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ASSOCIATION



25TH ANNUAL DINNER
OCTOBER 15, 2016



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A Message from the Chairman

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people and local businesses for sponsoring this program as well as those contributing to our Silent Auction. Without your help this program and this evening would not be possible.

- Congratulations to tonight's honorees and their families; including our two 4 year scholarship winners from the Ridgefield High School graduating class of 2016; Ally Livingston and Lorenzo Kinnicutt. Ally and Lorenzo are our 47th and 48th scholarship winners. This year we introduce a new 1 year scholarship in memory of past ROTA chairman Tom Belote. The 2016 winner of this award is Mikhaela Miller.

We are delighted to have our annual dinner in Ridgefield at St. Mary's Parish. The past few years have been some of the most successful dinners in more than a decade. Thank you to St. Mary's Parish for being a wonderful host and for allowing us to use their hall.

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

I would like to thank the members of the Ridgefield Old Timers Association for their continued hard work; Darla Shaw, Terry Hughes, and Bob Cox for putting together all the biographies for this program; Gregg Hutchings for organizing the ads for this program and Mark Lionetti who took on the task of organizing all the bios and adds and making sure the programs completed. Thanks to Doug Clewell, Richard Proctor and Terry Hughes for handling our ticket sales, as well as the staff at the Ridgefield Town Clerks office for their continued help. I would like to thank Senior Melodiers for performing at tonight's banquet. Thanks to John Pierandri, Peter Nichols and Mark Lionetti for heading our scholarship committee and picking this years winners. Sarah Flanagan consistently helps out in many areas including setting up the room for this event with the assistance of new members Trish Gernert and Trish LaRosa.

Last but by all means not least our new treasurer, Manette Hutchings, for running our silent auction as well as assisting with setting up this event.

I would like to thank Ridgefield Prime for serving us a delious dinner tonight, please support this exceptional local business.

I would like to make a plea to everyone reading this to consider becoming an active member of this organization. Like I stated earlier we provide a wonderful scholarship to deserving RHS graduates and for this to continue we need your help. You can go on our web site, Ridgefieldoldtimers.org to see when our next meet will take place or feel free to email me at Fitzfive@att.net.

Thank you all for coming out tonight to support a great cause. I hope you enjoy the evening.

Mark Fitzgerald

The 25th annual Ridgefield Old Timers Dinner Saturday, Oct. 15, 2016

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Who's in charge of the Old Timers?

The Officers: Mark Fitzgerald, chairman; Gregg Hutchings, secretary; Mark Lionetti, vice president. Manette Hutchings, treasurer.

Awards Dinner Committee: Doug Clewell, Bob Cox, Mark Fitzgerald, Andree Fitzgerald, Sarah Flanagan, Trish Gernert, George Hanlon, Terry Hughes, Gregg Hutchings, Manette Hutchings, Dave Kiley, Trish LaRosa, Mark Lionetti, Pete Nichols, John Pierandri, Richard Proctor, 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.



John and Elaine Couri

CIVIC AWARD

**John and Elaine Couri,
Many vital contributions**

Few families have contributed more to the Ridgefield community than John and Elaine Conklin Couri. Their contributions are always vital to the productive life of the community and have lasting value. Much thought and planning goes into each of their projects and there is continuous and personal follow-up.

Without the financial and organizational support of the Couris and the Goldstone's, Ridgefield would not have the most outstanding senior center in the state. People come from all over to visit Founder's Hall to see a model for a senior center of excellence. Even if these people are not able to replicate the physical facility, they are able to come away with

an all new philosophy about the role of senior centers and the types of challenging activities seniors really require today.

What some people do not realize is that the Couri's have also built senior centers similar to Founder's Hall in both Bangor and Moose River, Maine. The idea for the senior centers and also the camp for underprivileged children in Moose River, Maine came from Elaine Couri who works tirelessly as a volunteer. It is not uncommon to see John and Elaine helping out with various activities at the three senior centers. They see themselves as regular residents who can help out cooking burgers, setting up tables, and taking part in actual center activities right along with the other members.

In addition to the Couris' contribution to Founder's Hall, the family also contributes greatly to the Ridgefield Library, the Ridgefield Playhouse, and Housatonic Habitat for Humanity, the National Charities League and many other organizations. The impact of their donations have made a tremendous difference in the quality and number of special town activities offered through their philanthropy. The Couri's are very family oriented and want to enhance the life style of people of all ages.

Syracuse University is also very indebted to the Couri family for their outstanding contributions. John, as Chairman of the Board of Trustees Emeritus, and his wife, were responsible for funding the New Visitor Center and Museum at Syracuse University. They have also endowed many academic chairs, the Business Incubation Center, and were responsible for building an entire entrepreneurial complex at the Whitman School of Business. Every school dreams that they will produce alumnae like the Couri's.

As a business graduate of Syracuse University, 1963, John went on to co-establish Duty Free of America, and along with Elaine, established the Couri Foundation which is involved in numerous financial projects for the betterment of society. For all of his work with Syracuse University, John was awarded an honorary doctorate from the university in 2008. He was also awarded the highest accolade possible at Syracuse in 1993, the George Arent's Pioneer Medal.

For the Couris achievement of reaching their goal of inciting positive and lasting change in the world, the Ridgefield Old Timer's Association is happy to award them the Civic Award for 2016.

