

STEVE BACON
CLASS OF 1968
TRACK/FIELD, BASKETBALL,
& CROSS COUNTRY



Steve is a 1968 graduate of Daniel Hand High School, a three year letter winner in track and basketball, and a two year letter winner in cross country. He was co-captain of all three in his senior year. He won the 100 yard dash and 220 yard dash, setting school records in both events while finishing second in the high jump and anchoring the second place 880 yard relay team in leading Hand to the Shoreline Conference Championship. His 17 points at the conference meet led all competitors.

Steve was undefeated in the 220 yard dash and high jump in dual meet and tri meet competition and finished second in only one 100 yard race his senior year. He also won the 220 yard dash in the State Sectionals and took the gold at the Elks Club Meet in all four events.

A three year starter on the basketball team, Steve averaged 15 points per game as a senior and was named Second Team All-State, along with teammate and fellow co-captain, Buddy Hall. The 1967-68 team finished the regular season at 18-2 and reached the quarter finals of the state tournament. Steve and Buddy were named Co-Most Valuable Player of the team that season. Four of the five starters are now members of the Madison Athletic Hall of Fame (Scott Ferguson, Mike Fagan, and Hall). Steve was one of four New Haven area seniors to be awarded the 1968 Scholar-Athlete in basketball by the New Haven Tap-Off Club.

Earning two letters in cross country his final two years, he finished undefeated in Shoreline Conference meets. He was awarded the Lions Club outstanding athlete award on the basis of athletic ability, scholastic achievement, general sportsmanship, and character. He also received the Babe Ruth Sportsmanship Award.

During his junior year, Steve was installed as a member of the National Honor Society and was chosen as a delegate for Nutmeg Boys State held at the University of Connecticut. As a senior, Steve was elected President of the Student Council. The school faculty selected him as "Register Youth of the Year" as published in the New Haven Register for the senior who best exemplified qualities of leadership, scholarship, and accomplishment.

Steve was selected by the faculty as the senior who best demonstrated qualities of scholarship, loyalty to the school and community, and achievement in school and community affairs and was also awarded the Rotary Club Prize. In addition, he was a sports reporter for the Shoreline Times and sports stringer for the New Haven Register, along with being the Sports Editor of the school newspaper, the Hand Print.

At Brown University, Steve played freshman basketball and was a four year letter winner in track. After graduating from the University of Connecticut School of Law, where he was President of Phi Alpha Delta, Steve settled in Mansfield, with his wife Anne, and has practiced law in the Mansfield/Storrs area for forty-five years, the last fifteen as partner with the Vernon-based firm of Kahan Kerensky Capossela, LLP.

Steve served on the Mansfield Downtown Partnership Board of Directors for nineteen years, the last four as its President. He has also served on the Board of Directors of the Windham Hospital and is a member of the Planned Giving Council of the Windham Hospital Foundation. He is a Trustee of the Storrs Cemetery Association. A Paul Harris Fellow, Steve was awarded the Mansfield Community Business Award and Joshua's Trust Presidential Citation.

In town affairs, Steve was the Chair of the Charter Revision Commission and has served as Town Moderator. During this past year, Steve had joined the boundary crew of Joshua's Trust, a local land conservation trust. An avid hiker, Steve hopes to tackle the sixty-seven 4,000 footers in New England in the coming years. Steve attributes much of his success as a high school athlete and student to the mentorship of his basketball coach, Bill Barker, and track coach, Bob Duncanson, benefitting from their athletic acumen and the valuable life lessons taught him off the court and field.



MICHELLE CONROY McBEAN
CLASS OF 1991
SOCCER & LACROSSE



Michelle Conroy McBean's soccer career began in the 1980s. Frequently coached by her father, Art Conroy, Michelle initially played on the field and transitioned to goal in middle school. She started varsity at Daniel Hand High School for four years. Her fearlessness and tenacity evolved into a deeper technical and tactical understanding of the position honed by her high school coaches, Betsy Christenson and Bob Faulkner. They trained with her and often invited her to play with the boys' goalkeepers. She was captain her junior and senior seasons and garnered All-Shoreline and All-State Honors. She participated in the CT Senior Bowl and was named team MVP those two years. During her senior year, she had 165 saves and 16 shutouts while leading her team to a Co-Shoreline Championship and finalist in the State Tournament.

Unlike her many years spent on a soccer field, Michelle's high school lacrosse career started a few minutes before her freshman season in Shane Kokoruda's backyard since Madison did not have a girls' youth program at that time. Under Hall of Fame Coach Pat McCahill, Michelle played varsity lacrosse for three years and captained the team as a senior. She scored 21 goals her sophomore year, despite a cast on a broken hand, and added 27 goals as a junior. She was selected to participate in the Women's Lacrosse Association Junior All Star game at Hampshire College.

