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# *Ridgefield Old Timers Association*



**Eleventh Annual Dinner**

**October 17, 2002**

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**A SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SUPPORTERS OF THE  
RIDGEFIELD OLD TIMERS ASSOCIATION**

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Eleventh Annual Ridgefield Old Timers Awards Banquet. As in preceding years we are gathered to honor a number of individuals who have made significant contributions to our town through their sportsmanship and sustained involvement in the life and affairs of our community and rich contributions to Ridgefield's past and present.

The Ridgefield Old Timers Association was organized eleven years ago for the purpose of uniting and promoting the good fellowship that developed among Ridgefielders during their schooling and their participation in sports, athletics and other community activities. In addition to honoring individuals from various segments of Ridgefield's past and present, the Association has devoted its efforts to establishing a scholarship fund for graduating RHS seniors. This year, as in the past, the Association awarded grants to two RHS graduates who demonstrated academic excellence, athletic prowess and sportsmanship, and gave generously of their time as volunteers in the community.

While in the past our benefit dinner has been the Association's primary fundraiser, this year, members Andy Montanari and Paul Baker were responsible for organizing and supervising the First Annual ROTA golf tournament. With the generous assistance of the First Union Bank and other businesses, this tournament was an extremely successful event that substantially contributed to our scholarship endowment.

The Association would like to thank those individuals and businesses that have contributed to our scholarship fund through their donations and advertisements in our program book. We hope that Ridgefielders will continue to patronize these businesses in recognition of the generous support they have provided to the scholarship fund.

As we have said in the past, tonight is a good time to remember friends and loved ones who are not with us and to give thanks that we have this opportunity to enjoy the fellowship of our members and friends.

Tom Belote  
Chairman

*Best Wishes  
to the  
Ridgefield Old Timers  
and  
Congratulations  
to the  
Eleventh Annual Dinner  
Award Recipients  
  
Tom & Jane Belote*



## EDITH MEFFLEY

A native of Montclair, New Jersey, Edith's penchant for volunteerism began early. She sold war bonds during World War II and was a nurse's aide in various hospitals. Edith graduated from the University of Colorado in 1947, the same year she married her husband, Fred, an Army Air Corps P47 pilot and fellow student at Colorado. Mrs. Meffley moved to Ridgefield in 1960 with

her husband Fred and their two children, Eric and Pamela. Almost immediately Edith became an active volunteer in Ridgefield organizations including the PTA and the Girl Scouts.

In 1965 Mrs. Meffley joined the Ridgefield Garden Club, an organization in which she has held nearly every office. She has served on the Environment Education Committee, the PATE Curriculum Guides as State Chairman, the American Land Trust Project as State Chairman, the National ACE Committee as Co-Chair, the Landscape Design School as Chair, the National Affairs and Legislation Committee, as Zone 11 Conservation Representative and as a volunteer in the Ballard Park Perennial Garden.

Mrs. Meffley was appointed to the Conservation Commission in 1965 and, to date, has been instrumental in advancing environmental issues, policies and programs. She has appeared at countless town hearings and meetings promoting sound growth, the preservation and acquisition of open space, and the protection of wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas. Mrs. Meffley helped establish a conservation curriculum in the school system thirty years ago and aided in making courses on environmental studies available to teachers throughout the region.

While perhaps best known for her accomplishments on the Conservation Commission, Edith's other civic activities included volunteer work for the Woodcock Nature Service, the Discovery Center of Ridgefield, the Cooperative Extension Service Program where she is a master gardener, the Ridgefield Tree Inventory and the Ridgefield Design Council Advisory Commission to the Selectman, and the Visiting Nurses Association where she became a member of the Board of Directors in 1972.

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## ALDO "SQUASH" TRAVAGLINI

"No village merchant was more recognized and more enjoyed during the 20th century than Aldo Travaglini . . . he was a center of the Main Street scene from the 1920's until the 1990's—and has even appeared as a character in a novel", reported the Ridgefield Press in its millennium issue "Notable Ridgefielders: A Who's Who of People Who Made News in the 20th Century". Squash, rumored

to have been nicknamed because of his love of vegetables, is the sixth of seven children and the first of his family to be born in the United States. His father, Nazzareno, came to the United States in 1911 and moved to Ridgefield to work on the F.E. Lewis estate. Squash was born here in 1914. He grew up on North Salem Road and later resided on Bailey Avenue.