POSTHUMOUS AWARD

**Tom Belote,
Heart and Soul of ROTA**

There have been few people in the Ridgefield Old Timer's Association who have put more time and effort into making the scholarship program what it is today. Tom was well known



Tom Belote

for fund raising, nominating outstanding candidates and writing up their biographies for the paper and the brochure.

Tom Belote was the heart and soul of the Old Timer's Association.

Mr. Belote first moved to Ridgefield in 1947 and lived in an apartment over Squash's Store on Main Street. He later lived in the old Elm's Inn complex which was owned by his mother's family. He worked at the Elm's Inn from age nine to eighteen. This is where his love of good food started.

After being president of the student council, vice president of his class and voted the most likely to succeed at Ridgefield High School, Mr. Belote went on to Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

Since Mr. Belote received several scholarships to pay for his tuition as a student, he was always in favor of raising money for good students to further their education. He even taught for a year at Branchville before going onto law school at the University of Connecticut, where he graduated with honors.

With his law degree, Mr. Belote went on to further distinguish himself in the field of immigration and consular

law and was appointed a special assistant to the attorney general where he worked on cases involving counter-terrorism and Nazi war criminals. For his work in this capacity he won many awards.

In 1983 Mr. Belote decided to go into private practice with his wife, Jane, who was also an attorney. It was at this time that Mr. Belote began to give back to the community through service to the Community Center, Land Conservancy of Ridgefield, the police and fire department, the American Legion, the Ridgefield Historical Society, and other organizations, too many to mention. He also started his own non-profit for dealing with immigration issues for people in need.

People in Ridgefield knew and respected Mr. Belote, not only for all of his work on various committees but for three other activities. For 15 years, Mr. Belote wrote a column called Looking Back for the Ridgefield Press and entailed what went on in the history in Ridgefield many years ago. His antique, 1956 Ford convertible was also a memorable part of every parade. And his tales of his trips to Italy and related Italian food stories brought much attention to this well known Ridgefield icon.

Mr. Belote was not actually a founding member of the Old Timers Association, but he came close as he did so much important work for the club throughout the year. Mr. Belote is already greatly missed at monthly meetings and at the annual award's ceremony.

In memory of
Tom Belote

*"The Ridgefield Old Timers
 Tom Belote
 Memorial Scholarship"*

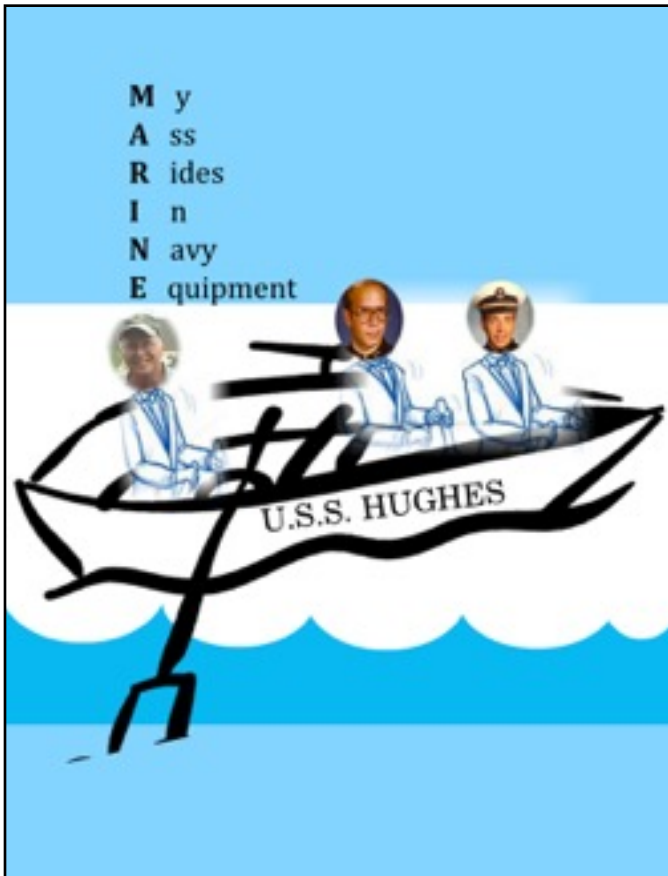
He loved Ridgefield.



Congratulations to our brother
Jack Hughes!
God Bless You & all the 2016 honorees.



St. Mary's Men's Ministry



SPORTS AWARD

Diniz, Kreisher, Hughes: The Founders of SCOR

In the early 70's organized youth sports was almost primarily just for boys ages eight and up to play baseball, football and basketball through the Little League, Babe Ruth, the Townies Basketball program, Pop Warner football and at the Boys Club.



Al Diniz

And then Al Diniz appeared. He was a long time soccer enthusiast from Portugal who played professional in Europe and in the semi-pro leagues in New York and throughout New England. He and his wife Norma were raising two boys, Darrell and Duane in Ridgefield where he also ran his business, a local hair salon. Like most Ridgefield boys, his 11 year old son Darrell played baseball and was on the same team with John Hughes, the oldest of the not yet nine

Hughes kids, and Keith Kreisher, the middle of three boys. It was in the stands of their Little League baseball games that soccer was conceived in Ridgefield. During the games Al Diniz would talk soccer with local fathers and he convinced a few to get their boys to give it a try. Dr. John Kreisher and Jack Hughes showed up with their boys one spring afternoon and they almost had enough for a team. Before you knew it, there was a team of boys 9-13 years old who started to play regularly under Al's tutelage which focused on discipline and fundamentals. Before long the boys became quite good. Three men from very different backgrounds in their thirties were

about to forge an unlikely friendship that would forever change the youth sports landscape in Ridgefield.

