



Special Guest of Honor

Sandy Schmidtke Colonia High School

Sandy grew up in a coal mining town in Pennsylvania where she learned how to shoot a rifle, fix equipment and grow confident in her abilities. She was in the first graduating class of Dunbar Township High School... a first of many firsts. A pre-Title IX athlete, she played organized sports with the boys and learned how to compete. An undergrad degree from Slippery Rock and two masters' degrees later, she was ready for her first job at Avenel Jr. High. (1965) Next stop...CHS.

It was 1967, Colonia High School was ready to open its doors, and with Dr. Geddis as the first principal, Sandy was in the first wave of young teachers ready to teach in the fast growing Woodbridge Township. All the teachers looked forward to their assignments; and when Sandy walked in to Dr. Geddis' office-she was going to be the cheer advisor. When Sandy said, "I know nothing about cheerleading", Dr. Geddis deadpanned, "Well Miss Schmidtke, I would suggest you go to the library and get a book." Little did anyone know what was in store for this new program. Building new traditions and doing things "the Colonia way" was built under Sandy's advisement. She was building a pride for Colonia High School that is still evident today.

Sandy's life revolved around Colonia High School, Woodbridge Township and especially her students and athletes. She coached the girls' tennis team, who travelled to Springwood Swim Club to practice. She was also in charge of the band units (all of them), including the five boys who were the flag bearers and led the band in parades and ceremonies. Sandy was everywhere! Archery's first co-ed team was led by none other than Sandy—which included a stick shift van used to transport the team and equipment...and you can guess who didn't know how to drive a stick shift! She was also the yearbook advisor with Frank Gubernat and did skits at the Pep Rallies with health

teacher Lynn Sheehan. Sandy also ran an intramural floor hockey program in the spring where wood and supplies were donated to create a "rink". In the town, the Ernest Dubay track meet for elementary and junior high students was created and Sandy became the voice and MC of the program. Sandy's friend and co-worker Jennifer Kirby-Jeter (HoF) had this to say; "Sandy was "THE BOSS". She was a savvy person and things got done with her by her and because of her. She led by example and I enjoyed working with her because of her commitment to the kids, the programs and the community. From her presence on the floor to the lessons learned in her "office", was an experience I will treasure."

For a person who knew nothing about cheerleading, Sandy knew a lot about motivation, character and leadership. Forming the first Colonia squads and the first competition team was a challenge she accepted. Her favorite word during practice was, "AGAIN", because she and her squads were striving for as close to perfection as they could get. The cheerleading squad was known around the county and state as "team to beat" and they set the bar high. Maria Zullo Mantak, first team captain spoke about Sandy... "Sandy knew all too well that success in sports required 10% talent 90% mental strength. The words "We are" were repeated over and over again. In fact, she insisted that I create a competition cheer began with those exact words. At the time she was not convinced it was a good idea. But it turned out, the "We are #1!" cheer took her straight to the top, as she knew it would.

However for Sandy, it wasn't just about winning cheering competitions. She coached us to be winners in life, and to think of no greater gift a coach can give. Blessed we all were to have received a special gift!"

Sandy was also "a woman of the time" as Title IX had just been passed and tears

Previous Special Guests of Honor

- Ron Osborne** 1996
- Lou Creekmur** 1997
- Samuel A. Lupo** 1998
- Johnnie Royle** 1999
- Matt Fratterolo** 2000
- Mayor John E. McCormac** 2015
- Harding William "Pete" Peterson** 2016
- William "Bill" Kovacs** 2017
- Frank & Dr. Vincent Capraro** 2018
- Herb Hollowell** 2019



coaches such as Hall of Famers Sue Williams, Marie Gardner, Joan Wataha, Jennifer Kirby-Jeter and Sandy were on the front lines of equality for the girls. Practice times, uniforms and overall respect was what they sought... and it became a reality slowly but surely. Sandy managed to take it a step further. As vice principal of Colonia High School (recommended by Bob Sanislaus, principal), Sandy became a mentor for both males and females who looked toward administration in their careers. Giving females the same chance of leadership positions, she was willing and excited to share her experience. Jenn Murphy, Vice Principal of Colonia High School and Principal of Fords Middle School had this to say. "The first time meeting Ms. Schmidtke, I thought that she portrayed herself as a no nonsense type of person. Initially, I would avoid Ms. Schmidtke because I did not want to be the person to get yelled at. As the years went by, I noticed that you only saw that no nonsense side if you were not meeting her expectations. There were so many funny stories with Ms. Schmidtke. Like, when she called my classroom to ask a random question, where I truly felt she was looking to make sure that I didn't "disappear" and leave early. When I was working on my Master's, Ms. Schmidtke took me into the "secret" scheduling room. She was working on the schedule and I was simply supposed to watch, listen, and learn. Well, it was fourth block and that is

