

RIDGEFIELD OLD TIMERS ASSOCIATION



**27TH ANNUAL DINNER
OCTOBER 13, 2018**



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A Message from Our Chairman

As the new chairman of the Ridgefield Old Timers Association (ROTA), I would like to first thank our former longtime chairman, Mark Fitzgerald, for his many years of doing a great job leading this wonderful group. He has been an inspiration to me to do my best.

Congratulations to tonight's four Ridgefield High School 2018 graduates Julia McSpedon, Delmont Irving, Ava Thompson, and Mike Grevers! Ava and Mike are receiving the Tom Belote Scholarship which began only three years ago in memory of Tom, who was a longtime ROTA chairman.

These 4-year scholarships each year would not be possible without the support of so many people and local businesses over the past 27 years and also those that contributed to the Silent Auction has also been very helpful. Please do what you can to help.

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

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

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

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

Peter Nichols

The 27th annual
Ridgefield Old Timers Dinner
Saturday, Oct. 13, 2018

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Who's in charge of the Old Timers?

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

Awards Dinner Committee: Mark Fitzgerald, Andree Fitzgerald, Trish Gernert, George Hanlon, Terry Hughes, Gregg Hutchings, Manette Hutchings, Dave Kiley, Trish LaRosa, Mark Lionetti, Pete Nichols, John Pierandri, Richard Proctor, Darla Shaw,

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



Barbara Manners: “Just do it!”

CIVIC AWARD

Barbara Manners

Truly Making A Difference

No one in the Ridgefield Community in the last thirty years has provided more volunteer services that truly made a difference, than Ms. Barbara Manners. Her volunteer work has helped the arts, women’s issues, town politics, animals, minorities, people in need, etc.

Falling in love with Ridgefield’s Main Street, Ms. Manners first discovered Ridgefield when her parents had a home on Candlewood Lake. When she was married, she knew this is where she wanted to move and raise a family.

With a BA and MA degrees from New York University and a law degree from Fordham, Ms. Manners spent her first 17 career years as a lawyer. In fact, while working for what is now Merck, in their legal department, she met her husband. However, after having her first child, Ms. Manners decided that she needed to stay home and raise her own children and not let a nanny do it.

While her son David was in Maimonides preschool, Ms. Manners encountered the energetic Ruth Leibowitz,

drama and dance teacher at the school. Ms. Leibowitz immediately saw how important Ms. Manner's volunteer services could be to in regard to founding a community arts center. With this venture, Ms. Manners began her next 30 years of volunteerism and making Ridgefield one of the best communities anywhere in which to live.

In addition to being one of the key players in the founding of the Ridgefield Playhouse, Ms. Manners has also been on the Board of Selectmen in town for numerous years. She is always outspoken, strong, and fights for what she believes is right. Ms. Manners has also been on the Board of Directors for the A Better Chance Program and hosted girls throughout the years.

Also active on the Board of the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra and the American Association for Women, Ms. Manners continues her work in the arts and with women. However, Ms. Manners is probably best known for her CHIRP, free concerts in Ballard Park. People move to Ridgefield just because of these fabulous summer concerts. When you can't get a parking space in town you know that there must be a CHIRP Concert in the park.

Just recently Ms. Manners was able to get lights for the dog park and continues to support other projects that will help to make Ridgefield a better place to live.

Ms. Manners believes that volunteerism is key to the success of Ridgefield and names the following people as those she admires for their community efforts; the Lodewicks, Jean Cook, Steve Zemo, Kittie Fischer, Mary Pat Devine, Beth Yanity, Maureen Kiernan, Alison Stockel, Ruth Leibowitz and so many others.

When asked what quote she lives by, Ms. Manners answered one by John Wesley, "Just do it. Do all you can, in all the places that you can, at all the times that you can, by all the means that you can, in all the ways that you can, as long as you can."

In the final words by Ms. Manners: "Enrich your life by giving. It can keep you young."

EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR:

Bill Monti

A Great Influence

William Monti has had a great influence on many students and faculty members in Ridgefield over a period of thirty one years.



Bill Monti has been both a teacher and a principal in his 31 years here.

Having been in five different educational positions during his career, Mr. Monti never lost his true calling which was to inspire and motivate every person that he met.

Starting as a middle school social studies teacher at East Ridge Middle School in 1974, Mr. Monti went on to become the department head for social studies and then a house administrator. After thirteen years at ERMS, he went on as the beloved principal of Ridgebury Elementary School for twelve years and then returned to his teaching

roots at Ridgefield High School, teaching freshman and sophomore World History and senior Government and Politics for twelve years.

In 2004, Mr. Monti was the Ridgefield Teacher of the Year and in 1989-90, he was named to Who's Who in Education. Always closely connected to the faculty, Mr. Monti still plays poker with former Ridgefield High School staff members and golfs every possible Wednesday with former ERMS teachers, Nat Recine and Herbert Romisher.

There are few people that can be equally as successful as a teacher and an administrator, but Mr. Monti had no trouble doing both well. He was always charismatic, sincere, honest, fun loving, hardworking and knowledgeable. Mr. Monti wanted to know his students and faculty individually and was willing to work with them on the tough issues.

When asked what he thought his legacy was in regard to the Ridgefield School System, Mr. Monti replied, "I think that I had a positive influence on the students, their parents, and the faculty when I was part of the Ridgefield School system."

Getting his BA undergraduate degree in history from Holy Cross College, Mr. Monti went on to get his MA in history from Central Connecticut State University and then his sixth year administrative degree from Southern Connecticut State University. Mr. Monti loved to learn and was a true "history buff."