John Kreisher mentioned to Jack Hughes that there ought to be a league for these kids to play in locally. They placed an ad in The Press and before you knew it, they had a couple of hundred boys, and a fair amount of girls who would play with the boys for a couple of years until they had enough to form their own teams.

These gentleman were true pioneers, and truth be told, they were a couple of guys who fed off of the passion of one man who many would characterize over the years as borderline certifiably crazy – crazy for soccer. Al Diniz coached, and he coached and he coached, in his one-of-a-kind maniacal way that was common in youth sports in that era, only with a tough to understand accent and some memorable lines that would be replayed over and over again for half a century. As a player, if you didn't already have thick skin, you grew it quickly or left for another sport.

Within a year of that first practice, it was apparent there was enough interest to form a local league. Jack Hughes took the lead and was the Club's first President, a title he would hold for a number of years and one he took very seriously. He was the main organizer who handled most of the administrative duties with forming the foundation of what would shortly grow into one of the largest Soccer Clubs in the State and throughout New England. Dr. Kreisher was the trusted Vice President who worked to secure field space, get others involved, and also coached the first girls' team. Within a couple of years they had more players than any other youth league in town and the local sports traditionalists were now competing for the better athletes. And then this trio did the



John Kreisher

unthinkable, they started creating opportunities for the players to be active in the game year round, and were now cutting into valuable gym and field space. The players themselves were often the target of teasing and good natured ribbing from their friends in school with names like “sissies” and “you play a girly sport,” but as the players excelled and the teams did well they gained more respect, and today those kids who were doing the teasing, are coaching their kids in soccer.

Dr. Kreisher and Jack pleaded with Paul Roche at Parks and Recreation to give the soccer players their due. They needed more and better fields. The Club’s growth could not keep up with the current field space and together they applied for a federal grant that would eventually lead to the building of Diniz field which is adjacent to the skating center. And through that partnership became a regular coordinated effort between Parks & Recreation and all of the town’s youth sports which contribute financially to the upkeep of the fields. Today, Ridgefield’s fields are second to none throughout the region, and that all began with the impetus to improve and build more fields by SCOR.

Early on the Club was called the Ridgefield Soccer Club. Dr. K recognized that the initials were the same as the newly formed Ridgefield Skating Center and offered up SCOR, a name that today is synonymous with excellence and quite catchy. Over the years SCOR would earn a reputation as a very competitive Club competing for state titles every season and churning out many, many great players. As the years moved on and all of these men sent boys off to college to play, they worked with many other great folks who carried the



Jack Hughes

tradition, grew the sport, added more opportunities and eventually started kids playing as early as four years old.

Al Diniz continued to coach for the better part of the next four decades, winning two state championships at the High School level, numerous State titles at Club and routinely placing kids in top Universities around the country, not to mention introducing the game to thousands of families.

Both Jack and John would try their hand as referees. That was never a pretty sight; imagine Al Diniz coaching a game with these two as refs. One would think he would cut his partners a break, not to be. Between the lines Al was always all about winning and success, and he didn't care who had the whistle in their mouth. He was notorious throughout the state for being tough on officials. He couldn't help himself.

As Jack's nine kids all played he kept taking on more and more duties. His wife Joan's favorite role was when he was the Southwest District Administrator and now responsible for reviewing the eligibility of all of Fairfield County's players, and signing each player's pass. Mrs. Hughes loved the constant phone calls and people showing up at the house from Norwalk at 11pm needing a pass signed so this kid could play in the morning. Joan, along with Norma Diniz and Jeanne Kreisher were very supportive of their husband's efforts and took it all in stride. In retirement the three men and their families remain friends, Jack and Joan live in Ridgefield, Al and Norma in Danbury, and John and Jeanne in the Boston area.





We love you Dad
The Hughes Clan xxoo

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

James Muraski:

The Road He's Glad He Took

James Muraski is being honored by the Ridgefield Old Timer's Association for his remarkable work as an educator. As an outstanding special education teacher and coach, Muraski is well known in the community.

Mr. Muraski began his preparation as an educator the year after he graduated from Buckley High School in Hartford, Ct. He did not begin it in college, though. He began it on an assembly line in a factory for Royal Typewriters, working next to his mother.

"I was not a great student in high school, and I had to look at the choices I was making....Much later in my life, when I began my work in special education, I found I could relate to the students very effectively, and I realized I was teaching myself."

Muraski had been a basketball star in high school and, with the encouragement of his mother and his older brother, Hank, he talked to the basketball coach at Central Connecticut State, and started there in 1962 as a history major.

Muraski played varsity basketball for four years and his teams qualified for national tournaments all four years he played. He scored 1400 points in his collegiate career, was named a "little" All American as a junior, and was inducted into Central Connecticut's Hall of Fame in the 1990's.

Muraski began his teaching career at St. Francis Junior High School in New Britain while coaching at St. Thomas



Jim Muraski

Aquinas. He came to Ridgefield High School in 1970 as a social studies teacher and varsity men's basketball coach.

"Dirk Bollenback (former social studies department chair) was a great mentor for me in my teaching throughout my career," says Muraski, who taught social studies his first four years and social studies/special education for the next twenty six. Through his career, Muraski was renowned among his colleagues for his ability to mentor special needs students in turning around their lives and learning habits.