Michelle started in goal at Dartmouth College, a Division I soccer program led by Coach Steve Swanson, as a sophomore, junior, and senior, before a career-ending injury against the University of Connecticut in the first game of her senior year. She was captain of the "Big Green" as a junior and senior, leading the team to an Ivy League Championship in her junior year and finishing the year as the 14th ranked Division I soccer team in the country. She did not concede a goal in Ivy League play during that season and ended the year ranked fourth in the country for her goals-against average. The top three, all of whom were seniors that year, played in goal for the US Women's National Team. At Dartmouth, Michelle was named to the All-Ivy team, received All-Ivy Academic Honors, and was given the Ed Tremble award from the CT Soccer Association for outstanding collegiate play.

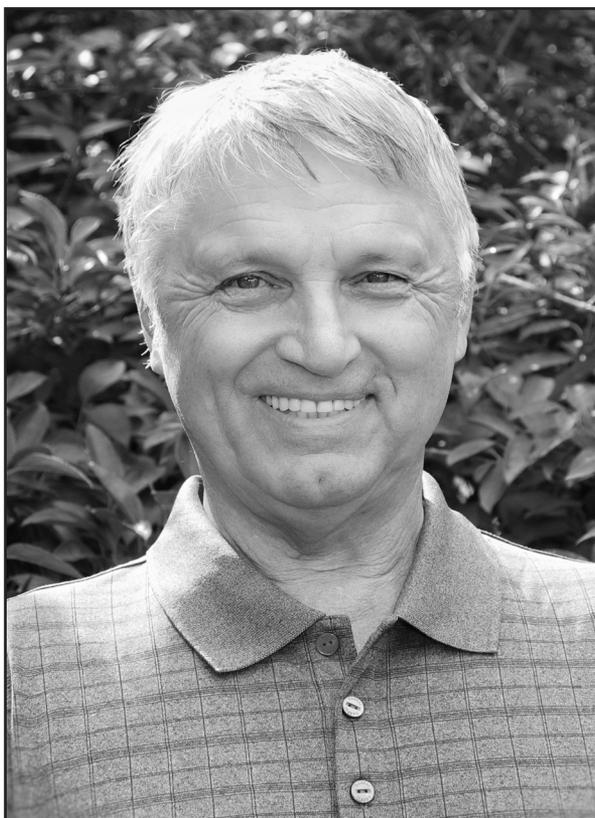
After graduation, Michelle joined the soccer coaching staff at the University of Vermont where she also completed her post baccalaureate pre-medical studies. She coached at UVM for two years and graduated from Dartmouth-Brown Medical School in 2003. Michelle completed her Psychiatry residency in the Brown Department of Psychiatry where she served as Chief Resident and then completed her Geriatric Psychiatry Fellowship at Beth Israel in NYC. She is now an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry in the Yale Department of Psychiatry where she serves as the Director of the Geriatric Psychiatry fellowship

program, the Director of the VA Geriatric Psychiatry Clinic, the Chair of the VA CT Dementia Committee, and has national leadership roles as Program Chair and Vice Chair of the Teaching and Training Committee through the American Association of Geriatric Psychiatry. She speaks nationally on a variety of topics germane to geriatric psychiatry. She has published 13 journal articles, three book chapters, and was named a future leader in Geriatric Psychiatry by the American Psychiatric Association. She is also the Founder and President of the CT Women in Mental Health of Fairfield County Referral Network, serves on the board of the Dartmouth soccer advisory committee, and volunteers as a coach for her daughter's premier soccer team.

Michelle is the daughter of Art and Judy Conroy (they still live in Madison!) and has two younger brothers, Ryan and Scott Conroy. She is married to her best friend, former DHHS classmate, and fellow 2021 Hall of Fame inductee Jason McBean. Both Michelle and Jason continued on together graduating from Dartmouth College (1995) and Dartmouth-Brown Medical School (2003). Michelle is the proud mom of her two children, Jackson McBean and Hayden McBean, both of whom play "the beautiful game."



HENRY DARICEK
CLASS OF 1966
CROSS COUNTRY & TRACK/FIELD



The story of Henry Daricek is more than a story about a successful cross country and track star; it's a story about grit, determination and coming back strong after a life altering encounter.

Henry was hit by a car while riding his bicycle in the summer of 1964, in the middle of his high school career, suffering head injuries, a broken arm, a severe upper leg puncture, and numerous cuts. The serious life threatening injuries cost him his entire cross country season his junior year. He went from a solid second place finisher for the team the year before to not being able to run at all.

The accident limited his participation in track in the spring that year as well. The loss of Hand's best half-miler, along with a solid performer in the two-mile race, led to a challenging season.

Henry started his own program of hard workouts the following summer around the Madison area. Most treks were four miles or more with some approaching the 20 mile mark.

All of the hard work paid off and he was elected captain of both cross-country and track in 1966. After losing his first race his senior year to Branford (a Class B school), he went on to win all his remaining regular season meets. He won the Shoreline Championship, setting records along the way. He took fifth place in the State Class C Championship.

Track season brought additional success. Henry typically ran the half mile and the two mile and was on the relay team. He won every two mile race and only lost one half mile race the entire season. He was able to avenge that only loss by beating that same runner later in the postseason.

Valley Regional made an attempt to limit him in the Shoreline Championship to just one race a half mile and longer where he finished a close third in the quarter mile. He won the two mile in record time.

Henry went on to compete for two years in cross country at the University of Rhode Island where he set numerous records as a freshman. A leg injury limited his second year.

