the night before a game and Herb kept him out of the lineup in the first half, and in Herb's words "he was like a raging bull on the sidelines." He finally put "Preem" in, in the second half, and according to Herb, "Preem" was a one-man wrecking crew in the second half."

"Preem" played a little baseball in the old twilight baseball league, he doesn't remember the team's name, but he may have been on Bluebirds roster. Jerry Zandri was the only name he recalls. There was one game in which an old scorebook showed he had two hits. (That may have been his total for the season)

During the Spartans era, few if any of the men went to college. It was depression time and most went to work to help with family finances. "Preem" worked as a carpenter with Pete McManus, then for years with the old Outpost Nurseries. He built the home he and his wife, Elina, live in now, and in which they raised their children, John and Dawn (Besse).

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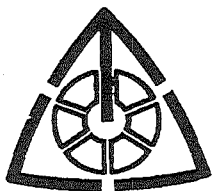
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DANTE BRUNETTI

Today he plays golf two to three times a week and swims in the pool about twice a day. Dante Brunetti and his wife of 42 years, Marian, are enjoying their retirement in Vero Beach, Florida.

He was born in Ridgefield in 1924, attended Ridgefield High School and graduated in 1942. He played his first organized ball in 1937-38 when he played shortstop on the local American Legion baseball team. Their games were played in Norwalk and Bridgeport. His basketball career started with the Boys Club in the mid and late 30's. They played teams from all over Fairfield County.

Dante was the shortstop on the R.H.S. winning team of 1941. Coach Norman Eichner was at the helm for the first time that year. In 1942 Dante, at the advice of big brother Joe, became a pitcher. The team was once again a championship one.

After graduation he played and pitched for the Ridgefield Merchants baseball team. He also played many games for the great softball team fielded by the Merchants.

Dante was also at home on the basketball court. He played for the R.H.S. '41-42 team and later he played with the Merchants basketball team.

Dante recalls great times swimming and diving at Great Pond before it became a public beach. He also enjoyed bowling for many years.

His sports career continued as he officiated high school basketball and as manager of a Little League baseball team.

After serving with the Army Air Force in Europe from 1943 through 1945, he returned to Ridgefield to pursue a career in Real Estate and Insurance sales. He served as president of the local Real Estate Board and a director and vice-president of the Connecticut Association. He was a charter member and past president of the Ridgefield Kiwanis Club.

Dante has expressed his pride in having played with many of the previously honored Old Timers. He and Marian look forward to the Old Timers Sixth Annual Award Banquet, where he will be honored.

We Salute the
"Youngest" Old Timer
TOM CLARK

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FRANK LANCASTER, SR.

Frank was born in Ridgefield in 1929, and is a lifelong resident. He and his wife, of nearly 49 years, the former Bunny Bedini reside at 25 Harvey Road.

A graduate of Ridgefield High School in 1947, Frank played football and basketball while there. He was a starter and full time player for the football team for three years and a first string guard on the basketball team as a junior and senior.

His interest in sports continued as he began playing softball. In 1950 while working for Charles of the Ritz in Norwalk he became the playing manager of their entry in the Norwalk Industrial League.

A tour of duty with the Army, 1950-52, took him to Germany as part of the Army of Occupation. Upon returning he became an original member of the Ridgefield Townies basketball team and again enjoyed fast-pitch softball in the Townies newly formed league. While a member of the Townies he was one of those responsible for the Townies youth basketball program which served the community for so many years. He also was instrumental in the Townies support of a girls softball league and Townie Belles, which was a womans softball team. A few years later, while he was writing a sports column for the Ridgefield Press, he secured the help of Horst Senf and Neal Casey and with the cooperation of William Seirup, Director of Parks and Recreation, the youth soccer program began in Ridgefield.

He used his influence within the Ridgefield Townies to assist with the formation of an American Legion baseball team in 1968 through 1970 and later to put Ridgefielders' entry into the newly formed Housatonic Intercity Baseball League.

