

## ROBERT SPANO

### Class of 1959



Robert (Bob) Spano is a 1959 graduate of Mynderse Academy where he was a leader not only on the athletic field but in student government as well. Bob, the son of Italian immigrants and the youngest of seven children, was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. When he was one year old, the family moved to Seneca Falls. His love for football began at St. Patrick's Elementary School under the guidance of Coach Gino Giovannini and Coach Chipper Vergamini. These two men introduced Bob to the sport which led to his playing football in high

school, college, and eventually a football coaching/teaching career.

After leaving St. Pat's and entering Mynderse Academy, Bob became involved in student government, serving as class president in his freshman and junior year. He was a member of the Student Council for all four years of high school and served as the treasurer his sophomore year and president his senior year. He was a Junior Rotarian, attended Boys State, and was selected to represent Mynderse Academy in Albany to observe the workings of state government.

Bob was a multi-sport athlete. As a Blue Devil, Bob played football for four years under Athletic Hall of Fame Coach George Davis. As a running back, he scored sixteen touchdowns in his senior year to help his team complete their second undefeated season. He was voted to the Wayne-Finger Lakes All-County Team. Bob also participated in basketball, wrestling, and track and was voted MVP for the track and field squad in his senior year. He was a Block M member and won the Babe Ruth Award for Outstanding Sportsmanship.

Coach Davis, as well as John Koska, had a profound influence on Bob. They encouraged him to go to college--something that Bob had felt was not possible for him. However, he was accepted to Ithaca College and while there, he played football for three years and then began his coaching career in his senior year,

accepting a position as an assistant coach to the Ithaca College freshman football team. Bob knew he would have to work his way through college so besides playing football, he worked in the cafeteria for three years for his meals, swept up late nights at a radio station, was a short order cook at a diner, and was a fireman for the Town of Ithaca where he lived in the firehouse as a bunker for three years. Bob graduated with a degree in health and physical education and later earned a Master's Degree in Health Education from the University of Bridgeport.

Bob's first teaching and coaching job was at Waterloo High School as an assistant varsity football coach to the legendary Mike Ornato. He was also head track and field coach. After several highly successful years in Waterloo, Mike went to Port Chester High School and asked Bob to travel "downstate" to be his assistant. Bob was also the head varsity track & field coach while at Port Chester. Three years later Bob felt the pull to be a head coach and was hired by John F. Kennedy High School in Somers, N.Y. to develop their first varsity football program and JV and varsity wrestling programs as well. He was a member of the Westchester County Football Coaches Association which encompassed over fifty high schools in Westchester County. During the ten years he was in this organization, he held several positions including president. Bob finished up his 38-year teaching career at John Jay High School in Katonah, N.Y. capping that off with a successful career as a real estate associate broker and salesman.

Bob continues to reside in Somers with his wife, the former Barbara Dyson (Mynderse class of 1964). They just celebrated their 53<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary and have three children: Michael, Karin, and Aimee. Bob and Barbara also enjoy their three grandchildren. Bob loved growing up in Seneca Falls and especially loved his four years at Mynderse Academy. He considers himself a "life-long New Yorker" but ditches the cold and snow in the winter for sunny Arizona.