Squash married Catherine Flood in 1941 and later purchased his Goldens Bridge home where he still lives after 50 years. Catherine and Aldo had four children, Margaret Anne, Joanne, Peter and Mark.

Squash began work at Bissell's Drug Store on Main Street in 1928 and continued there until 1953 when he purchased Finch's United Cigar Store at 389 Main Street. The News Store quickly became a central meeting place for Ridgefielders both young and old. Children would huddle in the corner of the store reading comic books (without paying) and teenagers would while away hours at Squash's soda fountain nursing 5¢ cokes after school. From early morning until closing time the Ridgefield News Store was the place to buy a paper and find out everything that needed to be known about town. Squash never stopped being a mainstay of the Ridgefield community and of the village in particular.

Many of Ridgefield's well-known residents, including our current First Selectman, Rudy Marconi, worked at Squash's after school and during the summer. Under Squash's ownership, the News Store sponsored numerous sports events and teams for both Ridgefield youths and its adults.

A consistent contributor to all extracurricular events at the high school, the News Store was most important to kids growing up in town.

Squash sold his store to his son, Mark, in 1989 but continued to work there until 1994 when the store was sold to its present owners.

Two years ago the Ridgefield Lions Club honored Squash as its Citizen of the Year, an award like tonight's, which is well deserved.

James V. Baker  
President



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## 2002 SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

This year's ROTA scholarships were given to RHS scholar athletes Elizabeth Case and Jerome von Kuhn.

### ELIZABETH CASE

Elizabeth is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Case of Peaceable Ridge Road. She has lived in Ridgefield for seventeen years and is attending Valparaiso University in Indiana. While at Ridgefield High Elizabeth was the Captain of the Indoor and Outdoor Girls Track Team. She ran outdoor track for four years and indoor track for three years. She also played varsity soccer for three years. Elizabeth received the high school's Scholar-Athlete Award and was on the honor roll throughout her four years at RHS. In addition to the Old Timers Scholarship, she is the 2002 recipient of the National Education Association Scholarship and the Service to Student Council Scholarship. Her part-time employment included working as a sales associate at Talbot's, as a lifeguard at Westmoreland and office work at the Board of Education. Elizabeth volunteered with Safe-Rides for two years, was a Silver Award member of the Girl Scouts and co-chaired her senior prom. Her career goal is to be either a physician's assistant or elementary school teacher.

### JEROME VON KUHN

Jerome is attending Clemson University. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Philip von Kuhn of Mead Ridge Road. Jerome played varsity football for three years with the Tiger squad and played RHS baseball for all four years of his studies at RHS. Jerome was the Captain of the Varsity squad in his senior year. In addition to sports Jerome participated in the Future Business Leaders of America, the Distributive Education Club of America and was awarded a Washington, D.C. internship. His summer employment included working at the Silver Springs Country Club.

In addition to the ROTA scholarship, Jerome was the 2002 recipient of the prestigious Ligi Memorial Scholarship.



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## JOHN O'KEEFFE

John O'Keeffe, Jr. graduated from RHS in 1960. He played football, basketball and baseball during all four years of high school. While he played different positions in all sports, John ended up starting as offensive and defensive end in football, center in basketball and first baseman in baseball.

John received his bachelor's degree from Fairfield University and was subsequently awarded his Juris Doctorate from George Washington University in 1968. After graduating law school, Mr. O'Keeffe was employed as an attorney by Pan American Airways until 1972 when he joined TWA. Between 1977 and 1984 he served as Corporate Secretary and Assistant General Counsel for TWA. Between 1984 and 1981 he was employed as Senior Vice President and General Counsel for the TransWorld Corporation and TW Services, Inc. He is now the President of the Ramapo Land Company.

John lives in Larchmont with his wife Valerie Moore O'Keeffe, who is Supervisor (First Selectman) of the Town of Mamaroneck. They have two children, Anna and John, and three grandchildren.

John golfs at the Bonnie Briar Country Club in Larchmont and at the Grand Harbor Club in Vero Beach. He also sails with the Larchmont Yacht Club.

John returns to Ridgefield frequently to see his brother Tom, and a number of RHS classmates including his golf buddy George Bessic with whom he participates in the IAMAS golf outings.

