



## Victor Pituch



From the time Mr. Victor Pituch entered Nesquehoning High School in 1941 to his retirement from the Jim Thorpe School District in 1987, to the present day, he has distinguished himself as an athlete, coach, teacher, athletic director and organizer of sports activities.

During high school at Nesquehoning and college at East Stroudsburg, he excelled at gymnastics.

He began his teaching and coaching career at Blue Mountain High School in 1956. Beginning as a JV Football Coach, he eventually became the head varsity football coach from 1963-1966. He also was the head varsity coach for the girl's basketball team in 1958. Mr. Pituch organized the first AAU competitive swimming league in Schuylkill County, which continues to

existence to this day. In 1959 he became the head coach of the Cressona Swimming Club, which won 47 consecutive meets before experiencing its first loss in 1956.

The year 1966 brought him to Jim Thorpe Area High School, where he taught physical education and became the varsity wrestling coach.

His PIAA officiating career started while he attended East Stroudsburg in 1953, at that time he worked JV college basketball games. In 1966 he expanded his officiating for the PIAA include basketball, baseball, football, wrestling, and volleyball.

From 1970 until his retirement in 1987 he served as the Athletic Director of Jim Thorpe Area High School.

He organized the Carbon County Senior Games that includes Jim Thorpe, Lehighton, Palmerton, Panther Valley and Weatherly school districts. This popular competition has been an annual event and draws over 200 contestants.

Currently Mr. Pituch is the President of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church in Lansford, former Chairperson, and current Vice Chairperson for the Carbon County Office of Aging, and President of the Carbon County Action Committee. He and his wife, Mary Tursmanovich, are the parents of three children: Victor, David and Lisa (Price).





## George B. Weiksner Sr.



A 1931 graduate of Mauch Chunk High School, the late George Weiksner was an accomplished athlete in high school and college, and became an outstanding coach and educator. In high school, he won 14 varsity letters – four each in basketball, football, and track, and two in baseball. He attended East Stroudsburg State Teachers College from 1931 to 1935 and again won 14 varsity letters – four each in basketball, football and track, while gaining two in tennis. Also, he participated in intramural baseball, soccer and wrestling all four years. He was Co-Captain of the football team his junior year and won All Conference honors at the fullback position in the PA Teachers College League. For two years, after graduation from college, he coached and played semi-pro basketball, baseball

and football in the Shepton area.

He received his B.S. in Physical Education from East Stroudsburg College in 1935 and later went on to receive his Master's Degree from New York University.

He began his teaching career at Shepton High School in 1935. While there, he was the Director of Athletics, coached the Boys' and Girls' Basketball teams and he was the Director of Intra-Murals.

During World War II, he served in the Navy and was a Physical Education Instructor and Swimming Coach and was stationed at the University of Colorado.

He was a PIAA Basketball, Soccer, Tennis, and Track Official, and an Examiner of Swimming and Life Saving for the American Red Cross and the National YMCA.

His popularity as a Coach and Administrator is exemplified by an incident that occurred at Shepton High School in 1937. At that time, because of budgetary concerns, the Shepton School Board decided not to renew Mr. Weiksner's contract. Virtually all of the high school students, numbering about 300, went on a five-day strike. Subsequently three hundred taxpayers and 250 high school students confronted the School Board and demanded the reinstatement of Mr. Weiksner, or they would seek ouster of the School Board members. There Principal and School Board apologized to the taxpayers and students, reinstated Mr. Weiksner, and declared the five-day strike a 'holiday period.'





## Larry Morris



The 1961-62 and 1962-63 Jim Thorpe Area High School Basketball Teams' successes are indelibly etched in the minds of local fans, and the name of Larry Morris is likewise remembered. As a junior, he was on of the key players on the outstanding performance during the '61-'62 season, he was nominated All-State Honorable Mention and selected to play in the Carbon/Panther Valley All-Star Game.

During his high school career, he also played varsity baseball for two years.

Mr. Morris attended Lafayette College and continued to succeed at basketball, playing one year of Freshman Basketball and three years of Varsity Basketball. After graduating in 1967, he began his long and fruitful teaching and coaching careers at Parkland High School, where he was an Assistant Basketball Coach for two years and his teams won a league title.