He left URI for computer school and continued running where he was in the top five in the five to ten mile range. He completed the Boston Marathon, finishing 289 out of several thousand runners. His continued running set several "personal bests" before ending his running career in 1972 with a knee injury.

Henry's freshman year (1962-1963) was the start of Madison's cross country and track history. Track coach Robert Duncanson was in his first year and training up till then was basically in gym class. He was followed by Robert Schultz, Mr. Devlin, and assistant coach Richard Sellett.

Cross country was a simple course layout around the perimeter of the old high school and the surrounding corn fields. Track was another challenge. The grass around the old baseball field had a rise and fall of more than three feet and the sides of the loop. The uniforms were simply those required in gym class and running barefoot was the norm. Uniforms were added in 1965.

The Madison Lions Club named Henry Hand's Athlete of the year for 1966 and he also was awarded the Good Sportsmanship Award.

Henry (AKA "Skip") has lived in Madison his entire life. He and his wife Evelyn have a daughter, Jennifer, and two sons, Mark and Jeff. Henry has been retired for three years after a career as a Structural Inspector for bridges and buildings, including cell towers and submarines. Jennifer works for Yale New Haven hospital. Both sons are involved with firefighting. Jeff is currently with the Madison Hose Company and Jeff moved from Madison and joined the Durham Hose Company.



MIKE FAGAN
CLASS OF 1969
BASKETBALL



Mike Fagan was a terrific athlete. He was the starting goalie his freshman year on the varsity soccer team; however, he decided to focus on his favorite sport, basketball. Mike was a varsity reserve his sophomore year. He was a starter and star player his junior and senior seasons, leading both teams to a record of 19 and 3.

He averaged 11.1 points per game his junior year. His senior season he averaged 18.1 points per game. In addition, Mike frequently had ten rebounds or more in a game. His best game overall was probably in a 59-57 loss to Guilford where he scored 26 points and pulled down 15 rebounds. He scored 34 against Durham to tie the school single game scoring record while grabbing 16 rebounds.

Ranked fourth in Class C, Mike had 18 points and 11 rebounds in first round win over Ellington. Hand advanced to the State Class C Semifinals where Hand lost to Cromwell, finishing with a 19-3 record. Mike was renowned for his great first step and his very powerful drives to the basket.

Mike studied for four years in Italy and received his bachelor's degree from Chicago Loyola. While working for RJ Reynolds in California, Mike got his MBA from UCLA (including pickup games with Bill Walton). Mike retired in 2007 as Director of Marketing for Reynold's American, the parent company of R.J. Reynolds. Mike and his lovely wife, Robin, are blessed with four children (two boys and two girls) and two beautiful granddaughters.

KEVIN FILIPPONE
CLASS OF 2006
FOOTBALL & LACROSSE



Kevin was born on March 13, 1988 a birthday he shares with his mother, Paula. That spring would be the last as an assistant football coach for his father, Steve, who took over for Larry Ciotti in 1989. The groundwork was laid for a father-son combination that would include both he and his older brother, Tommy. From the moment he was eligible, Kevin became involved in Madison youth sports playing baseball, soccer, and basketball before beginning his football career as a fifth grader and his lacrosse career as a sixth grader.

Kevin was fortunate to be part of one of the most memorable classes of male athletes to come through Hand in the last 20 years. His teams in youth sports consistently excelled and playing for championships at an early age became something that would bode well for their future as Hand Tigers. Kevin points to the lasting and powerful bond between him and his teammates as the number one reason for the success they would have later at Hand. He was fortunate to be coached by a hall of famer Mike Ciotti in youth football where he played quarterback and Mike Wilson in lacrosse, where he began his career as a midfielder.

In 2002, he, along with his band of brothers, would begin their run as Hand Tigers. Kevin played freshman football that year and was part of an undefeated team under freshman coach Jim Flanagan and Hall of Fame Coach Frank Barron. He began as a lacrosse midfielder that spring for the first year coach Jim Wygonik. Kevin combined exceptional athleticism with an almost unhealthy competitive nature. His father said of him, "Kevin wanted to hit anything he could and had the courage to attack the net in lacrosse, and in football, catch the ball in traffic without a second thought."

He became a starter in football at mid-season of his sophomore year when Coach Pete Nye was determined that he deserved the shot, despite his father's protests. Kevin became a target for QB Mark Punzelt and caught four passes in Hand's State Championship victory over Ledyard in 2003. In 2004, he and Jim Eckenrode led a receiving core that would establish many team passing records and lead the Tigers to a perfect 12-0 season, a State Championship, and the program's second Number One Ranking in Connecticut high school football.

His senior season was the culmination of years of the group's efforts and commitment. Hand went 8-2 and defeated Hillhouse for the State Championship that year, making his the only class in Hand Football history to win three consecutive State Championships. For his efforts, Kevin was chosen to represent Hand on the All-SCC Division I team and earned a Second Team spot on the Hartford Courant All State team.