the bewitching hour where I am ready to fall asleep. As I was fighting sleep and the lesson ended, I swore I went unnoticed. Nope, Ms. Schmidtke clearly called me out the next day and I was so embarrassed but so happy that I didn't get yelled at. Throughout the mentorship, Ms. Schmidtke made it a point to make sure that I was around for a learning experience. Whether it was behavior/conduct that I needed to see or even going to see how Ms. Schmidtke gets the football team energized for the day's game. Ms. Schmidtke is a great supporter to have to encourage me to be an administrator, and I wholeheartedly appreciate her and many thanks for all that she did. You're the best Ms. Schmidtke!"

Sandy's life, pre and post retirement was a busy and people filled environment. Sandy was an original member-and the only female-of the WTAAA when it was first formed. Upon its return, she was tagged to be a member and brought several women to be included for equity and point of view. There is a scholarship in her name at Colonia High School and many of the traditions she began are still going strong. So far, 42 of her students went into PE teaching/coaching because of her. The amount of weddings, baby and wedding showers, and even wakes she has attended are too numerous to count...but shows what she means and meant to Woodbridge Township and Colonia High School. We salute you and thank you for being a part of this great town!

Sharon Cough (D'Lonardo) - 1974

A 3 year captain of the basketball team, Sharon twice won the coaches award for her outstanding performance and leadership. Sharon also captained the tennis team with an 80% win record in 2 years at first doubles ... earning MVP and coaches awards in her senior year.

Peter Fenton - 1974

As a running back in high school with 968 yards to his credit, Peter went on to Lehigh University and earned All Conference and Little All American Honorable Mention honors as a defensive back on the Engineers' Division II national championship team. Also a point guard for the basketball team and captain in his senior year, he added All County and All State Group IV selections in sports to his "Best Scholar Athlete in the Senior Class" Award.

Jeff Grose - 1973

Although a 1971 Star Ledger All Middlesex County first baseman, Jeff's notoriety was as a pitcher who threw 3 no hitters and struck out 130 hitters in 68 innings which earned him 1st team All County and 3rd team All State honors in 1972. As the Home News pitcher of the year, he was drafted by the New York Mets. A pro player for 6 years, he was on their major league roster from 1975-77.

Dan McMahon - 1975

Dan was a 3 year starter on Colonia football teams earning 2nd team All State, NJ Top 100, All-Metro and All-County honors. At Rutgers, he was a 2 year starter at outside linebacker on their 3rd ranked (nationally) team which came in second to Arizona State in the first Garden State Bowl. He was the outstanding defensive player in 1978.

Dan also played basketball and golf ... earning MVP and all-county golf honors in 1975.

Bill Perez - 1971

A 3 year wrestler with a 25-5 record, Bill was a district and regional champion and grappled his way to a 4th place finish in the state tournament ... the first for Colonia HS. He kept in shape on the football team.

1996 WTAAA HALL OF FAME

Legends- Woodbridge High School

- 9/9/20 ✓
17, 2000 ✓
1
- Melvin Anacker '37** Mel was an all county end in football and played 5 years with the Golden Bears.
- Tom Korczowski '45** A third team football halfback All Stater in 1944, Tom played college baseball at William and Mary
- Eugene Leahy '37** "Euge" was an outstanding baseball letterman who led the 1935 Middlesex championship team and captained the 1937 baseball team. Also played football and basketball