Today when he listens to people talk about education he realizes that the "buzz words" may have changed but feels the substantive portions of any good teaching remain the same. To him certain methods and materials may have evolved, but not how you get rapport and respect, how you develop a motivational lesson or lead a discussion, or how you interact with faculty members to provide leadership.

Mr. Monti does not like to give advice unless someone asks and then he does it by example, not as a mandate. From time to time he "bumps" into former students at public functions, and warm greetings and stories are always exchanged. Mr. Monti particularly likes meeting up with students who he knew as kindergarteners and are now grown adults with families.

After twenty four years, Mr. Monti is still living in Woodbury with his wife, Barbara. They have three children all in their forties and 11 grandchildren that they love to take fishing, bowling, and on special trips.

As a retiree, Mr. Monti is still active in government, serving on the finance committee for his town. He also like to garden, travel to Europe and to Alabama to visit one of his sons, and is very close to his own siblings who love to golf together.

For Mr. Monti life is very good.



Jack Herr brought military bands here for 50 years.

POSTHUMOUS AWARD

Jack Herr **‘The Band Man’**

Ridgefield is the only place in the United States, other than Washington D.C., that can boast of having a military band play at least once a year for 50 years. And to whom can we attribute this honor? To Ridgefield musician, Mr. Jack Herr, who started the tradition back in 1967 when he moved to Ridgefield and began to manage and own several NAPA, Automobile Parts Stores.

With a mother who gave piano lessons, Herr always loved music. He did not want to play the piano, however, as he loved reed instruments, especially the clarinet.

“I played in every type of band possible during junior high school, high school, college and after college,” commented Herr. “I just loved to play music, especially Dixieland, but I never considered music for a profession.”

“In fact, after graduating from Ohio State in plant and nursery management, I decided to go into the Army and become a helicopter pilot,” Herr explained. “But while waiting for my helicopter training assignment, the Army

discovered that I played multiple instruments and said we need you for the Army band.”

“My parents were thrilled as this would make use of my education and musical talents and keep me in the United States. I would also be playing with the 72 member 101 Airborne Division Band, a very famous Army band at the time. I was also happy as it would take me off the farm and away from milking cows.”

Herr played with the prestigious Airborne Band for two and half years, traveling throughout the United States. Along the way he developed fast friendships with band members, many who would go on to play with well-known symphony orchestras. He would also get the opportunity to play solo numbers all over the country and even conduct the West Point and Coast Guard Bands.

After settling in Ridgefield and becoming active in the American Legion in town, Herr decided to use his connections to bring just about every band the military organizes to come to town for free concerts two or three times a year. He was responsible for bringing over 140 concerts to Ridgefield over the last 50 years, Jack was known around town and nationally as “The Band Man.” Getting the bands to Ridgefield and all the organization it entails, was not easy but Herr found it very rewarding when he saw the crowds that it drew and the joy that it brought to the people of the town.

Ridgefield owes so much to Herr for all of his volunteerism for the past half century, but Herr said he couldn’t do it alone. He would like to thank George Besse, from the American Legion, Barbara Manners, and the two new men that will take over after him, Chuck Trado and John Willie.

Herr was proud of the fact that he was able to play for President Truman and bring joy to so many people over the years. He was also proud that due to his organizational skills and connections, the military bands chose to come to Ridgefield over other places. Being able to bring military music to some very small towns and being able to bring the distinguished Pershing’s Own part of the Army band to Ridgefield three times, has also brought him satisfaction.

“Seeing tears come to the eyes of listeners from time to time, makes it all worthwhile,” commented Herr.

We will miss you Jack Herr. —*Dr. Darla Shaw*

EVERETT RAY SEYMOUR POST 78

of the



SALUTES

Jack Herr

Jack Herr, a true patriot, who as a veteran continued serving America and the people of Ridgefield by bringing military band concerts to Ridgefield for fifty years. He was “the man behind the band.” We salute his patriotism and love for his country.

God Bless Jack and the USA!



Gene and Jo Healy at their granddaughter's wedding in December 2017.

SPECIAL AWARD

Eugene F. Healy

A Mentor of Ridgefield's Youth

If you or your children played Babe Ruth Baseball, Townies Basketball (girls and boys) or Girls Softball in Ridgefield during the seventies thru the early eighties, then you or your children played for or against a team coached by Eugene "Gene" Healy. For 15 years, Gene was a coach and mentor to more than 400 young men and women on more than 40 teams. Perhaps what is equally impressive is that 30+ of those teams did not have any of Gene's 5 children on them.

Gene was born in Brooklyn, NY on Christmas Eve 1933. Gene attended St Michael's High School and then St John's University graduating in 1955. That year proved to have 2 more highlights for Gene – the Dodgers won the World Series and more importantly Gene married his bride Josephine "Jo" Healy.

From 1952 thru 1957 Gene was in the Marine Corp Reserves at bases in Paris Island, SC, Quantico, VA and Cherry



Townies Basketball ca. 1970: from left, top row: John Morgan, Billy Fitzgerald, George Kesaris, Kevin Kraus, Gene Healy; bottom row: Ricky Norman, Gary Bellagamba, Kevin Healy, and Larry Webb.

Point, NC. As an interesting aside, it was in the Marine's in that Gene and Jo met and became lifelong friends with fellow Ridgefielder's Ann and Ray Hastings. While Gene and Jo miss Ann greatly, they get together with Ray weekly to talk about old times, their children and grandchildren, current events including Ray's golf game and next week's doctors appointments.

