

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME NIGHT FEBRUARY 7, 2003

Welcome hall of fame recipients, family members, friends, and bear fans young and old. This is the 15th year for the St. Joseph High School Athletic Hall of Fame. Athletic director, Eric P. Gohlke, and principal, Mike O'Hara, will be honoring the 5 new inductees with a plaque at halftime. Earlier in the day their names and list of accomplishments were placed on the Hall of Fame wall outside of the gym.

St. Joseph High School has a very simple philosophy. Each individual has the right and responsibility to develop and grow as a student, as an athlete and as a person, through a variety of experiences. Athletics has been a positive outlet for our honored guests. Certainly as you read through the profiles of the inductees, you can see that these people serve as strong role models in all facets of life. They have distinguished themselves as great athletes, but more importantly, as good students and community leaders throughout the United States.

St. Joseph High School has every reason to be proud of the 5 new Hall of Fame members. Due to construction, the Hall of Fame room is temporarily closed but please take the time to visit the Hall of Fame wall located in the northside hallway next to the gym.

We hope you enjoy tonight's activities and invite you to spend some time with the new inductees, their families and friends at a reception in the guidance office area to be held after the game.

STAN BISSEY – Stan, a 1961 graduate of St. Joseph High School, participated in football, basketball, and track where he earned 10 varsity letters. He played 3 years of varsity football where he was an all-state selection his senior year. He also received 3 letters in basketball and 4 in track. Mr. Bissey was class salutatorian, president of the National Honor Society, and received the John Karsten Scholarship Award in 1961.

Stan attended and graduated from Purdue University on a track scholarship. He received an engineering award for the development of a physical therapy device for crippled children and was awarded top honor as high school booster in the state of Maryland. He currently resides in Rockville, Maryland where he owns his own construction development and realty firm that specializes in maintaining and restoring historic properties. Ray Haack will be accepting the award for Stan.

BRET WITKOWSKI – Bret, a 1986 graduate of St. Joseph High School, participated in football, basketball, and track. He played 2 years of varsity football, 3 years of varsity basketball, and received 4 letters in track. He was a 1986 finalist for the Herald Palladium Berrien County Athlete of the Year award.

Bret attended the United States Air Force Academy on a scholarship where he played football in 1986. He transferred to Ball State where he played football as a tight end for four years and was a member of their 1989 Mid-American Conference championship team.

Mr. Witkowski, who currently resides in St. Joseph, is employed as the Village Manager for the Village of Stevensville, and is Chairman of the Berrien County Board of Commissioners. Bret also is a radio commentator for WSJM sports, having broadcast over 400 football and basketball events to date for local high schools, including St. Joe's own basketball and football teams, and has coached baseball at Eau Claire High School.

JAMIE MANDARINO – Jamie, a 1992 graduate of St. Joseph High School, participated in three sports - softball, basketball, and tennis - and earned 6 varsity letters. She and Carrie Lignall were state champions at #1 doubles in 1991. In addition, she was all-state, all-conference, and a 2 time regional champion in tennis. As a softball player she was a 2 time all-state honorable mention player, 2 time all-regional and district selection, 3 time all-conference player and captain of the Big 8 all-conference team. She also was a member of the E.P. Clarke National Honor Society.

Ms. Mandarino played on the 1993 Lake Michigan College national softball championship team and on the 1994 softball team that finished 4th in the nation. While at the junior college she was a member of the 93 and 94 regional champion teams and a second team all-american selection. In addition she received all-conference, all-region and state honors as an outstanding pitcher. Other honors included NJCAA Distinguished Academic All-American and National Softball Coach's Association Academic All-American.

Jamie continued her education and playing career at Hillsdale College where she was selected to the GLIAC all-conference and academic teams.

After graduating from Hillsdale she was an Assistant Athletic Director and softball coach at LMC from 1997-2000. Presently she resides in Kalamazoo where she is an adjunct physical education instructor and first assistant softball coach for Western Michigan University.

BEN ADLER – Ben graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1989. He earned 4 letters in cross-country where he was a 3 time all-conference selection, 2 time all-stater, and a member of the 1988 Class B state champion cross-country team. Ben also earned 3 track letters and was a 2 time all-conference award winner in track. He was a member of the E. P. Clarke National Honor Society.

Mr. Adler went on to Hillsdale College where he participated in cross-country and track and field. He was a 6 time conference champion, 7 time collegiate all-american, member of the Hillsdale cross-country team that was 2nd in the nation in 1992, finished 2nd in the 10,000 meter race at the 1993 National Meet, and was an alternate in the 10,000 meter event for the 1993 World University Games. Ben was sponsored by Asics footwear and InSport athletic apparel while training for the 1996 United States Olympic trials.

Currently Ben resides with his family in Findlay, Ohio where he is the District Manager for Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical Company, a division of Johnson and Johnson.

MICHAEL J. MAHLER – Mike, a 1992 graduate of St. Joseph High School, participated in 3 sports – cross-country, wrestling, and track - where he earned 12 varsity letters. Mike is believed to be the only male or female athlete in St. Joseph athletic history to earn 12 varsity letters. Mike was an all-conference runner in cross-country and a member of the 1988 Class B State Champion cross-country team. In wrestling he was a Big 8 conference champion at 112 pounds, and captain of the 1992 district champion wrestling team. He was an academic letter award winner, a National Honor Society member, and received the John Karsten Scholarship upon graduation.

Mike graduated from the University of Michigan where he participated in cross-country and indoor and outdoor track. He received 3 varsity letters in cross-country, was a Big Ten Scholar Athlete Award winner and placed 29th at the USA National Championships for the 25k run.

Currently Mike resides in Benton Harbor and works as a naturalist at Sarrett Nature Center. He continues with his running career participating in marathons and as race director for Sarrett Nature Center's Spring Stampede. Mike is also the head cross-country coach here at St. Joseph High School and an assistant wrestling and track coach.