



Celebrating Over 60 Years Of Mustang Pride!

September 27 - 28, 2024
Immaculate High School
Danbury, CT

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR OF ATHLETICS

Dear Honorees and Guests,

Our Mustang athletics pride runs deep!

For over 60 years, Immaculate has been committed to the personal, academic, spiritual and athletic development of students. We know that the lessons our Mustangs learn about teamwork, sportsmanship, personal responsibility and individual excellence here carry over into college and their future careers.

Congratulations to our 2024 Hall of Fame Inductees! Thank you for playing an integral role in this amazing legacy. We are grateful to all those who dedicate themselves to making this possible for our student-athletes every day: coaches, teachers, fans, alumni, community members, friends and families. Our Immaculate athletic program would not be possible without you.

It has been an exciting year! Mustang Valley has been the heart of Immaculate High School athletics – and now it has a whole new look. Bishop Frank J. Caggiano blessed the school's new \$1.3 million turf field and track complex in September 2023, which was part of a capital campaign honoring Immaculate's 60th anniversary. The school's commitment to offering student-athletes incredible programs earned it a #8 ranking for athletics in Connecticut (by Niche). Immaculate is now home to 27 varsity sports and has a tradition of athletic excellence that includes 49 conference championships and 38 state championships.

I am grateful to serve as the Athletic Director in this special community and look forward to building on this incredible legacy. Congratulations to our Hall of Fame Inductees on receiving this prestigious honor. As a Hall of Fame member myself, I know about the sacrifice and dedication you made to get there. Most importantly, thank you for setting the bar high and inspiring a new generation of student-athletes.

Welcome to the 2024 Immaculate Hall of Fame! Go Mustangs!

Nelson Mingachos
Athletic Director
Immaculate High School

WELCOME

The IHS Athletic Hall of Fame exemplifies the rich traditions of excellence in Immaculate athletics by recognizing those who have brought honor and distinction to our school. The induction ceremony and celebratory luncheon allows us to honor individual athletes, legendary coaches, special contributors and outstanding teams who have made us proud through the years.

Thank you to our Hall of Fame Committee for helping to make this evening a success!

HALL OF FAME COMMITTEE

Maureen (Brew) Arsenault '69
Christine Cappiello
Nikki (Weiss) Conte '01
Jeannie (Coleman) Demko '88
Kevin Dunleavy
Bob Gerwien
Brian Hayes
Zach Long '04
Joe Mohn '02
Nelson Mingachos '89
Wendy Neil
Mike Palmer '69
Bob Plumb
Carolyn (Sullivan) Schlichtig '87



FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2024
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME INDUCTION CEREMONY
Presentation of Hall of Fame Pins

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2024
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME CELEBRATORY LUNCHEON

11:30am	Welcome <i>Wendy Neil, Head of School</i>
	Recognition of current IHS Hall of Fame members in attendance <i>Nelson Mingachos, Athletic Director</i>
	Prayer <i>Jeannie (Coleman) Demko '88, Alumni & Events Director</i>
12:00pm	Lunch
12:30pm	Presentation of Awards & Medals
	Julian Christe '07 - Football, Lacrosse & Wrestling
	Maggie Christe '13 - Cross Country, Indoor Track & Outdoor Track
	Coach Ralph Derubertis - Baseball & Basketball
	Jeffrey Haddad '95 - Baseball & Basketball
	Liz Spinella-Jones '75 - Golf
	Michael Mango '94 - Baseball, Basketball & Football
	Courtney Marra '11 - Girls Soccer
	Corey Medrano '11 - Girls Soccer
	Jessica (Wojnicki) Rodriguez '14 - Cross Country, Indoor Track & Outdoor Track
	Dominic Zancan '77 - Baseball, Football & Track
	1996 & 1997 Boys Soccer Teams 1997 Girls Cross Country Team
2:00pm	Closing Remarks <i>Wendy Neil</i>

HALL OF FAME MEMBERS

Inducted 1989

James E. Tierney '67
 Paul A. Hiro '68
 Christopher J. Palmer '68
 Frank E. Fiorita '69
 Sandra J. Arconti '78

Inducted 1991

W. Jeffrey Russell '76
 Kathleen Rowe Shaw '83
 Kerry Rowe '83
 Robert E. Gerwien (Admin)

Inducted 1992

David S. Closter '67
 Michael R. Pascuzzi '70
 Thomas J. Lynch '73
 Lynne M. Viscio '79