Kevin said, "Playing with my best friends and for my Dad was the greatest thrill that anyone could ask for and I loved every minute of it." His lacrosse career also included many firsts and championships

for Hand. The Tigers won the SCC championship in Kevin's sophomore year for the first time in school history, defeating Fairfield Prep 8-3. This was to become a common theme as they won three consecutive titles, defeating Branford in 2005 and Prep in 2006.

Hand would qualify for the State Championship finals for only the second time in school history in 2006. They fell to Darien 13-5 in the championship game. Kevin was honored with membership on the 2004, 2005, and 2006 Division I All SCC teams in both his junior and senior seasons. He was also selected to represent Hand on the New Haven Register All Area teams and the CHSCA All State teams. He was especially proud of being named captain his senior season.

That three-year run resulted in over 40 victories for Hand and established the program as one of the best in the entire state. In 2006, he and close friend and fellow Hall of Famer, Ryan Nizolek, had the honor of being selected to the USA Lacrosse All American Team, an honor which Kevin calls the greatest in his life, short of having his wife Caroline say, "Yes."

Kevin's achievements place him in some good company. He currently is ranked sixth in all-time career assists, twenty first in goals scored, and ninth in total points for the entire State of Connecticut. He is the all-time assist leader for Hand and ranks second in career points behind hall of famer Tom Zaccagnino. In 2006, he was selected as the Connecticut Lacrosse Player of the Year by both the Hartford Courant and the New Haven Register and made his Mom proud by being chosen to represent Hand as the CIAC, the National Football Foundation, and the Hall of Fame Scholar Athlete.

Kevin chose to attend the University of Delaware to play lacrosse. The highlight of his college career came early when, in his freshmen year, the Blue Hens qualified for the NCAA tournament and played in the Final Four vs. eventual winner Johns Hopkins in the semi-finals in front of 40,000 people at the Baltimore Ravens' stadium. He continued to play and graduated in 2010 with a degree in marketing. Today, he lives in Philadelphia with his wife Caroline and their 6 month old son Henry.



TYLER LESHNEY
CLASS OF 1991
BASKETBALL & BASEBALL



Tyler was a two-time Shoreline Conference baseball champion, an undefeated Hartford Courant First Team All-State pitcher, a three-time All Shoreline Team member, and a captain of both basketball and baseball at Daniel Hand. He was a league leader in rebounds on the basketball team and was named a Second Team All-Shoreline player in 1991.

He was also active as an officer and four-year member of the DHHS Band. When he wasn't competing, he was an accomplished sports correspondent for The Shore Line Times covering wrestling, cross country, track and field, soccer, and girls' lacrosse and basketball. As a serious student and athlete, he was named Hand's Scholar Athlete of the Year in 1991.

Surrounded by a very solid team, he played first base and was the closer on the 1990 Shoreline Champion baseball team. It was the first title in many years. He had 11 saves that year which contributed to two thirds of the wins with a record of 1-0, allowing only one earned run all those appearances.

As a co-captain of the 1991 baseball team, he was undefeated with an 8-0 record and had an amazing ERA of 0.58. He appeared in ten games (eight complete games) and pitched 60 innings, giving up just 22 hits while striking out 50 and walking 17. The season ended with Tyler tossing two one-hitters in ten days, beating Guilford for their second consecutive Shoreline Conference Championship and then in his final home game against Foran of Milford in the CIAC Class L Tournament. His season also included complete game three-hitters versus Xavier, Coginchaug and H-K, not to mention four-hitters against Guilford and Old Lyme.

"Tyler was a major factor in contributing to make Daniel Hand baseball a consistently successful program. He was easily one of the most dominant pitchers to play for Hand in the last 30 years," said Hand head baseball coach Tom Schultz who added, "Tyler appeared to be mild mannered as a player, but he was an absolute bulldog on the mound. He took it as a personal affront if a team had the audacity to score a run against him."

Schultz concluded, "Tyler was a standout as a student, as an athlete, and with the exemplary way he carried himself on and off the field. He was a shining example of what we wanted all Daniel Hand baseball players to be."

Although very active in youth soccer and football, Tyler focused on baseball and basketball while at Hand. He earned the first of his eight

varsity letters starting for the basketball team his sophomore year – the first sophomore starter in many years. A severely fractured elbow in a preseason All Star game (89-90) ended that season early. Doctors felt he might not be able to play competitive sports again.

Tyler went on to graduate with Honors in Government from Harvard. He played baseball for the Crimson until a shoulder injury cut his career short in his sophomore year. His biggest thrill, although a lifelong Yankees fan, was playing in the 1992 Bean Pot Tournament in Fenway Park.

Tyler went on to a successful career in finance and business, moving to Southern California in 1997. He is currently President of Ultra Mobile which was named Inc. 500's 2015 Fastest Growing Company in America. Tyler lives with his wife Stephanie (who is President of her family business) and their three children, twins Nora and Parker, and Paige in Long Beach. Tyler is encouraged by seeing pretty good throwing arms in at least two of his kids!