In 1970, he accepted a teaching position at Upper Perkiomen High School, but he began his Head Basketball Coaching career at Allentown College. Between 1973 and 1976, he upgraded the team's competitive schedule and in his first year, led the team to the best record in the school's history.

He returned to high school coaching Upper Perkiomen as the Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach and in seven years, led the JV team to the best overall record in school history. Subsequently, he assumed the position of Head Varsity Basketball Coach and held that position for eight years. In his final season, he led the team to their best record in fifteen years. He resigned as Head Coach in 1993.

From basketball, he removed on to coaching football as the Assistant Coach (1994-97) and was the Head Tennis Coach for two years (1944-96), posting a record of 21-7. Returning briefly to the college level, he was the Assistant Varsity Basketball Coach at Ursinus College (1993-94). For eight years he served as the Athletic Director and founded the Upper Perkiomen Hall of Fame. He was instrumental in developing a new athletic conference and was twice awarded the annual Dedicated Service Award by the Local Coaches Association. A Pennsylvania Certified Track Official from 1975-1997; he dedicated many dual, double dual and championship meets.

Involved in community youth athletics, between 1984-1993, his teams won three Little league and three Softball Championships. He was the director of the winter and summer youth basketball programs for 20 years, as well.

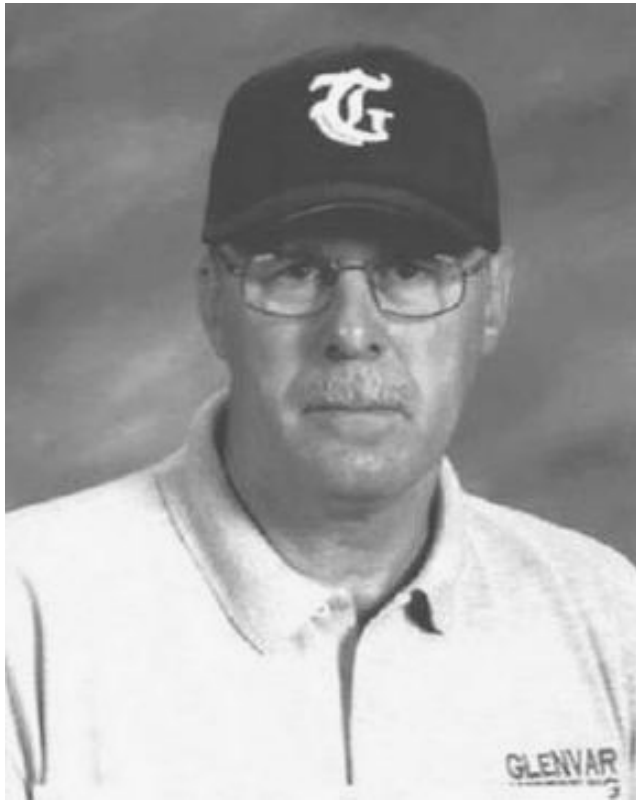
After retiring from Upper Perkiomen in 1997, he and his family moved to Ocean City, Maryland, where he initiated the boy's and girl's tennis programs and became the Head Tennis Coach at Worchester Prep School in Berlin, Maryland. His overall boy's record from 1998-2004 is 58-8 and the team is recognized as one of the top high school teams on the Delmarva Peninsula. In 2004, his team's record was 14-1 and Mr. Morris was selected as Tennis Coach of the Year.

He is not only a tennis coach, but also a player. He and his doubles partner are undefeated in the local mixed doubles league over the past three years. Last year they won a Silver Medal in the Maryland Senior Olympics. Larry is married to the former Sheryl Rohlring, and they have two children, James and Jennifer.





## David J. Mueller



A 1971 graduate of Jim Thorpe Area High School, David Mueller distinguished himself on the gridiron and wrestling mats during his scholastic career, and went on to become a renowned wrestling coach in Virginia.

At the high school level, he won three varsity letters in football and was a member of the 1967 and 1969 Carbon County Football Championship Teams. In 1971, he won the Phil Heraty Football Award. He was an outstanding wrestler, who won four varsity letters and compiled a 22-2 record during his junior and senior years. He was a member of the 1970 wrestling championship team and during the 1971 season, was chosen the Most Valuable Wrestler and won the Cossman Wrestling Award.