Inducted 1993

James V. Pacific '72
 Michael M. Jeffress '78
 Ellen Prunty '82
 Ronald P. Gleissner, Jr. '86

Inducted 1994

Robert Suchy (Coach)
 Raymond De Pelteau '69
 Maryann Lynch '85
 John Drohan '86

Inducted 1995

Fraser Randolph '70
 Candy Ferris McCarty '70
 David Osborne '81
 Karoline Rossini '81
 Michael Donahue '84
 Beth Anne Livolsi '89
 Elston Dodge (Supporter)

Inducted 1996

Daniel Murphy '66
 Harold Gantert '74
 Michael Dekker '80
 Claire Holston '81

Inducted 1997

Roger Burke '72
 Ralph Scozzafava '76
 Sheila Hanley '80

Mark Thalmann '82
 Robert Slavinsky (Coach)
 Inducted 1998
 Joyce (Jowdy) Curran '68
 Ian Smith '87
 Dana Smith '87
 Kevin Dunleavy (Coach)

Inducted 1999

Albert E. Davis '71
 Thomas K. Neville '74
 Robin Jeffress Walker '78

Inducted 2000

Ray Velez (Coach)
 Stephen T. Palmer '74
 Lisa J. Bongo '79
 Nelson O. Mingachos '89

Inducted 2001

Joseph Fazio (Coach)
 Mark Schweitzer '86
 Zach Dargaty '88
 Suzanne N. McAuliffe '89

Inducted 2008

Kate Drohan '91
 Robert Gerwien Jr. '81
 Stephen Kaplanis (Coach)
 Andrew Riepe '95

Inducted 2009

John Barata '96
 Jaimie Bierwirth '97
 Kenneth Rausch '91
 Kristi Setaro '91
 Linda Sabel (Coach, Phys. Ed Teacher)

Inducted 2010

Bridget Deakin Henry '92
 Sean Lomas '97
 Patty Murren Gessner '92
 Mike Palmer '69
 Bob Nelson (Coach)

Inducted 2011

Bob Plumb (Coach, former Director of Athletics, Phys Ed Teacher)

Andrea Behling
 Thoennessen '96
 Doug Riepe '00
 Caryl Drohan '91

Inducted 2014

Cicely Jette '92
 Joe Mohn '02
 Joe Rios '81
 Charlie Zarcone (Coach)
 1976 Boys Basketball Team

Inducted 2016

Maureen (Brew) Arsenault '69 (Supporter)
 Nicole Baker '06
 Moira (Deakin) Finney '93
 Amanda (Genova) Johnson '06
 Paul Myott '86
 1986 Football Team

Inducted 2018

David Bonilla '00
 Nikki (Weiss) Conte '07
 Chris Haddad '00
 Francisco "Chico" Barata (Coach)
 1986 Ice Hockey Team

Inducted 2021

Alex Asencio '89
 Jon Fenaroli '87
 Moira Kenny '09
 Zachary Long '04
 Lauren (MacKay) Neeley '05
 Anthony Simone '01
 Lindsay (Brown) Smith '06
 Walter "Dusty" Thompson '71
 1995 State Championship Girls Soccer Team
 Mike Szabocsan - Mustang Appreciation Award Recipient

A portrait of a young man with dark, curly hair, smiling. He is wearing a black tuxedo jacket, a white dress shirt, and a black bow tie. The background is a mottled grey.

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He was one of the students who started wrestling as a club in 2004. In their first season as a varsity team, 2005, Julian medaled in the state tournament and the SWCs. As a senior in 2006, he started the season with one loss and then won 40 straight matches en route to an SWC and Class S state championships at 135 lbs. He broke the record for fastest pin in school history (7 seconds). Julian captained the 2006-2007 wrestling team which led the entire state of

A word cloud of various sports. The words are arranged in a circular pattern. The most prominent words, shown in larger fonts, are 'lacrosse', 'baseball', 'wrestling', 'football', and 'basketball'. Other visible words include 'soccer', 'indoor track', 'outdoor track', 'golf', 'cross country', and 'volleyball'. The colors of the words range from light gray to dark blue.

Julian went to an elite military institute, served his country for a decade overseas on multiple tours in Afghanistan and Iraq and is a dedicated husband and father. He is now retired from the military and works as a market director for Fooda.



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cross country golf soccer basketball football lacrosse indoor track baseball wrestling soccer indoor track outdoor track

Maggie, an outstanding athlete and scholar at Immaculate, attended the University of Connecticut and had a successful running career with the UConn Huskies.