JASON C. McBEAN
CLASS OF 1991
SOCCER & TRACK AND FIELD



Jason, a 1991 graduate, is the best sprinter in the history of Daniel Hand High School Track and Field. His speed and athleticism also earned him a position on the varsity soccer team as a freshman and then consecutively for his remaining seven varsity seasons in both Soccer and Track and Field. Hall of Fame Track and Field Coach Bob Roberti remembers first meeting Jason as his fourth and fifth grade elementary P.E. teacher at Jeffery school. For the next three years, Coach Roberti anticipated and honed Jason's return as part of Roberti's Track and Field team at Hand High School between 1987-1991.

As a standout soccer player at Hand, Jason started for Soccer Hall of Fame Coach Bob Faulkner. He also played travel soccer and premier soccer with the South Central Connecticut program his junior and senior years. Jason was named All Shoreline and All-State three times and was selected for the A Team in the 1990 Connecticut Soccer Senior Bowl. His senior year, Jason was selected co-captain of the varsity soccer team, along with teammates and friends Bill Woods and Ted Dowling.

Along with friend and teammate John Bowes, Jason was selected co-captain of the track and field team. Jason was named All-Shoreline and All-State Track and Field all four years of his high school career. He was the Shoreline Champion in the 100 meter dash, 200 meter dash, 400 meter dash and the 4x100 meter relay. Jason also consistently anchored the 4x400 meter relay. Coach Roberti remembers when Jason, along with Ned Lynch and Sean Lynch, set the Hershey 4x100 meter relay state and New England records. The performance at the New England Championship qualified them to travel to the Hershey Pennsylvania National Championship meet where they placed fourth, just shy of medaling at the national level.

Jason broke the 200 meter and 400 meter State Class MM records with times of 22.18 and 48.53 seconds respectively his senior year. After 30 years, Jason still holds the Daniel Hand High School records in indoor 55meter dash and outdoor 100 meter dash, the 200 meter dash and the 400 meter dash. Additionally, Jason is part of the school record breaking 4x200 meter team with fellow 2021 inductee Dan Zaneski.

In addition to his record-breaking performances, Coach Roberti remembers Jason's humbleness as second to none. At the Ledyard Relays, Jason willingly ran the 800 meters, a middle distance run that Jason described as self-induced torture, helping Daniel Hand win that competitive meet. This serves as an example of Jason's unselfishness and true leadership.

After Daniel Hand, Jason continued his athletic career as a scholar athlete at Dartmouth College. He earned a position on the Dartmouth Soccer team as one of two walk-ons. As a track and field recruit, Jason excelled at the Division I collegiate level, winning the New England Championship in the 400 meter dash with a time of 48.02. Twice, he was selected to the All-Ivy Track and Field team as a member of Dartmouth's 4x400 meter relay team. Jason remains on Dartmouth's "All-Time" list among the top 10 fastest quarter milers ever to have run at Dartmouth.

After graduating from Dartmouth, Jason used the lessons learned as a scholar athlete to pursue medicine at Dartmouth-Brown Medical School. He completed his residency in Dermatology at Brown University and then pursued fellowship training in Cosmetic and Laser Dermatology at the Juva Skin and Laser Center affiliated with Mt. Sinai in New York City.

Jason built a successful career as a cosmetic and laser dermatologist in Fairfield, CT where he aims to positively impact the lives of his staff and patients.

Jason's parents, Carl and Cynthia McBean, thoroughly enjoyed and supported Jason's athletic and academic career, believing that through humble hard work and belief in oneself, anything is possible. Their pride in their son and their fond memories of their time in Madison could only be eclipsed by the athletic and academic accolades achieved by Jason's younger sister and previously inducted 2018 Madison Hall of Famer Melissa McBean who rightfully reminds Jason that she is the better athlete in the family.

Jason lives in Fairfield, CT with his wife and fellow 2021 Madison Hall of Fame Inductee Michelle Conroy McBean (also DHHS Class of 1991). They have two children and student athletes Jackson (15) and Hayden McBean (13).



MARYANN SALATTO
EXEMPLARY CONTRIBUTOR



Some might wonder why an organization like ours would allot space for Exemplary Contributors. After listening to this story, you'll agree that it is an essential part of who we honor. When MaryAnn entered Hillhouse High School in 1959, she was confronted with the fact that there were no girls' sports. She decided that she would be a cheerleader for a team whose star player was some guy named Floyd Little.

No sports for girls planted a seed that would change everything for Madison softball in the years to come. In 1969, MaryAnn and her husband Joe moved to Madison with their daughter Sue and son Joey, who later in that year would be joined by a set of twins, Laurie and Lisa. Almost immediately, she became a huge fan of Daniel Hand Softball and its Hall of Fame coach Willie Rose.

As her girls grew, she was disappointed to find out how limited the opportunities for them to play sports were. This time she resolved to do something about it so that her daughters could have access to softball that she never did as a child.

In 1973, Madison Little League was an organization dominated by many high-profile men in the community and the idea of a girls' softball league was not on their agenda. When MaryAnn approached them, she was told to go ahead but that it probably would not work. It was agreed that signups would be conducted for girls between the ages of 10-13. Enough girls performed well in the tryouts to form four teams. Almost immediately, the kindness and care for the girls that would become a hallmark of her involvement, began to shine through. When she noticed that several girls had not been chosen for a team and some had not signed up, the new Vice President in charge of softball decided that she would take a fifth team so that everyone who wanted to, could play. MaryAnn took the bad news bears and named them the stars.