Gene and Jo have 5 children: Kathy (Immaculate HS 74), Kevin (RHS 75), Jeanne (RHS 76), Maureen (RHS 79) and Eileen (RHS 82).

Gene started his business career with the American Can Company in 1957. Along the way, the Healy Clan moved from Brooklyn, NY to Valley Stream, LI to Barrington, IL to Appleton, WI and finally Ridgefield, CT in 1968.

Gene's 1st coaching assignment in Ridgefield in the late sixties was a Little League Minor League team sponsored by Lelak's Delicatessen. The following year in 1970, Gene moved on to coach Babe Ruth Baseball with an expansion

team sponsored by Czar Construction. Other Babe Ruth team sponsors (coaches) that year were Pamby Motors (Casey Darrah), Caboose (Chuck Dean), Walsh Realty (Tony Martinich), Keeler and Durant (Carl Kline), St. Mary's (Don Miner), Ridgefield Savings Bank (Charlie Coles) and VFW (Bob Scarlett). Also throughout the seventies, Gene and his friend and long-time Ridgefield volunteer Ray Altier managed the Townies Basketball League, expanding the league and teams and later in the seventies starting Townies Basketball for girls. Jo Healy remembers Gene's coaching years saying "we had a 2 car garage but never put any cars in as we had 40 basketballs, 80 baseball bats, 40 batting helmets, 15 bags of catchers gear and 20 boxes of uniforms".

Gene continued to coach thru the early 80's and also served as the Commissioner of Ridgefield Parks & Recreation from 1978 thru 1982. And from 1987 on, Gene has served as the President of "Friends of Ridgefield" at Parks & Recreation working closely with his friend Paul Roche.

Gene and Jo left Ridgefield in 2001 but didn't go far, moving to Lake Place in Danbury. Over the years, their family has expanded from 5 children to include 1 daughter-in-law, 3 son-in-laws, 10 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren.

When told that ROTA was going to honor him, Gene humbly said "that is very nice and appreciated but not necessary and never expected. My volunteer activities provided me great personal satisfaction. Hopefully along the way I made a small difference in some young men's and women's lives".



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SPORTS AWARD

Stan Engelhardt, '68

Three-Year All-WCC

In the summer of 1965 the Engelhardt family moved from West Hempsted, Long Island to Ridgefield, which had only one traffic light at the time. For Engelhardt, Squash's



News Store was the center of his activities and Grossfield's was the only store in town where he could buy clothes.

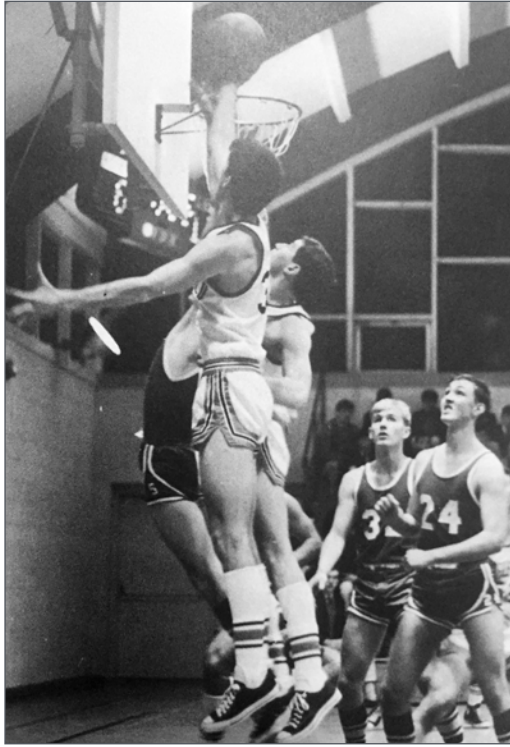
As a young boy Engelhardt discovered the Ridgefield Boy's Club and director, Ed Helminski. It was here that Engelhardt started to form real friendships along with playing basketball, ping pong and pool. In November of his sophomore year, Engelhardt made the Ridgefield High School Varsity basketball team as a starter since Senior Captain, Rudy Marconi, was out with mononucleosis. That 1965-66 basketball team was one of the best in the school's history.

Engelhardt's head coach during his sophomore and junior years was Harry Hyra, actress Meg Ryan's father. He made Engelhardt into a team player who knew how to play defense. Hyra made the team practice until their tongues were dragging on the court. Coach Hyra also taught his team about life in general. Engelhardt believes that Coach Hyra was the reason that he made First Team All WCC Basketball for three years in a row.

Engelhardt's first love, however, was Varsity Baseball and playing short stop. For this sport Engelhardt was fortunate enough to be coached by the iconic Bill Allen, and again was

named for three years to the First Team ALL WCC, but this time for baseball. Also on both ALL WCC teams with Engelhardt were Steve Martin, John Stolle, Tom Santini, and Rudy Marconi.

Since Coach Hyra was convinced that Englehardt's bony body would be broken in half in football, Engelhardt chose instead to run cross country for two years, usually coming in last place. Engelhardt also belonged to the



An Engelhardt layup

Varsity Club, was a sport's writer for the Ridgefield Press and worked on the RHS yearbook.

After graduating from Ridgefield High School in 1968, Engelhardt went on to the University of Pennsylvania where he played short stop on the Varsity Baseball Team and played in the Cape Cod Summer Baseball League. He had been recruited to play basketball for the University of Massachusetts and had he chosen to go to this university, he would have been a teammate of Julius Erving, Dr. J.

Engelhardt continued his university career at Wharton School of Business and has had a variety of sales and management positions in printing, publishing, software and flooring. For the last ten years he has been happily employed with PNC Bank in Pennsylvania.