Coach Ralph DeRubertis

Ralph was born in 1944, the son of a mother from Watertown, NY, and a father who had immigrated from Italy in the early 1900s. At a time when organized sports were relatively new and mostly found in schools, he began his athletic career in the backyard with his neighborhood friends, playing a version of baseball that involved hitting clothespins with sticks.

Ralph transferred those skills to playing both varsity basketball and varsity baseball at Danbury High School, captaining both teams. In 1962, the Danbury High School basketball team won the league championship. He went on to play four years of both basketball and baseball at Western Connecticut State University, again helping to lead both teams as captain. Ralph continued playing ball in the local Men's Industrial Softball League, where he was recognized for having the longest hitting streak (54 consecutive hits) in the early 1970s. Last but not least, Ralph coached the baseball teams of his three treasured sons, Scott, Ryan and Justin, each of them being athletes as well as the greatest blessing of Ralph's life (until those nine grandbabies came along).

After obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees, Ralph began teaching and coaching at Immaculate High School. In



1975-1976, while he was the coach of the varsity basketball team at Immaculate, the team became the first ever basketball state champions at Immaculate High School, winning the title at the buzzer with one last shot. He also coached the 1974 baseball team to a SWC championship win.

To this day, Ralph and his family consider the players outstanding individuals whose integrity remained steadfast, and whose families were "the rock" behind them. In 2014, the basketball team was recognized and inducted into the Immaculate Hall of Fame. In addition to the team's abilities and perseverance, Ralph also credits the contributions of the late Bob Suchy, his friend, and former varsity coach, as well as the late Paul Hart, who acted as assistant coach when they won the basketball state championship title in 1976. The honor of being part of the development of this exceptional group of young men and being inducted into the Immaculate High School Hall of Fame is a truly humbling and deeply treasured recognition for not just Ralph, but for his entire family.

More important than the championships and awards are the relationships built under the auspices of sport. Ralph maintains lifelong connections with former teammates, colleagues, players and parents.



Jeff Haddad '95

Jeff played two sports, three years of basketball and four of baseball at Immaculate. He played on the varsity team for three of his four years in baseball garnering multiple honors and awards along the way: 1993 All Star Wild Division Team, 1994 All Star All Conference Team, 1995 All Star All Conference Team and Class "S" All State Team. Also, in 1995 he was voted by the league coaches to the John Giampaolo Outstanding Senior Award. He received a Danbury Old Timers Athletic Scholarship and was named the Exchange Club Youth of the Month. He was a member of the 1995 Western CT Conference Champion team.

Outside of Immaculate Jeff was winning youth golf tournaments and was good enough to walk on and captain at Division I Mount Saint Mary's University where he



attended to play baseball and earn an education degree. During his senior year he was named Most Valuable Player on their golf team.

Since college Jeff has taught at the elementary level and is currently the assistant principal of Prospect Elementary School in Prospect, CT. He is active in both St. Rose of Lima Parish and School in Newtown, coaching, boy scouts and serving on the most recent principal selection committee.

He demonstrates the core values of respect, responsibility, reverence, creativity and leadership – not only in athletics but in his everyday life as an educator, coach, husband and Dad (his son is a senior at Immaculate).



Liz Spinella-Jones '75

Liz Spinella-Jones was a pioneer in high school golf! She was the first woman to play competitive golf at IHS under the guidance of Coach Ramponi. In fact, she was the only woman in the entire league when she played. She never wanted to be considered as having an advantage, so she always played from the same tees as the men. Liz broke the gender barrier in high school golf at IHS and earned her varsity letter in golf.

Liz attended the University of Bridgeport and then went on for a master's degree in public administration at UCLA. She has demonstrated excellence in all aspects of life, opening doors that others might find daunting.



Liz established the Diabetes Clinic at Cedar Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles. From there she had a long and successful career as a quality assurance manager at Kaiser Permanente in California.

She still plays golf for recreation.



Gabriela Juliano '09

Gabriela was a four-year starter for the Immaculate Girls Soccer Program from 2005-2008. During her playing days at Immaculate High school, Gabriela was a three time All-Conference (06-08), two time All-State (07-08) and selected to the All-New England team in 2008. Gabriela's teams won the SWC Championship in 2005 and also won three State Titles in 2005, 2006 and 2008.

Gabriela went on to play college soccer at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California. Gabriela currently lives in South Holland, Netherlands and is a freelance writer.





Katie (Collins) Kneram '10

A member of the Cross Country Team for three years and the indoor and outdoor track teams for four years, Katie served as captain for each of them in 2009, 2010 and 2010 respectively.