Running a league was no small job. She needed to find coaches, sponsors, and jockey for field time. She did all of it with the grace and decency that has been a hallmark of her work in our community. She did all this without having any children in the program. Then, in 1974, with MaryAnn's support, Nancy Hobb started an instructional league for six to nine year olds. They called themselves "The Robins" and several future hall of famers were included in that group of girls among them, Jenn Mueller, Sandy Gavin, Anne Kirwin Anderson, and Sue Salatto Leckey.

By 1975, the program had grown to 12 teams with three divisions.

As the program grew, MaryAnn continued to battle for her girls, taking on the much larger little league group. She fought for sponsors and teams with names like the Dairy Queen "DQ'S," Generals Residence 5 Stars, and the Lincoln Mercury Bobcats which became celebrated teams in the town.

MaryAnn gives credit to men like Hall of Famer Charlie Gebauer and women like Barbara Ciotti for helping her to manage all of the components of the program. She stayed with the program for nine years before turning it over in 1984. For the next decade, girls' softball was the largest outlet for girls' sports in Madison until the introduction of girls' lacrosse around 1990.

Sue Salatto Leckey says of her mother, "My mom didn't just create a place for girls to participate; she wanted them to compete and take pride in their achievements." MaryAnn's response, "I just wanted to see my daughters and all of the other girls have the chance to compete, an opportunity I never had growing up." Trish Docker says of her, "She was a pioneer in the world of girls and women's sports in Madison in the '70s and '80s and her legacy continues on through all of us that learned from her and now pass that passion on to the next generation of female athletes."

Ralph Waldo Emerson said this of a good life, "The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." When we reflect on the story of Madison youth softball, we can know for certain that our inductee was more than useful, consistently honorable, full of compassion, and for certain made an enormous difference in the lives of hundreds of girls.

Maryann was married and empowered by her late husband Joseph Salatto for 55 years, she has four adult children: Joey (Angela), Susan (Stewart), Lori (Joe) and Lisa (Jeff), 12 grandchildren and 3 great children all who share the joy of sport.



SUSAN SALATTO LECKEY
CLASS OF 1985
FIELD HOCKEY, BASKETBALL
& SOFTBALL



Sue was among the fiercest and most honorable competitors to ever put on the black and gold. She was a three-sport athlete who got to play for three Hall of Fame coaches in Pat Shonk, Willie Rose, and Jim Bombaci. She was chosen to lead her team as their captain in each of those sports. She was chosen to represent Hand on numerous All League and All State teams but, in true Sue fashion, downplays any personal recognition.

Perhaps the best example of why we are honoring her comes from her own recollection of a situation that arose her senior year as a field hockey captain: "We didn't have a JV goalie, so I played the entire varsity game at center midfield and then hustled over to the JV game, put on the goalie equipment, and played JV." Sue was the kind of selfless leader that any coach would die to have on their team.

Coach Bombaci says of Sue, "There are no statistics kept for pick setting or moving off the ball, but if there were she would have led the state! She did all of the jobs that brought absolutely no recognition other than from her teammates by playing her small part in such a big way she created better teamwork, higher performance, and positive moral on every team she played on."

Sue attributes much of her success as an athlete to the passion that each of her coaches brought to the field each day. "For me, it was a perfect match between the love I had for the game and the passion I saw in my coaches each day." Sue describes her coaches as the "gifts that keep on giving." She believes that playing for Coach Rose was the most intimidating sports experience she ever had. Her expectations were so high that you wondered if you could ever meet them, yet once she did it became the most fulfilling experiences of her life.

She attributes her ability to deal with childbirth, to running sprints for Bombaci. She also attributes the commitment she saw in her mom and dad to giving their children opportunities to compete in sports as evidenced by her mom's induction for her role in creating our youth softball league and her dad's involvement in the original youth football program in town.

For Sue, sports were a family affair, encompassing not only her brother and sisters but also her parents and grandparents. "If we won a championship, it was a family championship; everyone would be there and celebrate. We built our lives around sports and family." Susan graduated from Hand in 1985 and went on to be a two-sport athlete, playing field hockey and softball at the University of Vermont. In her senior season of field hockey, to no one's surprise, she was chosen

Captain and led the team as their center midfielder.

In 1989 with her degree in hand, she had a difficult decision to make. She could go to work beside her dad or take the advice of another Hall of Fame coach, Larry Ciotti. Larry saw something in Sue that he knew would make her a terrific coach and teacher. He encouraged her to get her teaching degree. When she chose to follow that advice, her father embraced it also knowing how powerful her influence on the youngsters of Madison would be.

Sue began her coaching career at Hand as an assistant coach in three sports in 1990. It would not be until 1998 when she was hired to teach history in Madison, that her impact as a coach would become among the most important in program history. Sue served as field hockey assistant under head coach Gina Wygonik until her retirement in 2002. Sue decided to apply for the job because she wanted every girl to have access to the same great experiences she had in high school. What followed is a story of success built around commitment, hard work, humility, and sacrifice.