Over the years Engelhardt has coached many youth sports; soccer, basketball and girls' softball, where he met his second wife who was coaching her daughter. Engelhardt

believes in working to win but also believes that teamwork and sportsmanship are the key ingredients in athletics, along with respect for the opponent.

Today Engelhardt has been married to his second wife for 25 years and they traveled to Italy in Sept. to celebrate their anniversary. They also love playing pickle ball and watching sports on T.V. together. With two married daughters and five grandchildren, Engelhardt loves his blended family that also includes three step children and six more grandchildren. His wife, Diane is a talented interior designer with her own business and brings great joy to the whole family.

When Engelhardt thinks back to fifty years ago when he graduated from RHS, he feels very blessed and filled with joy. He has so many great memories from his high school days and can remember so many teammates and coaches who have left a lasting impression on him. —*Dr. Darla Shaw*

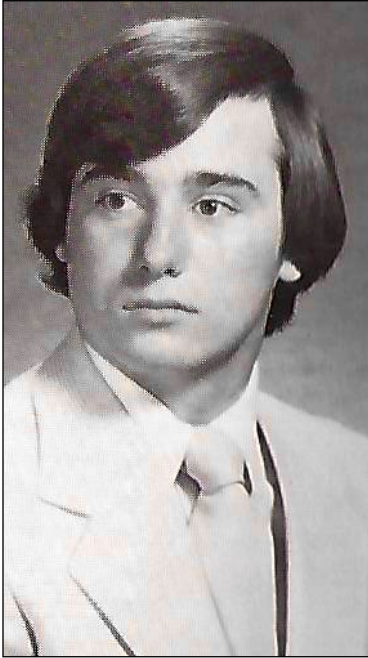


SPORTS AWARD

Bob Phalen, '78

Decorated Track and Football Star

Bob Phalen, RHS class of 1978, was a fantastic high school athlete. Bob was a speed demon on the track and as a football receiver caught every pass thrown in his direction. Bob is highly deserving of the Old Timers Athletic Award.



Bob is the son of the late Bob Phalen Sr. and Barbara Phalen. The Phalen's moved from Buffalo to Ridgefield in 1972. Bob is the second of three Phalen boys. His older brother Mike and his younger brother Dan were also track stars at RHS.

Bob honed his athletic skills early in life by participating in several Ridgefield youth sports activities. In little league baseball, Bob played three years for Community Center. Community Center, coached at that time by the legendary Jack Darlington, won the town championship all three years

Bob was on the team.

Bob also played three years of Pop Warner football in Ridgefield. Those teams also registered town championships each year.

Finally, Bob played several years of Townie basketball. I have seen Bob play basketball and I don't think he led those teams to championships!!!

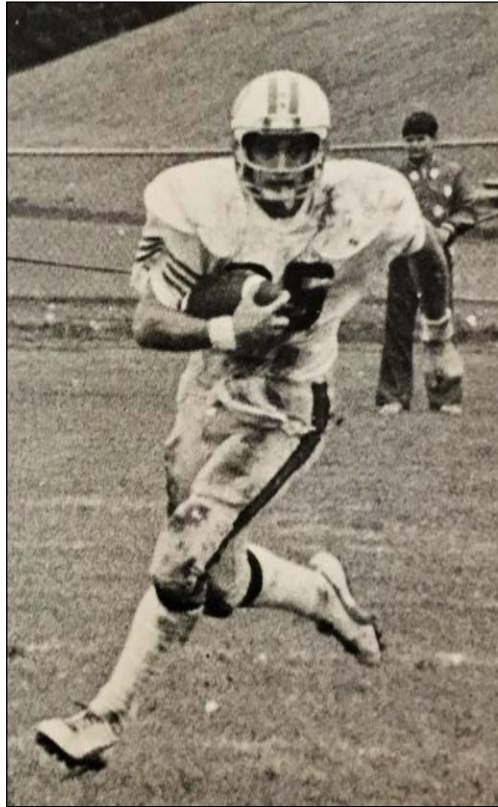
In high school football Bob was a three year starter at wide receiver. Bob had terrific hands and an uncanny ability to locate the soft spots in the defense. He was an extraordinary receiver and won many awards for his stellar play.

In his sophomore year Bob caught over 20 passes and was named to the first team All-Area football team.

In his prolific junior year, Bob had over 50 receptions and was named first team All-FCIAC, first team All-Area and first team All-State. Simply put, in his junior year Bob was the best high school wide receiver in the state of Connecticut!

In his senior year, Bob battled injuries but still managed to catch over 40 passes and was named first team All-FCIAC and first team All-Area. Bob served as a captain of the football team his senior year.

For all three years when Bob played receiver for RHS, the quarterback throwing him those passes was Paul "Willie" Bossidy, a previous Old Timers Athletic Award honoree. Paul was not a particularly gifted quarterback and many of those passes to Bob were off the mark. But Bob's amazing athleticism and Velcro hands enabled to snare the errant throws!



Phelan with the ball.

Bob's outstanding play lifted the entire Tiger team and overcame the mediocre play of many teammates including Mark Fitzgerald and Steve Scalzo!

Bob also excelled as a three year member of the RHS track team. Bob's track teams won two state championships and three FCIAC championships.

Several colleges took note of Bob's immense talent on the football field. The University of Connecticut awarded him a full four year football scholarship. Bob graduated from UCONN in 1983 with a B.S. in Marketing.

Today Bob lives in Ashland, Massachusetts and works as a counselor at Spectrum Healthcare in neighboring Westborough, Massachusetts.

In his spare time Bob enjoys watching on TV or attending college and professional football games. He also enjoys spending quality time with family.