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*The  
Chris Santini Family*

*Congratulations  
Honorees*

*Pat Ligos & Family*

In Memory of Tom Clark

Best Wishes to the

Old Timers

## JIM O'KEEFFE

Jim O'Keeffe, graduate of the RHS Class of 1947 will be honored by his fellow old timers in absentia. Health issues preclude his attendance at the annual dinner.

Jim played RHS baseball, football and basketball. After graduation from RHS he went on to play UConn baseball but before he completed his UConn studies, Jim signed a contract with the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1950 he struck out 6 out of 6 in the Meriden Connecticut Brooklyn tryouts. Jim was immediately brought to Ebbets Field where he struck out three of three batters before he was ordered off the field by George Sisler. Assuming that Sisler's shout "Get this kid off the field" meant that he failed in this opportunity, Jim was later relieved when a Brooklyn outfielder explained to him in the locker room that the guys cleaning the stadium were actually paid by other teams to spy on the Dodgers. Unfortunately, a severe elbow injury caused by pitching at too early an age and by overthrowing ended Jim's professional career. He requested and received a release and returned to UConn after receiving an NCAA waiver. In 1952 he graduated from UConn but not until he was the winning pitcher over Rhode Island in the Yankee Conference Championship game. Jim also hit the triple that cleared the bases to bring in UConn's winning runs. His wife, Florence, still wears the gold baseball awarded to each team member.

After graduation from college Jim served in the U.S. Army as a Second Lieutenant where he played baseball with the Ninth Infantry Division. In addition to Jim the division had three other pitchers, Haddix (St. Louis Cardinals), Portecarero (Senators) and Branca (Brooklyn).

Following military service, Jim joined the FBI and served with the Bureau until his retirement in 1979.



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## POSTHUMOUS AWARD

### JOHN N. STURGES



Born on December 11, 1930 John Sturges not only constructed premium homes, but like other members of the Sturges family, built a reputation for honesty, integrity and dedicated service to our community. A modest man who eschewed publicity, John volunteered thousands of hours to the town and was instrumental in the erection of two of our largest schools. His watchful eye also led to the town's acquisition of Sturges Park.

A lifelong resident, John grew up on Fairview Avenue in the village and attended Ridgefield schools. A member of the class of 1948, he played football, basketball and baseball. He was a member of the Student Council, the Executive Board, the Hilltop Dispatch staff, and HiY. Voted most popular and the senior who had done most for RHS, John went on to study at Bethany College in West Virginia and the University of Connecticut. John married Sylvia Pinchbeck and together had a daughter Charlene and two sons, James and Donald.

As president of the John N. Sturges Construction Company, he was known throughout the area for the quality of his work.

In 1968 John was appointed to the school building committee that oversaw the construction of the new high school on North Salem Road that opened in 1972. Thirty years later he was serving as chairman of the new middle school building committee, overseeing a \$26 million project adjacent to that high school. Town school officials were so pleased with his leadership that the Board of Education voted to name the new middle school auditorium after him. A letter from fellow building committee members suggesting the dedication of the auditorium to John sums up the admiration Ridgefielders have for him, "As a role model, he displays important virtues such as intelligence developed from self-education and experience, a great love for family and country, exemplary business ethics, a true respect for nature and a demonstrated commitment to Ridgefield". Or, as Superintendent Ralph Wallace said, "The guy is just unbelievable".



## POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

**1994**

Ralph Crouchly, Kip Holleran, Francis D. Martin

**1995**

Chuck Walker, Charles F. Ashbee, Frank E. Minnerly

**1996**

Lou Girolmetti, Ed & John Sullivan, John Bacchiochi

**1997**

Lick Santini, Red Dlugo, Bill Allen

**1998**

Joseph M. 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

## Congratulations to all the

### Old Timers Honorees:

John Edward Dowling

Jack Jones

Jack O'Keeffe

Jim O'Keeffe

Mike Ryba

Aldo Travaglini

Harry Zandri

Edith Meffley

### Scholarship Recipients

Elizabeth Case

Jerimiah vonKuhn

### Posthumous Awardees

John Sturges

Jimmy Warner

You have all contributed greatly in your  
own way to making Ridgefield a great place  
to live and an even greater place to remember  
the days gone by.