For the last 19 years she has led the field hockey program at Hand. She has had a winning season in all but one of those years while compiling a record of 262 wins, 69 losses, and 21 ties. By the way, that is a winning percentage of 84%. Her teams have qualified for the state tournament 17 times and reached the finals six times, while producing two state championships.

Her teams have qualified each year for the SCC tournament and come away with three championships. She has been named Coach of the year by the Connecticut High School Coaches Association, the Connecticut Field Hockey Coaches Association four times, and twice was All Area Coach of the Year for the New Haven Register.

Sue has produced 53 All State players and 51 All SCC players. More importantly, she has created a Field Hockey family in Madison that fits well with the strong sense of community she has always felt. Sue points to coaching her daughters in Field hockey as one of her most enjoyable experiences. Sue said, "Sports is a great vehicle for escaping some of the tougher things in life, like losing my dad a few months ago. There wasn't a day that went by where my father didn't tell me I was beautiful and that no matter what happened I would still be beautiful. He taught me that relationships were the most important thing in life." He is very proud of you tonight.

Susan has been a Social Studies teacher at Daniel Hand since 1998, she lives in Madison with her husband Stewart and 5 children: Hannah, Bryce, Taylor, Stone and Campbell.



REBECCA SHANLEY GORDON
CLASS OF 1994
GYMNASTICS



Countless successful student athletes have come in and out of the gymnastics gym at Polson (formerly Hand), garnering recognition at the conference, state, and national level. The Daniel Hand Gymnastics team boasts 18 State Championship titles, the most of any sports program in Daniel Hand history. This tradition of excellence and success makes it even more noteworthy that Rebecca Shanley Gordon, class of 1994, continues to hold the Floor Exercise school record more than 25 years after competing, with a score of 9.7.

Rebecca earned her varsity letter all four years and was the team captain her senior year. She was an integral piece of the 1993 undefeated SCC and State Championship team and the 1992 State Runner-Up team. Her Floor Exercise school record of a 9.7 also tied the State of Connecticut record for that apparatus at the time. In all four of her gymnastics seasons, Rebecca earned First Team All State honors in Vault, Uneven Bars, Balance Beam, Floor Exercise, and the All Around and was a New Haven Register All Area selection. In the 1992 season, she was the Class M and State Open Vaulting Champion and in every season, she placed in the top five in both vault and floor in the Divisional and State Open Championships.

“There is a long list of adjectives that I could use to describe Becky... as a competitor she was dependable, consistent, fierce, and creative,” said former Hand coach and 2016 Madison Athletics Hall of Fame Inductee Stephen Redes. “She was tougher on herself than anybody else. That and [she had] a given genetic talent. [She] forged through it all. Becky was an absolute charm. She was sweet. When someone had problems, Becky was there. She was like a little mom almost. Her heart. She was sensitive and sincere.”

Rebecca was the first Daniel Hand gymnast to break the 1000 point barrier in her career, doing so in her junior year, and scoring over 1550 points in total. Additionally, she was the first Hand gymnast to break the 36 point All Around barrier, an elusive club in the world of high school gymnastics. At the culmination of her career, Rebecca was named to the Connecticut High School National Gymnastics team and the team placed second at the National Championship. She also placed top 20 on floor in this national competition.

Coach Redes shared one poignant memory about Rebecca’s talent on the floor exercise. In one particular close meet, her music was missing before it was time to compete floor. “So I said, get a walkman. Here’s some music. Make up a routine to it,” Redes recalls. “So she

walked away with her little ponytail bouncing and [ends up] throwing like a 9.3 floor routine, with somebody else's floor music and forgetting a requirement. I don't think there were one or two floor routines that were ever exactly the same. [The still standing floor record] displays her talent, her athleticism, and her consistency."

Rebecca currently lives in Higganum with her husband, Bill, and two sons, Liam and Riley, and she works as a paralegal for Reed, Wilson, Case Attorneys and Counselors at Law.



KERRY WALLACK
CLASS OF 2010
BASKETBALL, SOCCER
& SOFTBALL



Kerry Wallack was a multi-faceted athlete and three-sport star from the class of 2010. She was constantly guided through her career by three simple words – Passion, Poise, and Purpose. At DHHS, she was a varsity player from freshman year on and earned varsity letters in soccer, basketball, and softball.

On the pitch, Kerry joined a strong soccer team her freshman year and transitioned from the state's leading premier scorer in seventh and eighth grade to a willing defensive midfielder, where she was asked to battle for possession and then work the ball up field to a strong contingent of upperclassmen.

Sophomore year, she thought she would go back to her natural position as a striker, only to change positions again! When the team opened the preseason without a keeper, Coach Faulkner asked for a volunteer. One hand went up – Kerry Wallack's. Her commitment to team and unselfishness provided a spark that would lead to some great years for DHHS soccer, culminating with the second-best record all-time, 17-1-2 and for Kerry (12 shutouts). Coach Bob Faulkner exclaimed, "Simply put, there was no one better at the goalkeeper position. Kerry was a game changer; she revolutionized the position." He goes on to say that in an SCC final against the Cheshire Rams, Kerry put on a show. She stopped everything, making 18 saves, six of which no other goalkeeper would have made. Hand took one shot and won the title 1-0. Longtime Cheshire coach Tony Crane said afterwards, "She was the finest goalie he had ever played against." Kerry went on to garner All-League for three years, All-Area, All Area MVP, All-State, and was selected to play in the CGSGA Senior Bowl.