In cross country she was a three-time State runner up, earned All State honors in 2009, All SWC in 2008, 2009, 2010, qualified for New Englands at the State Open in 2009, was rookie of the year in 2007 and team MVP in 2009. Her indoor track achievements include State 1600 meter champion and State runner up in the 3200 meter in 2009 and 2010.

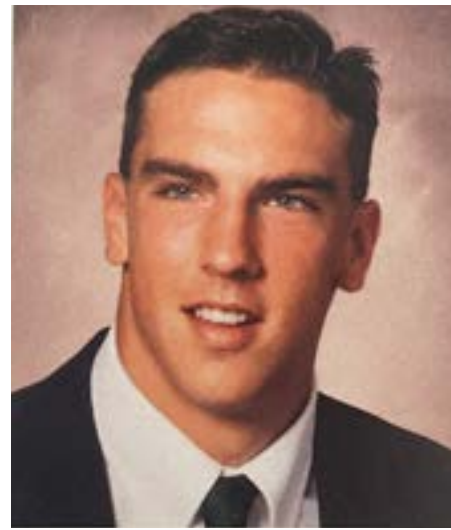
She was the 2009 and 2010 indoor track state champion in the 1600 meter and runner up in the 3200 meter. At SWCs she was the 2009 runner up for the 1600 meter and 3200 meter. She was All State at



the 2009 open taking third place in the 1600 meter. In 2009 she also qualified for New Englands in the 1600 meter. She was named the 2010 Team MVP.

In outdoor track she was the 2010 Class S champion in the 1600 meter and in 2009 she was the Class S runner up in the 3200 meter. She was All SWC in 2008 and 2009 and was named the 2010 team MVP.

Katie went on to run four years at West Point. She spent eight years as a helicopter pilot in the US Army and is currently enrolled in graduate school at Auburn University.



Michael Mango '94

Mike was a three-season athlete playing football, basketball and baseball each of his four years at Immaculate and was captain of varsity baseball, football and basketball teams as a senior.

A two-year starter in varsity baseball (including playing pitcher, first base and center field), his senior batting average was .450 with eight home runs and 35 RBI. In one game as a junior, he hit two home runs and had nine RBIs. In 1993 he was named Athlete of the Week by the Connecticut Post and made the All WCC Wild Division team. In 1994 he was named to the First Team All Conference of the Western Connecticut Conference and the Most Outstanding Player of the WCC. The Mustangs were the 1994 WCC Wild Division Champions and the 1994 Western Connecticut Conference championship runners up.

Mike was a three-year starter in varsity football; a two-way starter his junior



and senior years playing RB, CB safety/LB and punter. He had many touchdowns and interceptions and as a punter averaged 35 yards per punt. He was named First Team All Area (Danbury) and first team all WCC as a Junior. In 1993 the Fairfield County Football Officials Association awarded him the Bernie Iassogna Higher Education Award.

As a two-year starter in varsity basketball playing power forward, Mike averaged 10 points per game as a junior and 14 points per game as a senior. He had 10 rebounds per game each year. In 1994 he was an All WCC honorable mention.

Mike went on to play Division I baseball as a pitcher at Villanova University. He played on the Danbury Westerners baseball team during college summers. He has had a successful career in sales and technology and is currently chief operating officer for Clarip, Inc., a data privacy company located just outside of Philadelphia.



Courtney Marra '11

Courtney played soccer at Immaculate High School for all four years. She was team captain both junior and senior year. During her career at IHS, Courtney was a three time All-Conference, three time All-State and two-time All-New England recipient. She and her team also won the state championship her sophomore, junior and senior year, 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively.

Courtney went on to play soccer and started all four years at the University of New Haven. She was captain both her junior and senior year. She graduated from UNH with her bachelor's degree in psychology. From there she went on to get her master's at UCONN in social work and passed her social work licensing exam shortly after.



Courtney is currently a school social worker in New Fairfield. She lives with her husband, Colin, of three years in New Fairfield, CT with their three-year-old daughter, Billie.



Corey Medrano, '11

Corey was part of the Girls Soccer Team at Immaculate High School each of her four years, graduating in 2011. Corey co-captained the Girl's Soccer team with fellow inductee, Courtney Marra, her senior year. As a goalkeeper, Corey helped lead the team to three State Championship wins in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Corey earned All-SWC, All-State and All-New England honors her junior and senior year. Her senior year she held the lowest goals-against average for the state of Connecticut and was named the 2010 Goalkeeper of the Year.