Muraski began his coaching career at R.H.S. as the school was transitioning from being a "big" school in the old SWC Conference to being a very small school in the FCIAC Conference. He coached the men's team from 1970-77, and in his fourth year, the team qualified for both the FCIAC and the state tournaments.

After taking five years off from coaching, the profession called him back. "I missed it," he says. "I did some of my best teaching while I was coaching and I wanted to get that back."

So he signed on as Frank Lancaster's assistant coach for women's basketball, and three years later he took over as head coach of that program. Taking over a team which had gone 10-128 the previous seven seasons, after his second season Muraski coached the program into twenty consecutive state tournament bids, winning the FCIAC tournament as well in 1991 and 1995. Typically, he credits his students, colleagues, parents and the community for his success.

"My work with Frank Lancaster and Gary Caginiello was crucial in transitioning to the women's game. We were blessed with hard-working, talented athletes, many of whom had the opportunity to play on the collegiate level. We were also incredibly fortunate to have good kids and supportive parents during those years." Muraski has stayed in touch with many of his former students and players, and cites as one of his most rewarding experiences the opportunity to coach with the former captain of one of his teams, Kate Ritter, before his retirement. During his tenure at R.H.S., Muraski was named regional coach of the year twice by the Danbury News Times and once by the Connecticut Post.

Looking back on his career, Muraski reflects, "It was a long road from installing the backspace on a Royal McB typewriter to having the opportunity to work with so many wonderful young men and women. I'm glad that I took it."

The RHS Boys Tiger Rebound Club
Congratulates

Jim Muraski

On his induction to the
Ridgefield Old Timers Association
and the 2016 Scholarship Winners

Ally Livingston

Lorenzo Kinnicutt

Mikhaela Miller

CONGRATULATIONS!



ATHLETIC AWARD

Jim Croce: A Force to Be Reckoned With

A member of the famous, undefeated Ridgefield High School football team of 1968, Jim Croce was also an athletic force to be reckoned with in baseball. While he did not grow up playing for organized teams, his early sandlot baseball and



Jim Croce

football playing in Fairfield, Ct. prepared him to compete in both sports at the high school level. When Croce came to Ridgefield, he successfully played Little League Baseball, was in the Babe Ruth League and went on to play American Legion ball. He regularly made the All Star Teams at all three levels. At Ridgefield High School, Croce played baseball for four years and in his senior year was tri-captain with Frank Lancaster and Steve Bellagamba. Again, all four years, he won recognition from the WCC Selection Committee. While Croce excelled at baseball, he was equally as good at football, playing varsity for three years and making the Danbury News Times All Star Area Team.

He was also recognized by the WCC for his football skills, and was All State Honorable Mention, for Class B, his senior year.

While many of Ridgefield's best athletes are stars in high school, they find that playing at the college level is just too competitive, but not for Croce. He went on to play varsity football for four years at Central Connecticut State University in New Britain. He started out as a split end, but due to an

injury which would not go away, he spent most of his time playing tight end. In this position they used the Triple Offense Strategy where running and rushing were more important than throwing. During the years Croce was playing, the team record was 17 wins, 11 losses, and 1 tie game.

After graduating from CCSU in 1973, Croce spent three years in the United States Marine Corps as a first lieutenant. He also worked in the Office of Artillery and was second in command over 100 Marines. After three years Croce had to take a medical discharge due to the knee injury he had experienced while playing football at CCSU. Still wanting to stay with the government, Croce went on to work with the social security administration in Maine for 18 years and then the Veteran's Administration until 2013, when he retired.



On the field...

Still living in Maine, Croce remembers Ridgefield fondly. Since his father was a Ct. State Trooper and his mother worked in the Ridgefield High School cafeteria, he had to toe the line along with his two sisters, Mary Jo and Jackie. He reports that Mary Jane has just retired as a teacher from the Norwalk School System and Jackie is married, is a registered dietitian, and living in Glastonbury.

Croce is also very proud of his two daughters who inherited his athletic genes and became accomplished AAU basketball players. Their father never held a basketball until he came to Ridgefield, therefore, his strength stayed with baseball and football. He is happy his daughters discovered basketball as participation in any sport can make a positive difference in anyone's life. Athletics has been and always will be an important element in Croce's life, not only for fitness but for discipline and friendship.





The 1967-68 Tiger football team was 8-0.

ATHLETIC AWARD

1967-68 Football Squad: A Very Special Team

This very special team compiled an 8 win, no-loss record by crushing opponents by over 30 points on an average. During the 1967 football season, RHS scored a total of 290 points while allowing a close contest with Norwalk Catholic, as an opener. RHS won 14 to 8 over Norwalk and Norwalk's only other loss was to Danbury, by one point.

The 1967 RHS Head Coach was Bob "Spanky" Mark and he was assisted by Rick Medve. The team co-captains were seniors, John Stolle and Tom Santini.

Although it varied from time to time, the "official starting" looked something like below:

On Offense:

Quarterback: Steve Martin (Sr.)

Running backs: Kevin Rowe (Sr.), Peter Santini (Jr.) and Vinny Tulipani (Sr.)

Ends: Randy Nicklas (Sr.) and Tom Stolle (Jr.)

Interior Linemen: Bob Petrini (Sr.), Mike Testa (Sr.), John Stolle (Sr.), Gregg Miner (Jr.) and Jimmy DeLuca (Jr.)