On to hoops, where Kerry got her start practicing and scrimmaging with her older brother Dan's MYBA team, coached by Dad, which made that a little easier. By the time Kerry reached fifth grade travel ball, she was ready. Four years of Madison Travel, AAU basketball that included two years on the Rhode Island Breakers and driving to Warwick, RI two or three times a week.

All of that prepared her nicely for her ultimate goal to play college basketball down the road. Coach Jim Holleran, who coached Kerry her first two seasons on the court, called her a great all-round player. She could hit the three, as well as score inside. She had great court awareness and was exceptional at setting up teammates for quality shots. She was also a strong rebounder and was able to start the break with a great outlet pass or push the ball up the court on her own. She was the

key to the full court press as well, reading the opponents' passes and intercepting often.

A coachable and team orientated player, Kerry made her teammates better. She was also a clutch performer, having her biggest moments against rivals such as Mercy and Guilford, which usually meant winning shots! Her junior year memories include player of the week when she went for 23 points, 13 rebounds, and five steals versus West Haven and later that week had 24 points, 15 rebounds, and six assists against Guilford. Kerry finished her three-year career with 997 points, missing her senior season with a torn meniscus. She also took home honors such as Player of the Week, All Area, All County, and All State. Her teams during her career made it to the state quarterfinals each season.

Kerry also played softball for her first two years at DHHS. She was a power hitting outfielder from the right side of the plate and a speedy drag bunter and slap hitter from the left side. During her time with longtime coach Ray Ezell, Kerry was top three in all offensive categories. Coach Ezell said, "If Kerry had been able to commit to four years of softball, she would have received D1 offers as well." Ray went on to say, "During my 18 year tenure, I can't remember a more deserving Hall of Fame recipient."

Kerry ultimately chose basketball and headed to the University of Rhode Island where she started games in all four years and as a senior captain, averaged 9.1 and 7.4 rebounds per game, earning Top-Ten honors for rebounds in the Atlantic 10 conference playing guard! Kerry also had six double/doubles, was Atlantic 10 Honorable Mention, URI Player of the Week, Newport Bank Player of the Week, and a member of the FAU All-Tournament team. She also left Rhode Island with the second most recorded rebounds in a game with 18 versus Fairfield in her freshman year.

After contemplating an overseas career in Greece, Spain, or Ireland, Kerry opted for a great opportunity at Yale New Haven Hospital, where she has worked now for seven years as a laboratory IT analyst. Kerry's commitment to team and her passion continued, assisting her dad with basketball coaching on her youngest brother, Jason's travel team. When not coaching, you can find Kerry volunteering her soccer goalkeeping expertise, playing pickup, or perhaps sitting in the stands at the Final Four.



DAN ZANESKI
CLASS OF 1989
TRACK AND FIELD & FOOTBALL



As a 1989 graduate of Hand High School, Dan Zaneski had an outstanding career as an athlete in football and track in high school and college. He played as a defensive back and quarterback and became only the third football player to letter all four years, joining Hall of Fame inductees, Scott Sweitzer and Dave Thompson. Dan accepted a football scholarship to Division I Murray State University in Kentucky.

His football accomplishments at Hand are numerous. He was All-Conference Honorable Mention as a freshman and sophomore and was selected first team All-Conference and All-State defensive back in his junior and senior years. In addition, he was selected first team All-State as a punter as well as All USA. Dan held the school record in punting, averaging 40.3 yards. He is currently tied for the school record for longest punt return of 80 yards for a touchdown, along with Dave Thompson. Dan is also currently third for most career interceptions with nine and most passing touchdowns within a game at four.

As the 1989 captain of the Hand track team, Dan, once again, became a four year letterman. His 4x200 meter relay team presently holds the Hand school record which is 32 years old. As an elite javelin thrower, he placed first in many high-profile, national meets, including a second place finish in the Connecticut State Open and a fifth place in the New England Invitational. He was selected All-Conference and All-State in track as a senior.

Dan continued his athletic success at Murray State University as a defensive back in football and a javelin thrower in track. He lettered in his junior and senior years in football and was a key contributor in Murray State, winning the Ohio Valley Conference Track Championship in 1991 by becoming the champion javelin thrower in the Ohio Valley Conference. In addition, Dan placed first in the javelin at the Kentucky Invitation National Track and Field Tournament.

Dan resides in Madison along with his wife Catherine, daughter Madison, and son Connor. He works as a property and casualty risk engineer and gives back to his community by volunteering as a Madison Little League baseball coach and Madison Youth Football coach and serving on the Board of Directors for the Madison Youth Football.

Dan's football coach, Larry Ciotti, and his track coach, Bob Roberti, call him a very gifted, humble athlete and leader for Hand athletics. His role modeling and his work ethic have contributed to the development of countless younger athletes that aspire to accomplish great things.