Woodbridge High School

- 9/9/20 ✓
2
9/14/20 37 ✓
- Vince Capraro '55** An outstanding high school and college football lineman and Founder of the WTAAA
- Pat Cunningham '58** A county and state track champ in the dash and low hurdles, Pat was a member of the championship Penn Relay team and a 4 year letterman at Penn State
- Sam Marshall '74** Sam played baseball and football, but earned All State in 1974 when he led the Barrons to a 19-5 record and the MCAC title Played baseball at Upsala
- Robert Parrott '71** A 3 sport standout, Bob was an All State QB and defensive back in HS and at the U. of Mass
- 9/9/20 ✓
1
- Bill Sparks '61** As a tackle, Bill earned 2nd team All State football honors and played college football at Rutgers

John F. Kennedy High School

- Norma Arnesen (Grasso) '76** Norma's best sport in HS and college was cross country, but she also played 3 years of varsity basketball and fenced in college
- Bob Caleca '72** Bob was an all county tackle for JFK and led the team in tackles
- Dennis Egan '72** A 3 year letterman as a football defensive back, Dennis also ran track in the spring and played basketball during the winter. At Ashland College he won the non-scholarship award
- Roy Moyer '72** Wrestling co-captain in his senior year, Roy was also co-captain of the 1971 conference and state championship team...and "Best Athlete" of his senior class
- Rich Wiggins '73** An All State soccer star, Rich was soccer and basketball captains in his senior year. A West Point graduate

Colonia High School

- Harry Grose '76** An All State baseball 3 letter performer, Harry played football and basketball as well at Colonia
- Bob Peters '76** Football and wrestling were his HS sports. Played football at Upsala College
- Pat Siracusa '69** A football letterman, Pat's sport was wrestling where he had a stint as a professional wrestler after HS and then as a successful wrestling promoter

Ellen Baureis (Pisano) '74

44 Kentnor Street, Metuchen, NJ 08840 Tel. 908-549-1690

As a Colonia High School athlete, Ellen was the Captain of the 1974 tennis team (playing first singles), was MVP of the first varsity basketball team at Colonia, and was CO-captain of the 1974 Middlesex County Cheerleading Champions.

At Montclair State, Ellen continued her tennis, playing singles and doubles...as well as gymnastics.

At Woodbridge High School, Ellen has taught physical education (1978-1985), coached the girls' tennis team to Middlesex and Central Jersey Conference Championships (1984 record was 21-1) and coached the boys' tennis team as well. At J.P. Stevens, her 1996 awards include division and *Home News and Tribune* Coach of Year recognition.



JOHN F. KENNEDY

Marie Gardner - Coach

7 E. Francis Ave., Moganville, NJ 07751 Tel. 732-972-9375

Coach Gardner was the driving force in establishing the girl's varsity track program at JFK, heading it up for 13 years. Marie's squads produced a run of outstanding competitors who picked up county, group, sectional and state honors.

In 1978, Coach Gardner repeated her track endeavors by introducing soccer as a varsity sport for young women at JFK. In building a very successful program, it was not surprising that Marie's soccer teams from 1990 to 1993 went undefeated while bringing home a number of divisional titles.

Coach Gardner was elected in 1987 to the NJSIAA Hall of Fame.

Marie remains one of the most respected coaches in JFK's athletic history.



Susan F. Higgins (Lyster) '77

1312 Turner Ave., Wanamassa, NJ 07712 Tel. 732-776-7410

It's unlikely that in her high school years Susan Higgins had much free time, so busy was she maintaining an active athletic schedule that resulted in her being named Most Valuable female athlete in her graduating class at Colonia High and there isn't any reason to wonder why.

In track Susan participated in the shot put, discus and javelin when not running in relays. She was named MVP of the track squad in 1976 and again in '77, the year she also captained the team. In that same year came recognition of All American in track and field, women's division.

Along the way, Susan captained the varsity cheerleaders for three straight years again being named MVP two years running, 1976 and '77 and therefore was part of the '77 squad that won the Middlesex County Cheerleading Championship.

There was no letup in college as Susan focused on crew, track, rugby, water polo and racquetball and while excelling for Rutgers on these various levels there was a first place finish in the Pentathlon.

Following in Mom's footprints isn't going to be easy for the Higgins-Lyster children.