On Defense

Defensive Backs: Jimmy Tulipani (So), Kevin Rowe (Sr.), Vinny Tulipani (Sr.)

Linebackers: John Stolle (Sr.) and Tom Stolle (Jr.)

Ends: Pete Helie (Sr.) and Paul Martin (Sr.)

Interior Linemen: Jim Deluca (Jr.), Jim Mulvaney (So), Gregg Miner (Sr.) and Tom Santini (Sr.)

The leading scorers with nine touchdowns each were Kevin Rowe and Bobby Hlavac (So). Peter Santini (Jr.) scored seven touchdowns, Vinny Tulipani had five touchdown, and quarterback, Steve Martin scored four touchdowns himself, while throwing for many more. Co-captain, Tom Santini contributed by kicking 32 extra points to go along with one touchdown.

The other talented members on the team who deserve recognition are: Seniors: Gary Studwell, Gary Lucente, Carleton Rudolph, Peter Baggott, William "Laddy" Casey, Dave Robertson, Lee Heintze, and Billy Wygant

Juniors: David Yelinek, Vinny Panozza, Jim Croce, Jim Warner, Doug Both, Frank Lancaster, Jack Nally and John Pierandri

Sophomores: Doug Pintak, Paul Robertson, Eric Wilson, Bob Conroy, Brad Helie, Dane Vontobel, Brad VonSalkema, Bob DeCosta, Billy Budd, Bill Bowman, and Bobby Hlavac.

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ATHLETIC AWARD

John ‘Chip’ Wood: Outstanding Track & Field Star

One of our outstanding athletic honorees is John “Chip” Wood. Chip moved to Peaceable Ridge in 1970 with his



Chip and Cyndy Wood

parents, Gretchen and Jack, and three siblings, Kris, Amy, and Blake. The family later relocated in Cleveland, Ohio. Chip Wood, class of 1976, entered the new high school as a freshman. Even before coming to Ridgefield High School he had distinguished himself in a variety of youth sporting events. However, when he went to Ridgefield High School he became known as an outstanding track and field star.

The highest accolade that a track person can aspire to is to win the State Decathlon Championship and this is what Wood was able to do his senior year. He participated in the two day event which involves ten different events; 100 meter dash, running long jump, shot put, high jump, 400 meter run, 110 meter hurdles, disc throw, pole vault, javelin throw, and 1500 meter run.

While in Ridgefield High School, Wood was also all FCIAC Track and Field (1976), holds the school records for high jump and the half mile, and was co-captain of the high school cross country team and track and field team during his junior and senior years. Wood was also a representative to

Boy's State in his junior year due to his academic, athletic, and leadership skills.

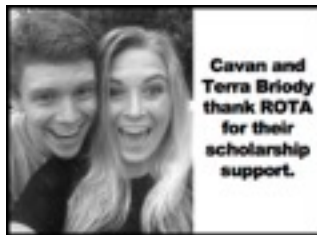
After high school Wood went onto to get his B.S. in business administration at the University of New Hampshire. While in college he was active in Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity.

After graduating from college, Wood got a job as a sales and product manager for Georgia Pacific. Then in 1987 he went to work in a similar capacity with Gilbert and Bennett. Presently Wood is working for Origin Point Brands where he is their product manager. Origin Point Brand is a steel/aluminum fence company that generates over 100 million in sales yearly. This job allows Wood to travel all over the United States and to China on a regular basis.



Wood on the run....

Wood is glad to now be living in South Pleasant, South Carolina, where he does not have to shovel snow and can play golf regularly. He also enjoys cooking and gardening with this high school sweetheart, Cyndy Bechtell.





**THE RIDGEFIELD HIGH SCHOOL
BOYS HOCKEY BOOSTER CLUB**

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10 A.M. AT THE WINTER GARDEN ICE ARENA



CATCH THE TIGERS HOME OPENER
DECEMBER 28TH VS NOTRE DAME WEST HAVEN
7:20 P.M. AT THE WINTER GARDEN ICE ARENA

ATHLETIC AWARD

William Van Orman: A First for A Golfer

William Van Orman was an outstanding hockey player and golfer for Ridgefield High School back in the early 1980's. For the twenty five years that the Old Timer's



Van Orman on the links...

Association has given awards, this will be the first time that a golfer has won the award. After high school Van Orman focused his talents on golf and went on to have an outstanding career in his given field. Although he loved hockey, most of his hockey skills were left behind after high school. Van Orman fondly remembers being the Ridgefield Hockey Captain along with Bobby Newman and Terry Hughes. Being brought up in the south, Van Orman started golfing as a very young boy, but he did not think about becoming a pro until high school when he

made the All American High School Team, finished 10th in the Nationals for high school golf, and was the winner of the 1981 state championships.

Because Van Orman had lived in Alabama and knew the University of Alabama was a great golf school, he applied for

a scholarship and got it. He had hoped to find a school where he could play both hockey and golf but could not find one at the time.

While at the U. of A., Van Orman captained the golf team for two years and was the first golfer in the school to qualify for the U.S. Open. This open was played at the Oakland Hills Country Club in Detroit and his father was his caddy. This event will always be a highlight of Van Orman's life.

After college Van Orman turned professional and competed on various tours around the globe including Europe, South America and South Africa. He also competed again in the U.S. Open in 2000 at Pebble Beach and qualified for the PGA School almost every year, getting to the second or third level.