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since 1875

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## RIDGEFIELD OLD TIMERS - 2002

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Vice Chairman . . . . . Andy Montanari  
Treasurer . . . . . Walter Evans  
Secretary . . . . . Barbara Serfilippi

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Andy Montanari  
Bob Tulipani

#### TICKET COMMITTEE

Jim Belote

#### AWARDS COMMITTEE

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Jim Belote  
Tom Belote  
Steve Carboni  
Andy Montanari  
John Pierandri  
Barbara Serfilippi  
Richard Serfilippi  
Sandy Mosiello

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Fabio Paul Biagiotti

#### PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Walt Evans  
Diane Minck  
Linda Parent  
Bob Tulipani

#### ARRANGEMENTS COMMITTEE

Cynthia Biagiotti  
Fabio Paul Biagiotti  
Pat Ligos

#### PUBLICITY Tom Belote

#### PROGRAM COVER Monique Carboni

#### TICKETS Village Printers

### PROGRAM

Welcome . . . . . Chairman Tom Belote  
Toastmaster . . . . . Paul Baker  
Dinner

### CIVIC AWARD

Edith Meffley

### SPORTS AWARDS

Jack Jones  
Jack O'Keeffe  
Jim O'Keeffe  
Mike Ryba  
Aldo Travaglini  
Harry Zandri

### POSTHUMOUS AWARDS

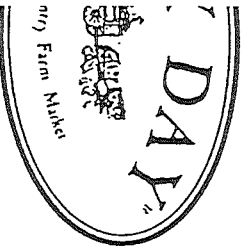
John Sturges  
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'O

S OLD TIMERS

## PAST RECIPIENTS

### CIVIC AWARD

Richard Venus ('92), Bob Tulipani ('93), Beth Yanity ('94),  
Aldo Tulipani ('95) Ferdinand Bedini ('96), Matty Pamblanchi Family ('97)  
Dr. Peter Yanity ('98), Charlie Coles ('99), Kitty Rosa ('00), Lewis Finch ('01)

### SPORTS AWARDS

1992

Tabby Carboni, Lynce Carboni, Leo Pamblanchi, 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 Cingolanti, Evo Principi, John Tulipani

1995

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

1996

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

1997

Primo Baldaserini, Dante Brunetti, Walter Evans, Frank Lancaster, Sr.,  
Navio Liggi, Fred Mazzi

1998

Cino "Jinx" Baldaserini, Dr. Philip Martin, Dr. Joseph Moylan,  
Andy Montanari, Julius "Bugsy" Santini

1999

Dick Bellagamba, Si Bellagamba, Gene Lavatori, John Lavatori,  
Gene McMahon, Harry Pierandi

2000

Glen Anderson, Bill Elliot, Booker Jackson, Tom Mitchell

2001

Ned Carboni, Paul Carboni, Jim Costanzi, John Fossi, Art Frattini,  
Nick Reid, Gloria Sharkany

### SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Fran Moylan ('95), Paul Baker ('96), Walter Boyce ('98),  
Earl Sturges ('99), Jerry Anello ('00)

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Cliff Webb  
Janet Yanity  
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## POSTHUMOUS AWARD

### JAMES WARNER

A member of the RHS Class of 1969, Jimmy Warner was born on March 14, 1951 and grew up in the near center of town on Gilbert Street. At Ridgefield high school he played varsity football for four years, baseball for three and track in his freshman and sophomore years. Jimmy was the captain of the basketball team and played offensive end on the RHS championship football squad. As described by a local sports writer, Jimmy "...was one of the finest all-round athletes in Ridgefield high school's history. Jim Warner could shoot a basketball as well as almost any player I have ever seen. That was his forte throughout most of his career with the Tiger's hoop squad."

Apart from his ability as an athlete, Jimmy was known for his character on the field and wherever he might be. He was a gentleman at all times on the football field and basketball court who never looked sourly at an official who may have made a call against the Tiger teams.

On Mother's Day, May 11, 1969, before his graduation from RHS Jimmy was injured in a tragic automobile accident that left him paralyzed until his death at the age of 50.



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**The Wiggins Institute for Social Integrity wishes to congratulate the Ridgefield Oldtimers for their fine work in honoring sportsmanship and civic mindedness within the community.**

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### **MIKE RYBA**

Mike Ryba was born in Stamford in 1945 and moved to Ridgefield from Greenwich with his parents and his brother Walt in 1956. Mike, like his older brother, quickly established a reputation for academic achievement and athletic excellence. By the time Mike reached sixth grade in the Ridgefield public schools, he was MVP of the Ridgefield All-Star Little League team. Mike played both tackle and linebacker on the first Red Raiders football team. In his second year of Red Raiders football, he played wide receiver and linebacker on the 14-1 team that went on to compete in the Orange Bowl playoffs. Mike Ryba was voted MVP. (This was the same year that the Red Raiders played their first night game.)