SUSAN HIGGINS

"Sue"

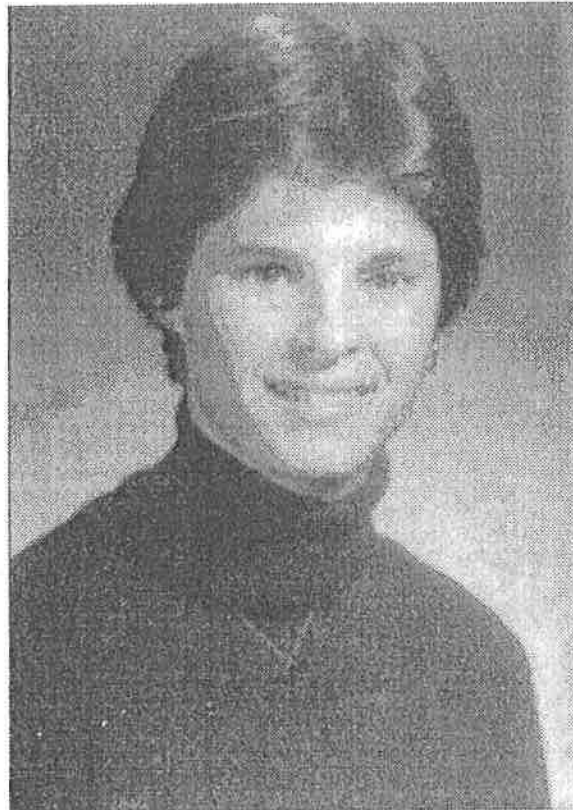
Deborah Janowski '74

287 Greyloch Parkway, Belleville, NJ 07109 Tel. 201-512-8564

Debbie was anything but a “court jester” during her years as a Patriot. On the courts, whether tennis or basketball, she made her presence known and recognized.

As co-captain of the 1974 tennis team, Deborah was singled out for the Coaches Award. The precious season had brought MVP Honors.

When not earning letters on the tennis courts from 1972 thru 1974, Deborah was fast-breaking on the basketball court, winning three letters in that same time frame.



Donna Koperwhats '79

38 Rockrun Rd. East Windsor, NJ 08520 Tel. (732) 381-7239

In the Spring of '79 it was observed of this inductee into the WTAAA Hall of Fame, "Donna is one of the best female athletes our school has ever come across and probably ever will." So said Ronnie Daniel, coach of the tennis team that had just swept to a 24-2 record with Ms. Koperwhats leading the charge with a 25-0 mark in second singles play. That level of performance helped guide the WHS Net squad to winning the county title and for Donna making first team All County. Coach Daniel attributed Donna's success to positioning and control, two traits that were also exercised in softball which she played harder than most and basketball. In the latter there was county-wide honors and a 17-3 season which led to MCAC Crown.

However Donna saved the best, if that's possible, for the diamond game, the sport in which the name Koperwhats has been identified in Middlesex County going back to the 1950's. In softball, the Barrons rang the bell, winning the state Group IV Title with Donna prowling the short stop's turf, pitching in when needed on the mound, driving home 30 runs while amassing a .505 batting average.

In entering the Hall of Fame today she does so with classmate and friend Joanne Matusz. Together they were quite a combination and just perhaps provided each other with the stiffest competition of all.