During his college athletic career, he was a member of the Lehigh Community College and the Kutztown State College wrestling teams. He was also a member of Kutztown's football team for one year. Dave graduated from Kutztown State College in 1977 with a Bachelor of Science in Education, specializing in Elementary Education and Visually Impaired. He received his Masters Degree in Education, majoring in Special Education, Orientation and Mobility, from the George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in 1982.

After receiving his degree from Kutztown, he began his teaching and coaching career at the Overbrook school for the Blind in Philadelphia. As the head wrestling and track mentor, he coached visually impaired athletes to a 1977 National Wrestling Championship and the following Track and Field Nation Championships in 1978: Women's – Pentathlon (\*World Record), Broad Jump (\*National Record), Triple Jump (\*National and World Records), and the High Jump (\*National and World Records). Also, in 1978, he coached individuals who won the Women's Broad Jump Silver Medal, Men's Triple Jump Bronze Medal and Men's Pentathlon Bronze Medal.

After leaving Overbrook, he coached at Selinsgrove Junior-Senior High School, where he was an Assistant Coach for the Eighth Grade Football Team and the Baseball Team. Subsequently he moved to Shamrock Junior-Senior High School, Dekalb County Atlanta, GA, where he was the Head Wrestling Coach and led the team to the best two-year record in the school's history (20-10). At Shamrock, he also was the Head Coach of the Girl's Eighth Grade Basketball Team and the Assistant-Coach of the JV Baseball Team.

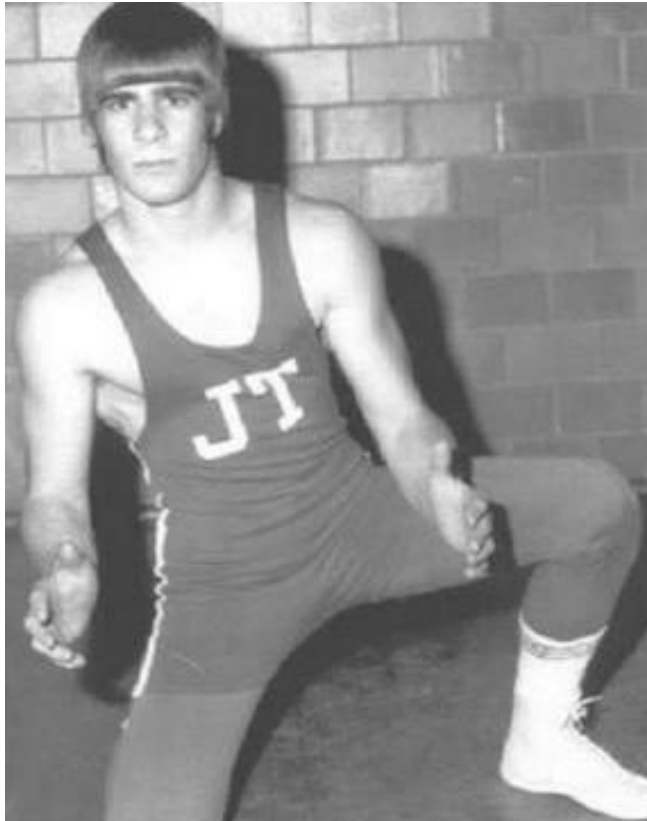
Currently he is the assistant wrestling coach at Glenvar High School in Salem, Virginia, and has served as the head JV baseball Coach for two years. But, from 1990-2002, he had a successful career as the head wrestling coach. His team's have won third, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> place at the Single A championships, have been the district runners-up four times, and captured a second place in the regional Championships. He has coached six state champions, 18 regional champions, and 27 district champions.

Mr. Mueller resides in Salem, VA and has three children, Ryne, John, and Caroline.





## Patrick Crowley



Beginning his sports career at an early age, Crowley continued to demonstrate his athletic abilities through high school, and beyond. He was a three-year starter in knee-high football and in his last year of play (1967) he won the MVP award. Playing for the Jim Thorpe High School football team he earned three varsity letters and, as the team co-captain his junior year, led the team in scoring. He played offense and defense every game at left halfback and safety and was on the kicking and receiving teams. After his junior season he was selected to the Big Nine All-Star offensive team. He was picked to be one of the top halfbacks in the area prior to his senior season but a knee injury, which required surgery, prevented him from participating.