On a personal level, Bob is a great and true friend. He loves to laugh and have fun. In high school, some of that fun went too far and occasionally landed Bob and his friends in hot water with parents, teachers or coaches. We all have amazing memories from those days. Through divine providence we survived all of the crazy antics!

Congratulations Robert....number 25, Mr. Cling, the best friend a guy could have!!!!—*Paul T. Bossidy*

CONGRATULATIONS

BOB PHALEN



YOUR TEAMMATES FROM THE CLASS OF '78



Mike Bossidy at bat.

SPORTS AWARD

Mike Bossidy, '87

Three Sport Standout

Mike Bossidy, RHS class of 1987, was an outstanding high school athlete. Mike excelled in football, basketball and baseball at RHS. Incredibly, over his high school career Mike earned all-FCIAC recognition in all three sports. No one is more deserving of the Old Timers Athletic Award than Mike Bossidy.

Mike is the son of Larry and Nancy Bossidy, who moved their family to Ridgefield in 1970. Mike is the eighth of nine children and his two older brothers (Larry Jr. and Paul) are previous honorees. As the youngest of three boys, Mike was introduced to sports early in his life. In fact he began serving as the bat boy for Larry Jr's summer baseball teams at six years old!

Mike loved baseball, basketball and football from the beginning. He developed his athletic skills participating in Townie basketball, Ridgefield Little League baseball, Pony/Colt baseball and various travel basketball teams.

Mike attributes some of his athletic success to the superb coaching he received early in his sports career. Specifically, Mike wants tonight to recognize Jack McDonald, Rav Altier, Dick

Bellagamba, Jim Baker, Scott Mason and Mike "Buddha" Bedini and Ed Helminski from the Ridgefield Boys Club.

In high school, Mike threw for over 2,000 yards as a three year starting quarterback for the Tiger football team. His single season passing record of 1,221 yards (which he rudely snatched from his brother Paul) stood for over 20 years. Though Mike was from a family not known for foot speed, he had the ability to occasionally tuck the football away and leg out some nice gains on the ground. Mike served as a captain of the football team his senior year.

In basketball, Mike scored over 400 points as a two year starter at guard for the Tigers. Mike was a superb ball handler, shooter and passer in hoop.

And finally as a two year starter at third base for the Tiger baseball team, Mike collected over 50 base hits and again served as a captain in his senior season.

Mike's athletic success in high school did not come at the expense of academics....despite being busy with sports all year, Mike maintained a solid B+ average throughout high school.

Mike continued to benefit from great coaching in high school and tonight wants to recognize Coach Maiolo, Coach Forcelli, Coach Lancaster and Coach Caginello.

After high school Mike played a year of baseball at the University of New Hampshire before transferring and graduating from Boston College. He later earned an MBA degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Mike has lived in New Canaan CT since 1999. He has been married to his amazing wife Julie for 25 years and they have four children: Michael Jr (24), Teddy (22), Madeleine (20) and Josie (18). Mike and Julie are extremely proud of the many accomplishments of their kids. They are all wonderful people.

Mike's extraordinary success in high school athletics carried over into his professional life. Today Mike is a senior executive at JP Morgan Chase where he serves as the Head of Global Equity Sales in their investment bank.

Today Mike displays his athletic prowess on the golf course where he has become a strong player, although he finds short irons vexing. He also likes coaching youth football and spending time with family in Nantucket or Florida.

Finally tonight Mike wants to acknowledge some of the terrific friends and teammates from his high school years: Chris McDonald, Matt O'Gorman, Danny Geary, Neil Ringers, Ed Tuccio, Mike Baker, Tim Daubenspeck, Jon Phillips, and Tom Hallett.

Congratulations Mike!!—*Paul T. Bossidy*

SPORTS AWARD**Lena Onyshkewych Payne, '88****A Top Soccer Star**

Lena Onyshkewych moved to Ridgefield when she was two years old from Woodside, Queens. Her father was Zenowij Onyshkewych, a prominent Ukrainian artist. Her mother was a linguist proficient in six languages. She had only one brother who studied philosophy and art history and now works in the antiques business.

At age seven, Lena started playing soccer, originally on a boy's house league team. Her coach for her early travel soccer team was Joe Colanari in the fall and spring. Lena also played indoor soccer in the winter under Mr. Colanari's direction. Her most memorable tournaments include going to Columbia, Maryland, and Lake Placid, New York.



While a student at Ridgefield High School, Lena played varsity soccer for three years. She was a starter on the varsity for the last three years and played on Ridgefield High School's FCIAC Champion Girls' Soccer Team for 1987. She also played on the Connecticut State Soccer Team, was All-FCIAC in her senior year, and was named Outstanding Senior Athlete for the year.

Lena also played varsity tennis for three years and was the captain of the Ridgefield High School Girl's Tennis Team during her senior year. In addition to her proficiency in athletics, Lena was also an excellent student.

After graduating from Ridgefield High School in 1988, Lena attended Cortland State University for two years. Here she was one of three freshmen to make the varsity soccer team. As athlete of the month for soccer, her freshman year, Lena went on to play in the national quarter finals in Minnesota.



Lena Onyshkewych, left in a game against Danbury.

When transferring to Miami University in Ohio, she had no opportunity to continue in soccer as there were no formal teams for girls. Here Lena majored in international studies and studied in Kiev, Ukraine, during the summer of 1994.

Upon graduation from Miami University, Lena taught English in Ukraine in the summer of 1994 and then proceeded to go to Fairfield University for her master's in psychology in 1996. Wanting to use her psychology degree in a meaningful way, Lena then went to Western Connecticut State University for a second master's degree, this one in school counseling. From 2001 to the present, Lena has been a middle school counselor for the Trumbull School System.

