

JOE LAWSON

Class of 1969



Joe Lawson was proudly born and raised in Seneca Falls, the oldest of 6 children born to Joseph Sr. and Helen Ferguson Lawson. As a child he grew up playing outside activities with the other neighborhood children. Most of these neighborhood gatherings revolved around sports. As they got older, they eventually branched out to other neighborhoods to create competition. Sometimes they competed with others through school, in Joe's case, St. Patrick's. Neighborhood sports taught him competition. Since he was taller than his age group, Joe played with older kids encountering many

bumps in the road. Soon thereafter came little league, school basketball, and later organized football. Throughout this period, Joe always continued to get together with his friends for no holds barred competition in all sports.

That competitive application continued to grow and as an 8th grader Joe's St. Patrick's basketball team had an undefeated season and won the league. Looking forward, some on that team have gone on to distinction in this hall of fame including Mark Piscitelli and Mike Nozzolio. Tony Ferrara was also a member of that team.

Throughout, Joe's favorite sport was football, which he continues to enjoy. An injury while playing JV as a sophomore caused his father to shut this sport down. Those were the days when kids actually listened to their parents!

In high school, Joe amassed 6 varsity letters in basketball and baseball, being a starting pitcher in baseball as a freshman. An injury caused him to miss part of the sophomore basketball season, and the entire baseball season. He was a second team all-league in basketball as a senior. He doesn't recollect there being an all-league team for baseball, but the highlight of his senior year was when he threw a no hitter against DeSales.

After graduation, Joe was offered scholarships for baseball, but following the death of his grandfather, his biggest baseball fan, he signed a contract to play baseball in the Seattle Pilots minor league system. He pitched a 9 inning shutout in his first game. The team then went on to be the Milwaukee Brewers, for whom he played for 5 seasons, his last 2 in the AA Texas league. Following his release, he used his National Guard training in the medical field and finished nursing school. After he got married, he and his wife Kate moved back to this area to raise their children in the close structure of a small town. He went on to become a Nurse Practitioner and recently retired from that field after 27 years. Following a divorce, Joe married Sharon and they currently live in Prattsburgh, NY.

The point Joe would like to make from his biography is that his childhood environment and the local athletic high school heroes on the field and courts, provided inspiration and hope for those who were younger. He feels that he never would have achieved the honorable position of being inducted into the Mynderse Academy Athletic Hall of Fame without these influences. He is additionally grateful to all the athletes he was lucky enough to play with and to basketball coach Norm Law who he firmly believes turned the MA basketball program around.