

## ADEN "ABE" VAN CLEEF

### Class of 1931



Aden "Abe" Van Cleef was born in Seneca Falls in 1913. He was the son of George and Frances (Bachman) Van Cleef. Abe had one sister, Agnes Van Cleef Holland. He attended Seneca Falls schools, including Mynderse Academy, where he flourished as a student and athlete. Abe is now being honored as a 2018 inductee into the Mynderse Academy Athletic Hall of Fame.

Beginning in the eighth grade, Abe was a four-year starting running back on the Mynderse Varsity football team. Impressive in stature, Abe delighted local football fans as they watched him dash and scramble for touchdown after touchdown with relentless speed and strength.

He was team captain and a true inspiration to his teammates.

Abe also played four years on the varsity baseball team. He played first base and was a true slugger with the bat while serving as team captain.

While playing varsity basketball for four years, Abe earned distinctions, such as, team captain and All State recognition.

Outside of being a "Three Star Letterman", Abe also played trumpet in the Mynderse school band.

After graduating, Abe continued his involvement in sports. He was the star running back for the "Clyde Americans" and "Clyde G Men" semi pro football teams. Abe was a major attraction on the team, drawing crowds of thousands from Seneca Falls and the surrounding area. As one local sports writer put it, "he's better than a triple threat, he's colossal!"

Building on his blazing speed and ever improving athletic skills, Abe went on to play running back in the AFL for the Syracuse Braves pro football team. He also saw duty as a punter and kicker.

Abe also played for the local SMS men's baseball team in the Middlesex baseball league. Being strong with the bat, he hit many balls out of the park.

In addition to his other athletic skills, Abe also had an impressive career as an amateur boxer. As a heavy weight with superior strength and speed he knocked out many opponents and suffered only one loss by a decision.

In addition to his own participation in local sports, Abe served the community by organizing and coaching both youth baseball and basketball. The athletes he coached as young men fondly remember him to this day.

Abe was a life long resident of Seneca Falls. In 1936 he married Esther Crane. They made their home on White Street where they raised their five daughters and one son. To quote one of Abe's lifelong friends and classmate, Joe Anglim, "Abe was a class act."