Lena presently lives in Sandy Hook with her two children, Ryan age ten and Henry, age eight. Her hobbies include gardening, skiing, hiking, wood whittling, and watching ice hockey. She has been a Ranger's fan since childhood.

This Year's Scholarship Winners



Shown from left are Julia McSpedon, Michael Grevers, and Del Irving.

ROTA is proud to announce their four outstanding scholarship winners for the upcoming school year. The scholars all have very impressive backgrounds and are dedicated to academics, service to the community, athletics and other creative endeavors. The awardees this year are: Ava Thompson and Michael Grevers for the Thomas Belote Award, as well as Del Irving, and Julie McSpedon for the regular ROTA Scholarships.

Ava Thompson has maintained a high academic average and is on the National Honor Society while working many hours at Bed, Bath, and Beyond to earn money toward her college tuition. She takes AP classes and received an award for her work in biology. Ava also plays the violin in the orchestra, is a soccer player, volunteers at the Ridgefield Library and with the Key Club, and tutors students at Scott's Ridge Middle School.



Ava Thompson

Michael Grevers has taken eight AP classes, has a 4.57 GPA. and a letter of commendation from the National Merit

Program. During the summer he has taken part in the UCONN program for engineering, and interned with IBM Cyber Security Program.

Also very active in service to the community, Mr. Grevers is part of the Safe Rides Program, was president of the Lion's Heart Service Program, worked on the Mr. RHS fund raiser and Get In the Game Fund Raiser for disadvantaged youth. In the summer Mr. Grever worked in the HOME program helping out people of need in Maine. For all of his service work, Ms. Grevers received the Volunteer Service Award.

Sports wise, Mr. Grevers was on the varsity soccer team, coached soccer and basketball and was a soccer referee. As part of his school program, Mr. Grevers was on the Mock Trial Team and an active member of the student government.

Del Irving has successfully completed numerous AP classes, is an AP Scholar with Distinction, is a member of the national honor society, has a National Merit Commendation letter, and received a special award in Spanish. To help others, he was a past president of the Lion's Club for community service, volunteered for both Safe Rides and Meals on Wheels, was a math tutor and worked with the Key Club.

While working at Deborah Ann's Sweets and Prime Burger, Mr. Irving was vice president of the Innovation and Economics Club and be a class senator for the Student Government. Sports wise, Mr. Irving played both varsity tennis and ice hockey, being a Hobey Barker and Tiger Pride Winner as well as a CAS-CIAC Scholar Athlete. He also competed in club tennis at Four Seasons.

Julia McSpedon has successfully completed numerous AP classes, is on the National Honor Society, and has a 4.7 GPA. As 2017-2018 Scholar Athlete of the year, Ms. McSpedon participated in varsity indoor track and field (was also a captain) and played varsity softball and varsity field hockey. In field hockey she received an FCIAC Honorable Mention.

In addition to scholarship and athletics, Ms. McSpedon plays violin with the RHS Symphony, is an Irish step dancer and has obtained the Silver and Bronze Award for Girl Scouting. Service wise, Ms. McSpedon is part of the

National Charity League, has raised funds for needy children in Nepal and Sierra Leone, works on service projects out of St. Mary Church, and works as a camp counselor at Waccabuc Country Club Day Camp.


ROTA is so happy to be helping these four students on their quest for further excellence in the field of academics, athletics, and service to the community.

In memory of

Tom Belote

*“The Ridgefield Old Timers
Tom Belote
Memorial Scholarship”*

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SPORTS AWARD

Mia Heissan, '85

Firsts for Young Women

Mia Heissan, a proud 1985 Ridgefield High School graduate, put her mark on sports early on in life. She was not



only the first girl to play soccer for SCOR along with Elizabeth Hughes, but she was also the first girl (along with Bridget Stearns) to play ice hockey in the Ridgefield Youth Hockey Program.

Although Mia was not able to try out for the RHS ice hockey program, she went on to play with what is now known as the Connecticut Women's All Stars. After playing with the All Stars, Mia was offered a full hockey scholarship to Colgate, but chose to go to her dad's university, Cornell, instead. At Cornell Mia played Division I ice hockey under Randy

May, NCAA Coach of the Year.

In addition to being an outstanding ice hockey player, Mia also played varsity soccer, was captain of the team, and was named three times to All FCIAC and two times to the All-Star Team. When not playing soccer or hockey, Mia was captain of the RHS ski team, named number 3 in the states and was a New England qualifier, and played varsity softball. In her year book Mia was named the female most likely to go to the Olympics.

After graduating from Cornell, Mia got married, had three children and went on to a business career with Procter and Gamble. In her spare time as a young parent, Mia obtained national coaching certification and coached travel soccer teams for all three of her children. As the children



Mia Heissan, right, on the ice.

aged out of the program, Mia became a certified level 3 USA certified hockey referee.

Today Mia, who now has a PhD in mathematics, is working on another advanced degree in computer science with a specialization in Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. Living in Kingston, Rhode Island, Mia is now a grandmother known as Mimi.

Mia's mother, Arlene, still lives in Ridgefield, and her three brothers live near by in New York. The entire Heissan family has stayed mentally and physically active. They have hiked the Presidential Range, Mt. Washington, and are planning on hiking Katahdin. The family also enjoys mountain biking as Mia's husband was a professional cyclist before becoming a physical therapist, and helping out yearly with the Special Olympics. Other sports the Heissen family enjoy participating in together are golfing, sailing, disc golf, and rooting for URI Basketball Team.