To keep his golfing career on track, Van Orman also became the golf pro at several well-known golf clubs such as the Sleepy Hollow Country Club, Hudson National Golf Club, Winged Foot Golf Club, and the Meadow Brook Country Club in Jericho, N.Y. where he now teaches. Due to his success as a golf pro he has also appeared on the Golfing Network Television Program.

Throughout the years, Van Orman has won some very prestigious tournaments including the 2010 Long Island PGA Championship, the 2000 Marbella Open in Chile, the 1999 Westchester Open and the 1998 Eastern Club Professional Championship. He can also claim three course records at various golf clubs, winning the longest driving championship two times, and competing successfully in the Peiz World Putting Championships.



William Van Orman

Hampering Van Orman's golfing success has been two hip replacements and two major hand surgeries. However, at this time he is doing well and he is back on track with his competitions. He recently had a semifinal finish at the Metropolitan PGA Sectional and will be competing in various other tours.

For his success in golf, Van Orman would like to thank his parents, William and Sue Van Orman, his high school coaches, Paul Fako and Frank Ciancio, and his life time coach, Clarence Fogal. He feels so fortunate to live and work in the Roslyn, N.Y. area in the summer and in Athens, Georgia and Port St. Lucie, Florida in the winter. It is the best of both worlds.

When Van Orman is not golfing in some manner he is restoring Corvettes or enjoying life with his significant other. Van Orman's dream was to go as far as he could with golf in any capacity, and he has been able to do this. His life may not have worked out exactly as planned, but in his estimation he has the best career in the world and a really great life.



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The advertisement is enclosed in a rectangular border. At the bottom, there is a large, stylized graphic of a paintbrush with a wooden handle and a white bristle head, angled diagonally from the bottom left towards the center right.

ATHLETIC AWARD**Cliff Onolfo:****He's Done It All in Soccer**

Soccer has dominated the life of Clinton Onolfo. When people in Ridgefield talk about soccer greats, they mention Diniz and the Onolfo brothers on a regular basis. From pre-



Cliff Onolfo

school soccer player to pro player, to team owner, Cliff Onolfo has done it all.

"Living in Brazil for three years and Australia for two years, made it possible for me to develop my soccer skills at a very early age. I remember playing at age 6 and 7 on a team where we won twenty games straight," explained Onolfo. "Life in these countries was all about soccer so when I came back to the U.S. at age seven, I knew that I wanted to continue with this sport as a year round venture. We settled in Ridgefield as my mother, Linda Robertson, was a native of the town."

Onolfo credits his father's support and working with Diniz for his success. "Al Diniz is a very special man. He built in me the love of the game and provided me with self-confidence and the necessary skills to compete on a high level. Al Diniz, with his strong Portuguese soccer background, was second to none in developing skills, building teamwork and nurturing the fire inside to compete," continued Onolfo.

Due to Diniz's belief in hard work and being only the best, Onolfo was able to make the U.S. International and National Soccer Teams. He was also All American in

NSCCA in both 1984 and 1985 and was part of the Youth USA Team for players 20 and under. Onolfo has won so many soccer accolades it is impossible to cover them all in one article.

Onolfo believes that winning cannot be based on the play of one individual and because soccer is a team sport you need to work as a cohesive unit. In addition to his father and Al Diniz, Onolfo would also like to recognize Phil and John Bergan and Pat and Jim Nichols as his coaches, and players: Mark Edwards, Dan Dardenne, Richard Nicholas, Scott Roberti, and Peter Coffin. Each of these individuals has left their mark on Onolfo as both an athlete and friend.

After high school Onolfo went to Columbia University in NYC and majored in English and finance/economics. While at Columbia he also played soccer for three years and then went on to play professionally abroad. After playing abroad for several years, Onolfo decided to return to the states and purchased the professional team, the Connecticut Wolves, based in New Britain. The Wolves were his team for seven years until he sold the team and went onto other successful financial ventures.

At this point in his life, Onolfo is living in Florida with two teenage daughters, who excel in ballet, track and rowing. He is also looking to purchase another professional soccer



Onolfo in action...

team that needs to be turned around. He is looking for such a team in Italy or Britain.

Onolfo's mission is to bring soccer to the USA and have it as popular here as in the other countries. He would love to see the World Cup Championships played here in the states and not have all the best soccer players come from other countries. He sees his mission being fulfilled in the future.

Today Onolfo still plays in an over 40 pickup league and continues to love the sport. His brother, Curtis, is also still involved in the sport through coaching the professional team, the L.A. Galaxy II. His brother also attributes his continued love of soccer to their father, James, and Al Diniz.

CONGRATULATIONS
to the honorees
and
scholarship winners!

•

Jeff Kinkead, Richard O'Keefe,
Pat Carney, Brian Gilligan

•

Class of 1980

ATHLETIC AWARD

Kate McMorran Leavey: All Around Excellence

This year the Old Timers Association is recognizing Kate Leavey for her outstanding achievement in athletics while at Ridgefield High School. This, however, is only a part of the large legacy that Leavey left behind at the school. She is also an outstanding lyric soprano, well known choir director at



**Kate McMorran
Leavey**

Boston College, author of children's books, and an academic.

While at Ridgefield High School Leavey graduated with eleven varsity letters and 5 captaincies (Captain of Varsity Field Hockey and Captain of Varsity Indoor and Outdoor Track for all four junior and senior sessions).