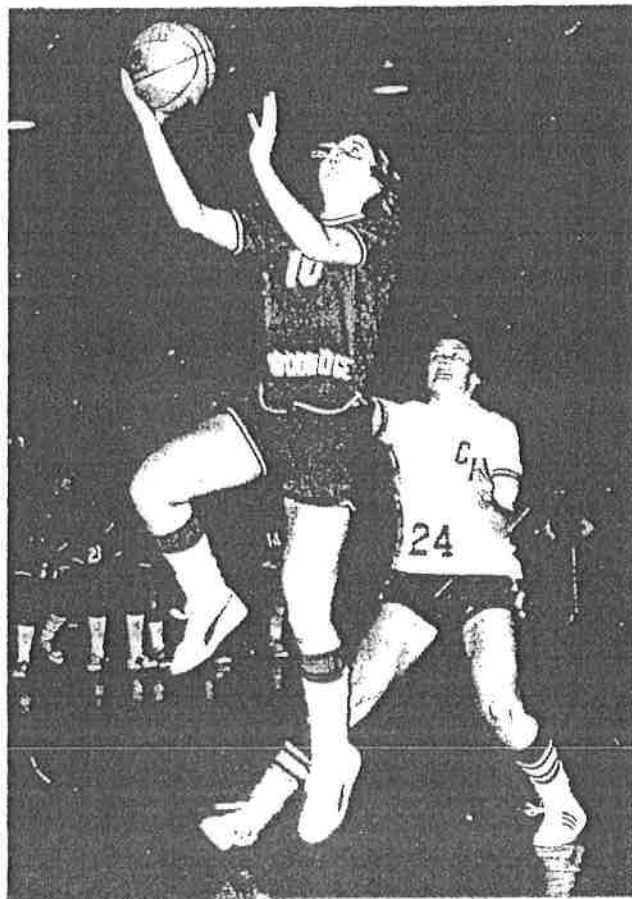


Donna Koperwhats
Woodbridge

All-State softball

FIRST TEAM

POS.	PLAYER	SCHOOL	HT.	WT.	CLASS
P	Jacki Booth	Westfield	5-10	165	Senior
P	Lisa Donohue	Ramsey	5-9	150	Senior
P	Sharon Hawk	Elmer	5-6	130	Senior
P	Bev Leach	Ramapo	5-5	130	Senior
C	Nancy Proctor	Hanover Park	5-7	145	Senior
C	Nancy Vacca	Queen of Peace	5-5	127	Senior
1B	Colleen McNamara	East Brunswick	5-8	145	Senior
2B	Vicki O'Connor	Phillipsburg	5-7	155	Senior
SS	Donna Koperwhats	Woodbridge	5-7	140	Junior
3B	Jessie Brubaker	Columbia	5-3	110	Junior
OF	Charlene Maxson	Middletown South	5-7	140	Senior
OF	Maryann Tarantino	Bound Brook	5-8	140	Junior
OF	Nancy Topozian	Parsippany	5-2	114	Junior



WOODBIDGE HIGH SCHOOL

Joann Matusz (McMillan) '79

12821 Diamond Dr., Pineville, NC 28134 Tel. (704) 543-4447

There was a time when the cry commonly heard around Middlesex County athletic circles was, "Here comes Matusz again for another award." There is a criterion in sports that there are athletes and then there are ATHLETES! Joann belongs to that latter group.

Whatever the game, Joann left a lasting impression on the opposition. With bat in hand, she pounded out a better than 400 average for each of three years of varsity softball helping the Barrons to the state title in 1978 and as runners-up and CJ Group 4 Champs in 1979. That same year her talents with the racquet in hand served the tennis team well as it captured with county title with a spiffy 25 and 2 mark and still there was time to gain All County honors from the Home News Tribune and be an All State selection on the basketball court.

When the diversity and success of all these efforts were added up, it was only natural that Ms. Matusz would be named Middlesex County Female Athlete of the year.

After graduating from St. Joseph's University in Philadelphia where she majored in economics, Joann finally slowed down enough to get married and now has a two-year old daughter. If genetics work, some high school, somewhere, is going to get one heckuva athlete.



NO. 1 IN MIDDLESEX — Jo Ann Matusz of Woodbridge Senior High School accepts her award at a parents' award dinner. Her parents were on



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Woodbridge: Court Queens

Chalk up another title for the Woodbridge Senior High School girls. This time, it is tennis.

Coached by Ronnie Daniels, the Woodbridge girls won the Middlesex County Conference and Middlesex County Tournament championship's.

Enroute to the titles, Woodbridge compiled a snazzy 25-2 record.

Last June, the Woodbridge girls softball team won the state Group IV crown.

JOHN F. KENNEDY

Catherine Wrabel (Sysock)'78

11500 Westwood Blvd., Apt. #1517, Orlando, Florida 32821
Tel. (407)-238-7575

It's been just over two decades now since Kathy was running cross-country, whacking softballs, swatting tennis balls and bouncing a basketball all for the glory of JFK High School. Her continued success in sports and academics resulted in Kathy being named JFK Scholar-Athlete for 1978.

From 1976 through '78 she made the All County Conference Team in softball, in '77 her tennis play gained All Conference recognition as did her basketball performances in the 1977-78 season.

Life and travels took Kathy after graduation from Kean College to the land of sunshine and citrus where she practices professionally as a health teacher in the Osceola County school system in Florida.