He served the Babe Ruth league as umpire and was president for two years. He was the Red Raiders football team Head Coach for several seasons and was a prime mover in the formation of their Candlewood Valley Pop Warner League.

A past president of the Townies, Babe Ruth League, Father's Club, and Old Timers Association, he is a Past Noble Grand of Pilgrim Lodge I.O.O.F. and a Past Commander of Everett Ray Seymour Post #78 of the American Legion.

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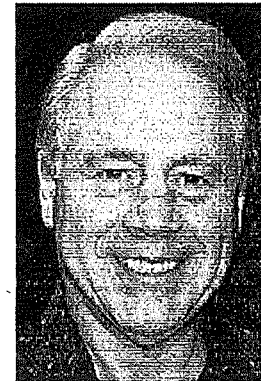


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FRED MAZZI

If one were to compile a list of the all-time greatest athletes at Ridgefield High School, Fred Mazzi would have to be near the top.

For four years during the mid 1950s, Mazzi was a dominant figure in interscholastic sports for RHS.

Mazzi began participating in organized sports in the seventh grade, at the Ridgefield Boys Club under

Ralph Crouchley. For two years he led the basketball team in scoring. He was also voted MVP in the Junior Gold Medal Tournament at the Danbury War Memorial both years.

He also was on the baseball team at the Boys Club for two years, playing first base and pitching.

As a freshman at RHS, Mazzi made the varsity on the six-man football team. In his first game he ran for two touchdowns and passed to Bob Earle for another as Ridgefield defeated Bedford Hills, N.Y., 20-13.

The same year he started for coach Mel Mackowicki on the basketball team. He led the team in scoring with 375 points.

The baseball season found him starting at first base, where in his freshman season he batted 275.

When Mazzi was a sophomore, RHS was playing its last season of six-man football. He was a starting halfback in every game that season.

In basketball that year he once again led his team in scoring, setting a new school record with 432 total points. His high game was a 39-point effort against New Canaan. His leadership and scoring carried the team to the championship finals of the Housatonic Valley League, where Ridgefield lost a heartbreaker to Watertown, 61-58, in the final seconds of the game.

During the baseball season he pitched and played first base. The highlight of his season came at the expense of Bethel High when he pitched a no-hitter.

Presently, Fred resides in Mountain View, California with his wife Miriam. He has two children, Michelle and Vincent.

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Richard Venus ('92), Bob Tulipani ('93),
Beth Yanity ('94), Aldo Tulipani ('95)
Ferdinand Bedini ('96)

SPORTS AWARDS

1992

Tabby Carboni, Lynce Carboni, Leo Pambianchi,
Tom Clark, Charlie Frattini, Joe Forcelli, John Carboni

1993

Gene Casagrande, Bob Mulvaney, Vin Petrini,
Charley Stolle, Joe Tulipani

1994

Lyman Anderson, Harry Bennett, Aldo Girolmetti,
Evo Principi, John Tulipani

1995

Peter Casagrande, Dino Cingolani, Joe Brunetti,
Ray Eppoliti, Bud Mahoney, Reno Severini

1996

Ben Bedini, Fabio Biagiotti, Jack Leary, Harold Mead,
Romeo Petroni, Janaile Severini

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Fran Moylan ('95) Paul Baker ('96)

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Matty Pambianchi Family

SPORTS AWARDS

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Dante Brunetti

Walter Evans

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Navio Ligi

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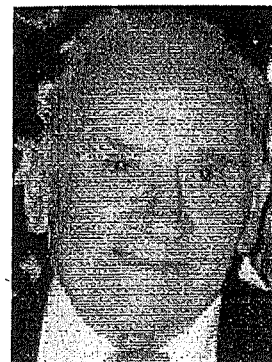


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NAVIO LIGI

Navio "Eggsy" Ligi was born on what is now Sunset Lane, (formerly known as Railroad Ave.), in Ridgefield in 1922. As a youngster, playing baseball was his main pass time. The neighborhood ball field was an open lot where the Ridgefield Arms now stands. Large pieces of concrete were used as bases,

Eggsy's abilities made him a star outfielder on the Ridgefield High School's winning teams of 1939-1940. Navio was a competitive player and he credits his success to "getting a jump on the ball plus concentration."