She was also All FCIAC eight times and named eight times to All State. In 1987 she was named Connecticut Scholar Athlete of the Year, while breaking records in shot

put, javelin, and discus. For indoor track Leavey won the Shot Put State Championship and was invited to Lake Placid training camp for her prowess in discus.

Leavey attributes so much of her success in track and field to Coach Rick Medve. She feels that athletics gives you discipline, helps you to work as a team member and as a shared leader, and gives you resilience. After college, Leavey competed in the highest levels of the 15 Pan Massachusetts Challenge Bike Races but was sidelined with an injury. Today she still competes with her family in the Spartan Races at Fenway Park.

While in Ridgefield High School, Leavey split her time between athletics, academics, and music. With outstanding musical talent, Leavey was named to All Eastern National Choir, was in the All State Choir for four years, was president of the RHS choir, and on the National Honors Society. For all of her musical work, Leavey would like to recognize her musical coach, Joyce Flanagan. For her Joyce knew how to make the hard work fun.



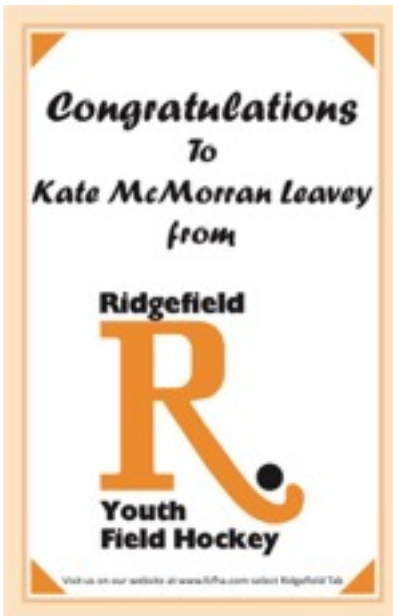
Kate's yearbook shot...

After graduating from RHS with highest honors, Leavey went on to Boston College for both an undergraduate and master's degree in education and music and was a merit

scholar. While in Boston she performed regularly in area clubs and also came to New York City to perform at Carnegie Hall and the Waldorf Astoria.

Today Leavey is head of liturgical music at Boston College and conducts the Spirit and Sound Choir, a multigenerational singing group which includes people from age 8 to age 80. For working with this intergenerational group Leavey has won the State's Unsung Hero Award.

When in Ridgefield High School, Leavey



was told by her favorite teacher, Mr. Bob Cox, that he saw some special personal brilliance in her writing. Leavey has taken the words of Mr. Cox to heart and has now written two young adult novels which she is looking to have published. With all Leavey has been able to achieve in her short lifetime, new author should soon be one of her accomplishments.

Leavey now lives in Natick, Massachusetts with her husband Steven, and four children. One of her boys, a sophomore in high school, is a shot-putter and already deadlifts 415 pounds. Looks like the “apple does not fall far from the tree.”

Her four years at Ridgefield High School had a lasting effect on the life of Leavey. She looks back fondly at so many teachers and how they saw her abilities and were able to work with her. However, little did any of these teachers know just how far this wonderful student would go in her life.



ATHLETIC AWARD

Sue Ellis: An All-State Swimming Star

Susan Ellis spent a little over 17 of her first 18 years growing up in Ridgefield. Her family moved to Ridgefield the day before her first birthday and she was in town until



Sue Ellis

graduating from RHS in 1989.

She attended Scotland Elementary School then East Ridge Junior High before her four years at Ridgefield High School. She spent a good portion of her time in the water as a member of the Wilton Y Wahoos; one of the elite swimming programs in the country; and then on the RHS swim team for all four of her years at the high school. Her parents have lived in Ridgefield for 44 years where they raised Susan and her 2 older brothers and 1 younger sister.

At the young age of 8, Susan started swimming for the Wilton Wahoos. She was a member of a relay team that set the New England YMCA record for the 100 meter free style. Since swimming is almost a year round sport she continued with the Wahoos until she graduated from high school. She was a member of the 1986, 1987, 1988 & 1989 Women's YMCA National Champion team and the 1987, 1988 & 1989 YMCA Combined National Champion team with the Wahoos.

Swimming for the Wilton Y took up the majority of her time however when she arrived at RHS she was ready and willing to be a part school's very first girl's swim team. While swimming for the high school Susan was All FCIAC in 1988



Sue, second from right, with the relay team...

and All State in 1986, 1987 & 1988. She was not alone in her swimming abilities as she was part of two record setting relay teams, the 400 free and the 200 medley. Some of her teammates from those teams included former honorees Janel Jorgenson and Stephanie Boles as well as Kelly Hoeft and Laura Wilkes.

After graduation Susan took her talents north to Syracuse University. She was member of the Orange swim team for all 4 years, competing against other Big East schools. Her times continued to impress as Susan was a finalist all 4 years in the Big East Championships in the 200 IM, 400 IM and 200 Backstroke. She also qualified in the Eastern Region for the same three events. Relating her years in Ridgefield to her time at Syracuse she said, "All the hours I spent swimming in high school made me more than prepared for swimming and studying in college." She proved this by graduating with a major in English Textual Studies as well as a minor in Fine Arts.

After graduation Susan took a job in advertising, a field she has worked in for over 20 years. She presently resides in New York City. She continues to swim, only now it is for the benefit of others. She has participated in Swim Across America, an organization that raises funds for cancer research.

