

## **Ruth Case**

### **Jim Kane Community Impact Award**

Ruth Case has made a name for herself in the Nyack and Rockland communities. Along with being the mother of four NHS athletes, Ruth worked as the Nurse's Assistant at the high school, up until her retirement. She was a long-time member of the Red & Black Club, and served as the Club's President in the mid-80's. Ruth and other members started the annual awards dinner. She made her presence felt at NHS athletic events, and became known as The Lady with the Bell. She was probably the most recognizable supporter of Nyack athletics from the early 80's all the way to the early 2000's. Ruth and her bell appeared at Football games, Basketball games and Track meets, to cheer on all Nyack athletes.

It was at Football games that Ruth achieved her greatest notoriety. "Ringing and Rhyming", as she called it, Ruth drummed up fan support and provided spirited motivation to the team. Players would say that when they heard the bell, it was time to get fired up. While around Rockland, Ruth has been stopped by people saying, "I know you! You're the lady who used to ring that d\*mn bell!" Ruth's son James, a Football coach, says that instructors at coaching classes have asked, "Hey, you're from Nyack...whatever happened to the lady with the bell?"

Ruth's oldest son, Eric, played Football for Nyack in the early 80's. He was followed by James, Clarence and Andrea. She started bringing the bell when her young sons began playing Pop Warner. At first, she used her father's cowbell, then she started ringing a larger and louder bell. Its handle is now wobbly from years of use, but it still makes a great sound.

Ruth tells a story about one of Eric's Basketball games. He was at the foul line, with the team down by one. Ruth was so nervous that she stepped out of the gym. She heard cheers and came back in, only to realize that he had another foul shot! She left again, and was relieved to hear more cheers. Vinnie Cuccia recalls driving Ruth up to the 2003 New York State Football Championship game at the Syracuse Carrier Dome. Security said that no cowbells were allowed, so Vinnie started to take the bell back. "As I walked the cowbell back to the car, Ruth winked at me and said 'You get this cowbell into the Dome, or Nyack doesn't win!'" The bell made it inside, and the rest is history. After Nyack took a 43-0 lead, fans remember Ruth yelling for the team to "Go for 50!

Ruth herself tells the story of a game where Nyack was the visiting team. She sat in the bleachers, waiting for the squad to run out on the field. A woman came and sat next to her, and asked if Ruth would mind if she rang a bell when her team came out. Ruth said she would not mind. As the home team ran out, the woman tinkled a little tea bell. When Nyack took the field, Ruth clanged her big bell, and the other woman abruptly got up and left. Fans fondly recall the Lady with the Bell as part of the Nyack Football experience. Patrick Worms reminisces, "That school bell was famous in Nyack. You heard that bell, you knew who was ringing it. Great lady

and great family. Robert Crews recollects, “Man! When you heard that bell...you knew everything was going to be alright.”