In conclusion, Mia says that she is very fortunate to have grown up in Ridgefield and graduated from RHS. She feels that the school helped to define much of who she is today, especially regarding athletics. She also feels blessed to be part of the class of 1985, which in her opinion, is the best class to ever walk the halls of the high school.



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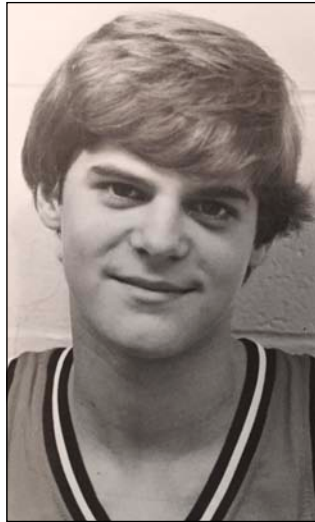
SPORTS AWARD

Mike Enright, '80

A Passion for Basketball

The Enright family moved into Ridgefield in 1974. Mike and his brother Pat; who is also being honored at this dinner; immediately found their way into the youth sports programs in town. Of all the sports available to Mike basketball became his passion. He carried his passion for basketball to Ridgefield High School and on to college at Villanova University.

Mike was a member of the varsity basketball team at RHS for three years, sophomore through his senior season. Mike played point guard and was elected captain of the squad his senior year. He received All-FCIAC honorable mention during his last year. Some of his teammates on those teams were Joey Hunt, Mark Principi, Frank Galante, Jack Jancin, Mark Harris and Mike Wilson.



Mike not only worked on his game but also worked hard to excel in the classroom. He applied and was accepted to Villanova University in Philadelphia, where he roomed with friend and fellow Ridgefielder Mike Scalzo. Mike tried out and made the basketball team his freshman year. He played for the division 1 power for all 4 years at 'Nova, from 1981-1984. Mike continued to return to Ridgefield during his summers off from college and worked for the Parks Department. He received no special privileges, even though he was a college athlete, as he worked picking up trash containers and dragging the baseball and softball fields.



Mike Enright at Villanova.

Back in school the team reached the Elite 8 in the NCAA tournament in '82 and '83 and the Sweet 16 in '84. In 1982 his team lost to North Carolina, in 1983 they lost to University of Houston. Some of the players on the teams Mike played against over his four years are Hall of Famers Michael Jordan, Hakeem Olajuwon, Patrick Ewing, Chris Mullin and Charles

Barkley. Some of Mike's teammates on those Villanova teams were Ed Pinckney, John Pinone, Gary McLain and Dwayne McClain.

After graduation from Villanova with a BS in Finance, Mike found his way back to one of those schools his team lost to during his playing days. He attended University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to earn his MBA. Mike then married his wife, Kathy, and started a family. They have 4 daughters, Cara (27), Olivia (25), Therea (21) and Nicole (20) and settled in Cary, NC.

Although Mike has moved several times in his life, when asked about Ridgefield he stated, .."I still have friends in town and I always tell those who ask that Ridgefield is my home town."

SPORTS AWARD

Pat Enright, '83

'No Better Town'

A 1983 graduate of Ridgefield High School, Pat attributes much of his success in both basketball and baseball to living in Ridgefield and being able to take advantage of all the resources. According to Pat, "There is no better town in which to grow up and build memories that will last a lifetime."

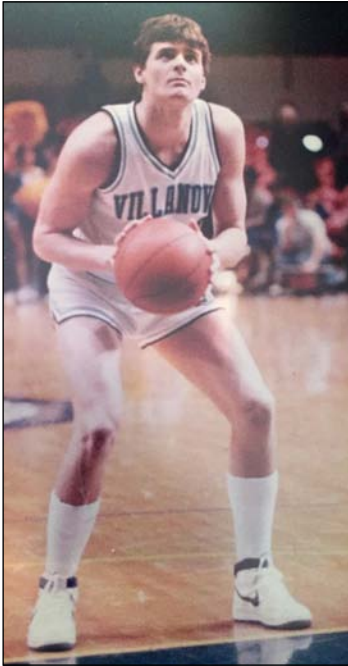
During his junior and senior year, Pat played both varsity basketball and baseball. In basketball he was a point guard, earning All FCIAC status during his junior year. During his senior year Pat made the All FCIAC, second team.

In baseball, Pat rotated between pitcher, third base and playing the outfield. He was equally good in any position. He remembers playing championship ball with Tony Wilmot during his junior year and getting Honorable Mention All FCIAC during his senior year.

After high school Pat went on to play basketball for Villanova University (1986-88). He played in many NCAA and NIT Basketball Tournaments, almost always winning a championship, but then losing out to teams like Georgia Tech, La Salle and the University of Oklahoma.



In addition to praise for the Ridgefield community and its positive effects, Pat would also like to pay tribute to the Ridgefield Boy's Club where he spent so much time honing his athletic skills. He remembers how Ed Helminski and Mike Bedini were always available to him and Mike McDonald when they wanted to practice. It did not matter if they were already in college and needed to practice late into the night, the



Pat Enright at Villanova.

Boy's Club support was there. Of course, they were always reminded to lock up afterwards.

In fact, when Villanova was playing UConn at the Hartford Civic Center, Pat invited everyone over to his house for a huge Italian dinner to honor his coach, Rollie Massamino, but not before first taking the team to visit the Boy's Club where he spent most of his time in practice.

Today Pat lives in El Segundo, California with his wife, Carissa and two elementary age children, a boy and a girl. Career wise, Pat has always been in sales, marketing and management with consumer products such as collectables, toys and sporting goods.