Swim Across American was previously run by a former ROTA honoree Janel Jorgenson-McArdle. Janel's sister and Ridgefield resident, Jacque Lang, helps to run the Swim Across America event in Greenwich which Susan participates in regularly. Over the past 11 years Susan has braved the waters off of New York City and Greenwich to participation in these long distance swims. It is obvious swimming has had a lifelong impact on Susan's life and now it helps her impact the lives of others.



**The RHS Girls and Boys
Swim & Dive Team honor
an exceptional athlete,
Swimmer Sue Ellis.**

Congratulations and best wishes to all of the ROTA 2016 awardees!

The Ridgefield High School Athletic Advisory Council (AAC) is pleased to support the goals of The Ridgefield Old Timers in recognizing the achievements of Ridgefield High School student athletes.

The RHS AAC was organized in 1999 to encourage, promote and recognize educational and athletic achievement of student athletes at Ridgefield High School. A further objective of the AAC is to help develop an athletic environment that fosters the development of leadership, self-discipline, strength, courage, stamina, sound judgment and a sense of fair play at Ridgefield High School.

The AAC is grateful to the Ridgefield Old Timers for their advancement of our goals by recognizing RHS student athletes and civic leaders in our community!





Scholarship Winners: from left, Ally Livingston,
Lorenzo Kinnicutt and Mikhaela Miller

2016 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

**Mikhaela Miller, Ally Livingston
and Lorenzo Kinnicutt**

Mikhaela Miller

Tom Belote ROTA Memorial Scholarship

Mikhaela Miller was an exceptional student and hockey team goalie during her years at Ridgefield High School. Her real strengths, however, had to do with her service to others and her ability to bring people together and provide leadership.

Mikhaela is a gold star Girl Scout, being in the organization for 12 years. She also started the SMART GIRL'S MENTORING Program at the Boy's and Girl's Club and has

worked extensively for this organization, also representing the organization at various national conferences. In addition, Mikhaela is a day care worker at Almost Home, and serviced in the Appalachian Service Project in the summers.

Teachers regard Mikhaela as hardworking, highly motivated, and filled with passion, personality and charm. They see her positive attitude, work ethic, and ability to lead as real assets when she attends Salve Regina in the fall.

Ally Livingston

Student Athlete Scholarship Winner

Ally Livingston, with a 4.1 unweighted GPA at Ridgefield High School, and high awards for outstanding work in physics, U.S. History and math, will be attending Duke University in the fall.

In addition to being a National Merit Commendation Scholar, a VFW Essay Contest Winner, National AP Scholar, and ranking highly in the National French Exam, Ally is highly involved in women's issues. She works with Girls Who Code to close the gender gap in STEM (science and math), is a member of Girl's Learn International, and was in charge of organizing the local International Day of the Girl at the Ridgefield Library.

Athletically, Ally has been on the girls' volleyball team for all four years and was captain her senior year. She received All-FACIA Honors and was selected to Ct. Senior All-Star Game. She was also the recipient of the Tiger Pride Award and given recognition as a Scholar-Athlete. Throughout her school years, Ally has also coached younger children in her sport.

Loving to work with young people, Ally was the marketing director and mentor for Role Model Mentors. Here she led a 35 member mentor team and secured partnerships with various organizations. Ally is a multitasked young woman who has the ability to make a difference in so many different venues.

Lorenzo Kinnicutt

Student Athlete Scholarship Winner

Lorenzo with a 4.2 unweighted GPA at Ridgefield High School, and strong potential in multiple areas of science, will be attending Boston University in the fall.

While at the high school Lorenzo was president of the Science of Olympiad Club and ranked highly in protein modeling, cell biology and chemistry on a regular basis. He

has also won awards in anatomy and physiology and is a member of the AERA research based club that uses weather balloons with cameras to launch missions. He was a leader in both the AM-3e and 4r Mission Launches that lead to significant findings.

As an athlete, Lorenzo has been a varsity member of both the cross country and track and field teams for three years. He was known for his ability in the 800, 1000 and 1600m events. However, it is Lorenzo's work as an Emergency Medical Technician and with Ridgefield Physical Therapy that has led him to want to do more in the field of medicine as he feels that his goal in life is to try and save the lives of others. Lorenzo has already established his mission in life and is well on this way to achieving this goal.





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*Thanks for inspiring me to follow
my dreams!*

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 Bacchiocchi; 1997: 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

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; 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


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 Cincolani, 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 Brunetti, Bill Elliot, Booker Jackson, Tom Mitchell; 2001: Ned Carboni, Paul 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 Bacchiocchi; 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

Educator Awards

2013: Dr. Harold E. Healy and Dirk Bollenback; 2014: Dr. Philip Pitruzzello; 2015: Bob Cox



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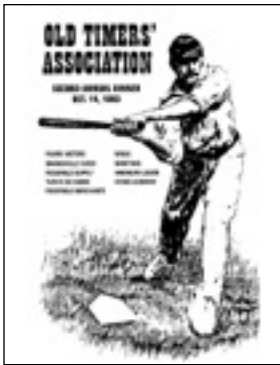
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Honoring Ridgefielders since 1992

More than 20 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. They decided to model the new organization after old timers groups in Danbury and Norwalk, which had already honored several Ridgefield athletes over the years.



The cover of the 1993 dinner program.

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 was 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 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 takes 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 served as 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."



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