At RHS Mike was the President of his junior class, and the President of the Student Council in his senior year. Voted most popular student in his graduating class, Mike's commitment to academics was as unflinching as his dedication to sports. An Honor Society athlete, Mike was co-captain of the RHS football team and lettered in football for three years playing both tailback and safety. Mike also lettered in baseball for three years playing second base and, later, shortstop.

This valedictorian of the Class of 1963 graduated with a 99 average from RHS and went on to receive both his Bachelor's and Master's of Science degrees from MIT. At college Mike played indoor track running the 60-yard dash, the 440 and the 600. He also played shortstop for four years and was co-captain of the team in his senior year.

Mike spent most of his career with J. P. Morgan in New York where he was a Managing Director. He recently moved to Redding with his wife of eighteen years, Rosemary, and his son Michael who is in the eighth grade.



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## HARRY ZANDRI

Harry Zandri, a member of the Class of 1945, who was known for his cheerfulness and ability to heckle classmates, played baseball, football, and basketball for RHS. As centerfielder for the Hilltoppers in his senior year, Harry saved the day during a crucial league game against New Canaan when he beat out a timely bunt in the sixth to load the bases and set up the opportunity for Dan Fischialetti's two-run single to tie the score. Zandri followed with a smashing double in the seventh, which drove in RHS' winning runs. The Orange and Blacks went on to beat Darien in the playoffs winning the "Little Four" league championships for the first time in four years. In addition to Zandri, the 1945 Hilltoppers baseball team included Jim Costanzi at short stop, Lou Girolmetti at second, Gene McMahon catching, Dino Cingolani at first, Dan Fischialetti pitching, Aldo Biagotti in right field, Romeo Petroni at first and Dick Benzing at third.

Mr. Zandri also played center on the RES six-man football team coached by Ray Eppolitti with team mates McMahon at left end, Petroni at right end, Fischialetti at quarterback, Mario Scala at wingback and Ed Green at tailback.

Mr. Zandri served in the Army after graduating RHS and played catcher for the Townies team.

Harry owned the Prospect Street Market with his brothers Lou and Primo from 1950 to 1953. Between 1954 and 1989 he was employed by Gilbert and Bennett. His family members include his wife Sonja and three children Denise, Heidi and Michael.



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## JACK JONES



Jack Jones starred in three sports in high school and played with and against some of Ridgefield's best athletes. Most of us know Jack Jones had an outstanding 27-year career with the Connecticut State Police, and was, and is, a superb golfer.

Jack was six years old when he came to Ridgefield the first time. Then it was on to Darien where he lettered in three sports, baseball, basketball and as a fullback in football. In 1936, while a resident of New Canaan, he played baseball and basketball against Ridgefield. Manager Jack Crowley liked what he saw and convinced Jones to come play for Ridgefield and his life changed.

Ed Sullivan was his baseball idol and taught Jack how to catch. Gene Casagrande convinced him to play with the basketball team of "Chirp" Mei, Pete Casagrande, Dave Moore and Alex Santini. His first baseball teammates included Bob Mulvaney, Jerry Walters, Chuck Walker, Charlie Stolle, "Jinx" Baldaserini, and teams that followed included Bernie Leighton, Romeo Petroni, Lou Girolmetti, Dante Brunetti and many others. He recalls vividly the series between this team and Ridgefield Motors. Strangely, after the two split the first two games the third was never played.

Now 85 years old, he carries a 13 handicap, and has shot his age or better every year since his 79th birthday. He has played a number of golf courses across the country and has two wins in the area K of C tournament and a second place in the 1st Ridgefield Open at Silver Spring CC to his credit. One shot that has eluded him in 65 years of golf is a hole-in-one. (His daughter, Monica, beat him to it.) He is also a memorabilia buff. Meaningful nostalgic pictures, souvenirs, scrapbooks, golf balls, caps and more rest in prominent spots in his lovely home on Mary's Lane.

The biggest hit he ever made was with Jeannette McManus, whom he married in 1940. The two of them were married for 57 years when she passed away. They had four daughters, Betsy, Ginny, Arlene, and Monica. The Jones clan lists 16 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren.