



## RUSSELL LECHARD

### CLASS OF 1986

A 1986 graduate of Point Pleasant High, Russell Lechard has the distinction of being the only inductee to the Point Pleasant High School Hall of Fame to be nominated by two people. To quote one of his nominating letters, "Rusty never gave into his handicap; in face, he never acknowledged he even had one."

At birth, he was diagnosed as brain injured due to birth defects, and it wasn't until he was nearly one-year-old that it was discovered that he had cerebral palsy. When he entered school, psychologists discovered that a diagnosis of severe retardation was incorrect. Later on, surgeries were performed to enable him to walk and to correct and inward-turning eye.



Upon entering high school, Lechard immediately became a favorite of both faculty and students because of his infectious smile and always optimistic attitude. He participated in student council, dramatic arts, and dramatic arts club, chorus and was named to the National Honor Society.

After graduation, he enrolled at Brookdale Community College receiving an associate of applied science degree in communications design in 1989. While at Brookdale he entered a training program for the disabled at Fort Monmouth, where he has been employed for the past eight years. In 1994 he was named Fort Monmouth Disabled Employee of the Year. In 1997 Lechard was named CECOM Junior Employee of the Year!

Lechard is on the Fort Monmouth Disabilities Advisory Committee and has served as second vice president since 1995.

Lechard served as a youth advisor for the Harvey Memorial United Methodist Church in Point Pleasant from 1987 to 1990. He volunteers for Cerebral Palsy of Ocean and Monmouth Counties and is also vice president of the Jersey Shore Computer Club in Lakewood.

Lechard writes that he "now lives in Long Branch where I enjoy anything dealing with science fiction, animation and high technology (when I'm not working.) Having cerebral palsy, I also like to use humor and laughter to try and bring attention to how the disabled can lead very productive lives and have much to give to society if given the opportunity."