Past Old Timer's Recipients playing on that team included Jack Leary, John Tulipani, Evo Principe, Ben Bedini and Vin Petrini. Some long time Ridgefielders claim that the Ligi, Leary, Petrini outfield was Ridgefield High's all time best. Alfred Tulipani credits much of his pitching success to this same outfield.

Shortly after leaving high school, Navio joined the army. He spent much of World War II in the European Theater's 1st Army, participating in Normandy and the Battle of the Bulge. He was a member of the forces that liberated Paris and the Buchenwald Concentration Camp.

After the war, Navio returned to Ridgefield and to work at Gilbert and Bennett Wire Mill in Georgetown. He resumed playing baseball for the Ridgefield Merchants. During the summer, the Merchants, comprised of the same group of guys, played fast pitch softball. They were a part of an inter town league which included teams from Danbury and Georgetown.

Upon hanging up his baseball spikes, Navio became an avid golfer, winning many tournaments at the Vail Grove Golf Club,

Navio continues to live in Ridgefield with his wife of 51 years, Ridea. He has one child, Richard, a Major with the Ridgefield Police Department and two grandchildren.

CONGRATULATIONS

to

Ridgefield's

Old Timers



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WALTER EVANS

A native of Ridgefield, Walter Evans spent his first four school years in the Old Branchville Schoolhouse, which packed four grades into a single classroom. He moved to the high school on East Ridge in 1934.

In the 1940s, Ridgefield played only two sports, baseball and basketball. The basketball teams on which Evans played an aggressive game as a forward were only moderately successful.

The baseball teams, however, were entirely different as they lost only one league game in two seasons (1941-42) and won the league championship both years. Evans played first base and then shortstop and was all-league at both positions.

During World War II, he enlisted in the Navy. While stationed overseas in Australia, he played baseball against future Hall of Famer Phil Rizzuto. After the war, Evans played sandlot baseball for the Branchville Civics, and later turned to softball in the Townie's league and won many championships. He played first base for both teams.

Retiring from baseball and softball, he turned to bowling. After bowling for 20 years at Ridge Bowl in the Merchants League, he held the highest average of those who bowled more than 1,000 games.

His spare time is now consumed by playing two to three rounds of golf a week.

After working for Gilbert & Bennett for 40 years, Evans retired in 1987. He is a director of the Ridgefield Bank, president of the Branchville Fresh Air Association, a trustee of the Ridgefield Cemetery Association, and treasurer of the Ridgefield Old Timers Association,

He still lives in Ridgefield with his wife Marlene.

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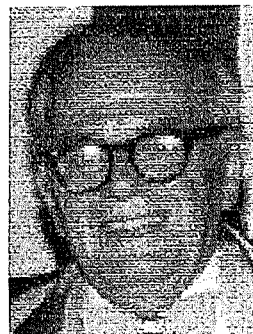
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– POSTHUMOUS AWARD –

ALEX "LICK" SANTINI



It has been said that in every community there are those persons about whom someone should write a book. Certainly, in Ridgefield, Alex "Lick" Santini was one of them.

The hardest part about writing it would be where to begin. He was a man of many talents, basketball, bowling and golf, and it was the latter with which he wrote perhaps his most indelible chapter. While he was capable enough to win local member-guest championships, and finish second to professional Leo Mallory in the Bermuda Open with a full set of clubs, it was his prowess with an old blade

putter that set him apart from any other golfer.

His most memorable victories came before a huge crowd that saw him defeat two popular local barristers, Eddie Dowling and Reed Shields at Silver Spring C.C. His other most notable victory was his win over Benny Jacobellis at the Newtown Country Club when Benny was pro there. To be best of our knowledge, "Lick" never lost a match with that putter.

Almost as notable was his boast that followed a bowling match that got Lick his most memorable coverage. Following a tenpin match against Brewster in Ridgefield, there was talk about the Lick's lasting power on the lanes to which Lick boasted he could bowl 200 games without stopping and average 170. The bet was made and over to Brewster a large contingent went. Soon a reporter arrived, and a sales rep for Trommer's Beer provided free beer. As the crowd grew, Alex started to put on a show bowling left and right handed at times using two lanes. The skin on his right thumb blistered and came loose, but Lick continued, and finished the 200 games.

Some will also remember his basketball with the low ceilings at the Italian-American Club Hall.

There is much more that can be written about Alex "Lick" Santini, for certain, one of Ridgefield's most unforgettable personalities. While the Old Timers are proud to honor him posthumously, he certainly is one of those who would have been honored during his lifetime if this Club were born earlier.

Lick's wife, Vivian, died in 1982. He is survived by four children — Robert, Philip, Betty Jane and Barbara, and several nieces and nephews.

We Salute the
"Youngest" Old Timer

TOM CLARK

His Friends

at Robert's Pond

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SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



CHARLES S. BLISS

Born on July 9, 1978 in Norwalk, CT, he has lived in Ridgefield his entire life. He attended Ridgebury Elementary School, followed by the East Ridge Middle School and ultimately, Ridgefield High School having graduated this past June. In addition to his education in Ridgefield, most of his athletic experience has occurred here as well.

Charles began playing hockey in kindergarten and played soccer as well. He also tried Little League Baseball. Athletics stayed this way for him until 4th grade when friends from Wilton introduced Charles to Lacrosse. He played on Wilton's Youth Lacrosse League for one year until the following year when Ridgefield established its own Youth Lacrosse Program. With the exception of a short stint with Pop Warner Football in the 7th grade, hockey and lacrosse have been Charles' chosen sports which brings him to his high school career.

He was a varsity athlete in both sports during all 4 years at Ridgefield High School having started on the lacrosse team beginning his sophomore year and as a junior and senior for the hockey team. As a junior, Charles received All FCIAC East 2nd Team for hockey and All FCIAC Honorable Mention for lacrosse. As a senior, he was named Captain of the hockey team and Assistant Captain of the lacrosse team receiving All FCIAC 1st team for hockey and for lacrosse, Division II 2nd team all state. Over Charles' four years, he amassed 55 goals and 40 assists for the hockey team as well as 126 goals and 42 assists for the lacrosse team.

While attending school and participating in sports, he worked at CVS part-time, assisted with the Ridgefield Youth Lacrosse Program on occasion and managed to make the honor roll several times.

Charles will be attending Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York beginning September where his goal is to major in History with a minor in Education. In addition, he hopes to continue to play lacrosse.

Charles would like to thank the Old Timers Association for their generous scholarship and to let them know that he intends to do well in school and on the athletic field this coming year.

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SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

KERRY BENNETT



It is not by chance that Kerry Bennett is one of the Old Timer's Association two 1997 Scholarship Recipients. Kerry moved to Ridgefield when she was in the 5th grade, where she attended Farmingville School. Kerry was very active throughout her high school years. She was a member of the varsity swim, ski and track teams, and captain of those same teams in her senior year. She performed community service, with the Appalachian Service Project and the Visiting Nurse's Association where, twice a week, she ran errands for an elderly woman. She was a member and officer of the Student Council and of the Homecoming Committee for four years. She was active in Safe Rides and the Out Door Club. She was a RHS Top Tiger, an Outstanding Senior of the Month, received the Secretary of State Citizen Award and was elected Senior Speaker at RHS graduation. With all this on her plate, she even had time to work. Congratulations, Kerry!

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