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Past Old Timers' Awards

Posthumous Awards

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

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 Panno, Jeanne Cook; 2010: Christine and Philip Lodewick; Chuck Camp; Reed Whipple; 2011: Mary and Nelson Gelfman; Terry Hastings. 2012: Martha and Dave Campbell; Joseph Consentino. 2013: Richard and Deirdre Aarons; George Besse 2014: Darla and Ben Shaw; Joy and Hank Kutcha; Joyce Ligi; 2015: Liz & Steven Goldstone, Bill Craig; 2016, John and Elaine Couri; 2017, Janice Pauly.

Educator Awards

2013: Dr. Harold E. Healy and Dirk Bollenback; 2014: Dr. Philip Pitruzzello; 2015: Bob Cox; 2016, James Muraski; 2017, Joan Voss.

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 Anderson, 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 Bacchiochi; 2006: Larry Bossidy, Jr., Isabel Caporale, Frank Lancaster, Jr., Carl Scala, John Stolle, Dave Sturges; 2007: Dave Landers, Jay Contessa, Chip Dean, John Devendorf, Marie Frulla, Steve Martin, Alan Wallace; 2008: Richard Lavatori, Judy Laslo, Craig Saltzgaber, Frank Serfilippi, Paul Vaughn, Chip Wilson; 2009: Robert Leary, Robert Lewis, Patricia Girolametti,

Richard Miller, Peter Santini, Michael Principi, and Dr. Richard Scala; 2010: Abe Morelli, Tom Fossi, Michael Bowman, Amy Fredericks, Christopher Winnes, Janel Jorgensen, Michael Dell'Aquila, Tony Wilmot; 2011: Lee Pasquarella, Harland Brooks, Janet Yanity, Harry Geary, Thomas McDonald, Joseph Korczynski, Lea Ann Schmidt, Gary Bellagamba; 2012: Michael Conroy, Anthony James Forcelli, Beth Ondrick Gattey, Terence Hughes, George R. Mulvaney, Phil O'Brien, Walt Valentine; 2013: William 'Sandy' Allen, Paul Bossidy, Dorene Almgren DeCecco, Mike Harris, Mike Maiolo, Ed Stone, Nicole Colanari Twomey; 2014: John Lorenzini, Peter Stuart Jongbloed, Brian Sullivan, Thomas Scala, Sandy Beal Carpenter, Nicole Muschett DiAntonio, Neil Ringers; 2015: Don Innamorato, Richard Dingee, Susi Mang McDonald, Guy Welton, Karen Dingee Leibowitz; 2016, Al Diniz, John Kreisher, Jack Hughes, Jim Croce, 1967-68 Football Team, Chip Wood, William Van Orman, Cliff Onolfo, Kate McMorran Leavey, Sue Ellis; 2017, Dr. Joseph Connelly, Nancy Ruhl Hurley, Bo Beatty, Danny Geary, Amy Walter Hillenbrand, Dr. Theodore Librizzi.

Ridgefield Old Timers Association: *Honoring Ridgefielders since 1992*

About 27 years ago, a group of friends got together with the idea of forming an old timers group for Ridgefield. Paul Baker, Julie Petrini, John Tulipani, and Joe Brunetti met at a dinner and decided to model the new organization after old timers groups in Danbury and Norwalk, which had honored several Ridgefield athletes over the years.

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

The Ridgefield Old Timers Association began to have awards banquets in October 1992. Seven Ridgefielders were selected to be the honorees and the first Special Award went to Richard E. Venus.

The first scholarship recipient was Thomas B. Gareau. He had been accepted at the University of Virginia. The guest speaker at the first banquet was Spec Shea, a pitcher for the New York Yankees. The advertisement book for that first gathering



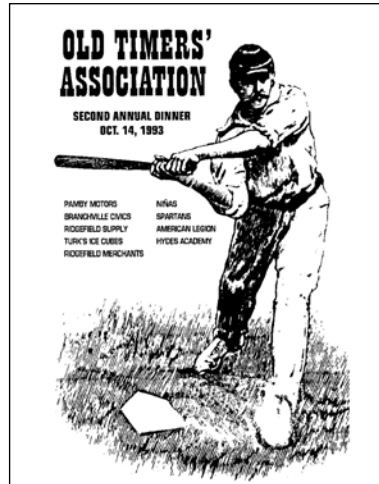
was only 20 pages, cover to cover. The event was a success and money was put into a scholarship fund.

The first award of the scholarship to a female Ridgefield High School graduate occurred in 1996. Janine Murphy was involved in three sports and many civic endeavors. A year later, it was decided to annually award scholarships to both male and female recipients, and the winners in 1997 were Charles Bliss and Kerry Bennett. The amount of the scholarships has grown over the years as a result of the advertising placed in this book, as well as other fundraising efforts — especially the annual golf outing and pig roast, which took place in June at the Ridgefield Golf Course.

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

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

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



The cover of the 1993 dinner program.

Kiley Painting

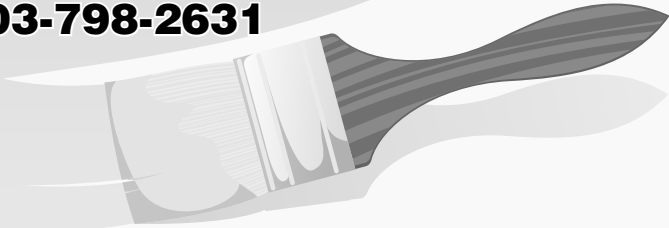
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