Less than two days after winning the state championship in 2008, Corey and her family moved to Shanghai, China, where she completed her sophomore year of high school. Upon returning to the United States, she finished the



rest of her high school career as a Mustang.

Corey went on to continue her soccer career at Central Connecticut State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Exercise Science & Health Promotion. Corey then attended Duke University. In just 16 months, Corey earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. Most recently, Corey completed her Master of Science in Nursing Management and Executive Leadership. Corey currently lives in Danbury and works as a nurse manager at Danbury Hospital.



Jess (Wojnicki) Rodriguez '14

Jess ran cross country, indoor track and outdoor track all four years of her high school career. Though she excelled in all of them, her greatest accomplishments came in indoor track. She still holds six individual school records for the 1000 meter, 1600 meter, 3000 meter, 3200 meter, 1 mile, 2 mile and one team record in 4 x 1 mile. She was All New England for four years and the Class S 1600 meter state champion in 2014. She also served as captain of the indoor, outdoor and cross country teams. During her tenure the Cross Country Team had a dual meet record of 56-0. They were the SWC champions in 2011 and 2013 and runners up in 2012. They were Class S state champions in 2012 and 2013 and runners up in 2010 and 2011. The Indoor Track Team was the SWC champions in 2012 and runners up in 2014.

Jess attended Cornell University and ran track and cross country there. She is currently employed as a sustainability project manager at Berry Global, Inc.



John Thorne '67

John Thorne was a three-sport athlete at Immaculate before the school was affiliated with a league, playing basketball, cross country and baseball. He was a member of the inaugural varsity basketball team and served as captain. He has been described by fellow players as the first "true leader" and the "coach on the floor" of basketball at Immaculate.

His achievements include leading the basketball team to a 7-0 start of their season and being selected MVP his senior year. He had a 15.5 average and led the team in assists. During this season Immaculate basketball achieved its very first state tournament berth.

John went to college in Albert Lea, MN and was the last cut as a walk-on. He spent many years playing/coaching and refereeing in the

Industrial League. His work life has been spent outside as a surveyor where, at 74, he still works!



Dominic Zancan '77

Dominic played baseball and football for four years and track for two years at Immaculate High School. In baseball, he was a five-skill athlete, named IHS' first All-State baseball player in 1977 and earned All-Conference honors in 1977 as well. He was a two way football player and in 1977 was named the CT Post All-State punter. He was a member of the 1977 4x100 track state best Class S, M and L team in 1977.

Dominic practiced as hard as he played and was admired by teammates and opponents alike, as he always set the bar high in performance, always leading by example and in the sportsmanship he displayed.



Dominic attended American International College and Western Connecticut State University. He married his high school sweetheart Maura. They have two beautiful children and grandchildren.



1997 Girls Cross Country Team

“This year’s Girls Cross Country Team began its season with a bang, strided for success, and ended with a victory. On that note the girls broke away from the pack, and leaving their opponents in the dust, completed their season with a 10-5 record, the best IHS has seen in its lifetime.

This fueled their ambitions and at the state meet, despite the wet and cold they poured their hearts out. The girls brought home the first IHS State Title.” IHS Crescent 1998

The team was coached by Ted Farah.



1996 Boys Soccer Team

“The '96 Boys Soccer Team overcame many obstacles but still came out on the top of the state. After losing the core of last year's starters, the Mustangs put together a 15-2-2 record. This was the best record in school history. They also beat Joel Barlow 1-0 for the first time ever. To top it all off, they won the state championship in their first appearance in the finals. The Mustangs plowed through the tournament,

out-scoring their opponents 12-2. They never gave anything but their best, and all their hard work paid off on a cold Saturday evening in November when they were awarded their trophy.” IHS Crescent 1997

The captains were Pat Kennedy, Brian Dorsey and Bassam Tarazi. The coaches were Frank Barata and Carlo Pascuzzi.



1997 Boys Soccer Team

“The 1997 Boys Soccer Team had an outstanding season making its first ever Southwest Conference final appearance, and tying Valley Regional for its second Class “S” State Championship. A season highlight was defeating Bethel for the first time in Immaculate Boys Soccer history. Led by senior captains Bassam Tarzi, Matt Murphy, Adelino Barata, Steve Kinkad

and John Laranjeira, the team finished with a 16-4-2 record, ranked seventh in the state. As well as team awards, many players received individual honors.” IHS Crescent 1998

The coaches were Frank Barata and Carlo Pascuzzi.