He excelled at wrestling and lettered all four years. His freshman record was 5-6 but he went on to compile a 31-4 record his

sophomore, junior, and senior seasons. This included a record-setting winning streak of 18-0 and a record until that time, for the most wins in school history. Fifty-one percent of his wins were by fall. He compiled a 12-0 record his sophomore season. Mr. Crowley was the Wrestling MVP his sophomore year and made it to the State Sectional Finals his junior year. In his senior season he was elected the team captain and won the first Jim Thorpe Christmas Tournament at 133 pounds, but his season was cut short by injuries sustained in an auto accident.

After graduation he attended Lehigh Community College and continued wrestling in and winning many tournaments at the Allentown and Bethlehem YMCA. He became involved in coaching and assisted in coaching the first knee-high wrestling show at Jim Thorpe High School. For 10 years was an assistant coach for the high school wrestling team. He was a power lifting coach between 1978 and 1985 and still instructs young lifters seeking guidance in proper weight training methods.

Pat is married to the former Carol Makara and he has two children, son Patrick and daughter Tahnee.





## Gene "Gino" Duffy



Few non-scholarship football players are successful when they walk-on to a major college program such as Penn State. However, Gino Duffy not only walked-on but also played for the Nittany Lions and was a highly thought of member of the team.

Before graduating from Jim Thorpe High School in 1986, he distinguished himself on the football field and basketball court. In 1986, his senior season, he was named the Scholar Athlete of Jim Thorpe Area High School, selected 1<sup>st</sup> Team All Conference Tight End in football and captained the basketball team to the division championship and a third place finish in the state finals.

He graduated from Penn State in 1991, with a degree in mechanical engineering.

He played for the Nittany Lions from 1989-1991 and during his three seasons he received three varsity letters while the team compiled a 28-8 record and were ranked twentieth, twelfth and third in Division 1 Football

After graduating from college he was selected for invitation only workouts with the Denver Broncos, San Francisco 49ers, New Orleans Saints and Arizona Cardinals. He played semi-pro football as a tight end and on special teams for the Fresno Bandits AFA National Championship team and was selected first team all-conference and all-american tight end in 1994. He also played for the Arizona Rattlers of the Arena Football League as a wide receiver and linebacker and was a draft pool candidate from 1996 - 1998 for the World League.

Gino resides in California and is currently the President of Rising Peak Productions Inc., which recently began production of its first feature film.





## 1959 Jim Thorpe Area Basketball Team



One of the outstanding teams in the community's storied, basketball history, the 1959 Jim Thorpe Area Basketball Team won the District 11 Tournament and advanced to the Eastern State semifinals.

In the District 11 Eastern semis the team faced West Reading, with All State (and eventual All American), 6'8 Ron Krick and lost 83-63. The loss, however disappointing, did not diminish Coach Ken Kline's team's accomplishments.

The contingent, which scored 1,917 points, is the second highest scoring team in local history and finished the season with an 18-9 record – six of the nine losses were by four points or less.

During the season they won the Smith Hall Christmas Tournament by an average of 17 points per game, defeated the 1958 Eastern State Champion, Jenkintown, in Inter District play and were the only team to defeat Tamaqua in League play. Tamaqua didn't lose again until the Eastern State Final Playoff against Chester.

The 1959 Olympians averaged 71 points for the season and 18 points in the District and State Playoff Games. They won 11 straight games during the season and in the State Playoffs won by an average of 17 points per game. Their District 11 title was the second district title that Jim Thorpe won in three years.

Bill Bechtold, the first local player to score over 1,000 points in his career, led the team in scoring. He scored 633 points for the year, which is a record that still stands, and averaged 24 points per game. But Bechtold wasn't the only star – four of the five starters were named to the Black Diamond League All Star Team. The latter made the First team and Tom Klitsch, Ken Ackerman and Gary Hiller were named to the Third Team.

Other team members included: Vince Gilotti, James Borosh, Brent Rohlifing, Ralph Lennon, Charles McHugh, Terry Watto, Phil Rader and Earl Gable. Assisting Coach Kline was Coach Clyde Quinn. Managers were Robert Cheese, Ronald Jackson and William Yanette.