A. Johnson, C. Wrabel

Barbara Shissias '79

535 Elizabeth Ave., Somerset, NJ 08873 Tel. (732)873-2033

It's not surprising for friends to learn that Barbara A. Shissias still plays with percentages as a major accounts manager at this stage of her adult life. Back in high school, percentages always seemed to be swarming all around her.

Upper 10% of Graduating Class

Shot 40% from the floor

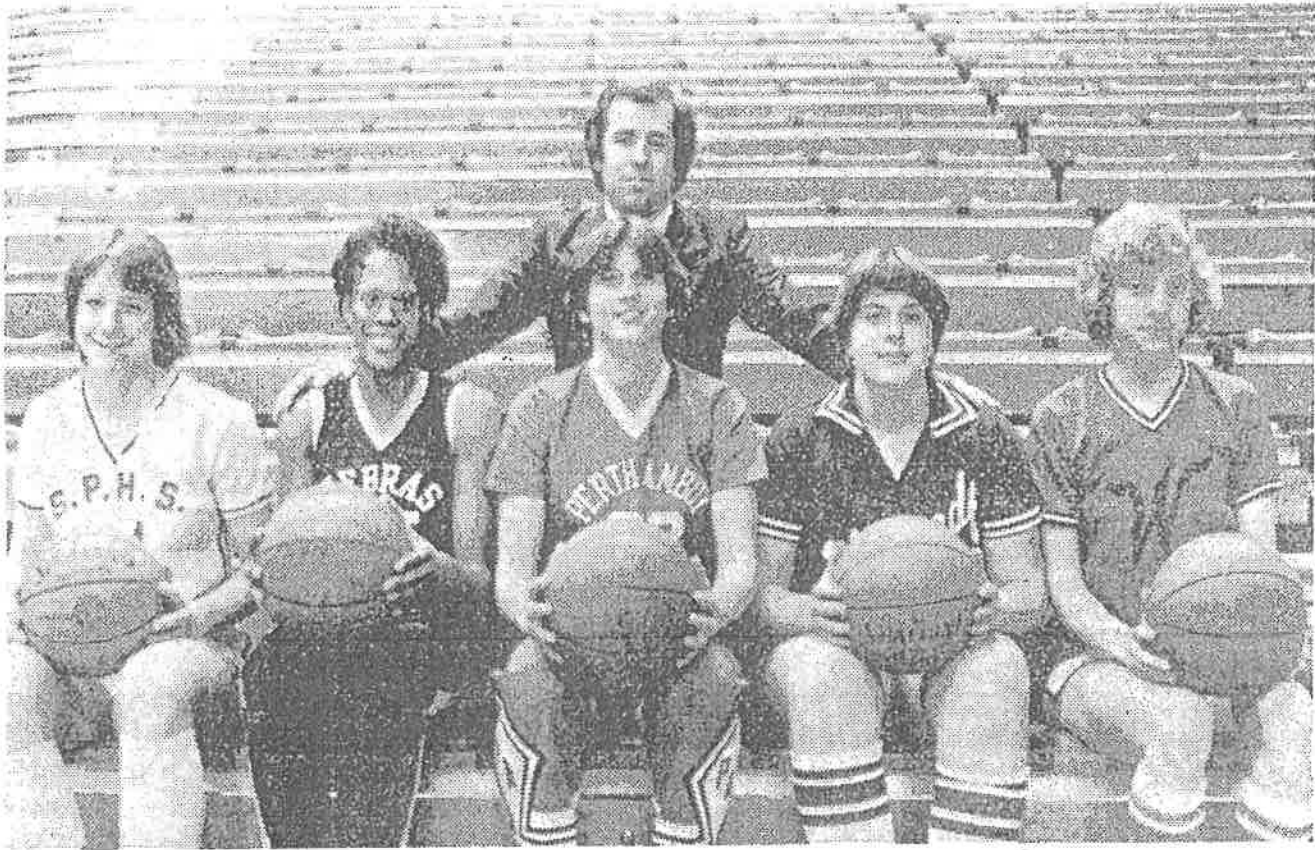
Hit 70% of the time from the free throw line

These percentages added up to a pretty smart high school career in which Barbara was equally comfortable making her sneakers squeak on the polished hardwood or her pen glide across a page of notes.

In making the All County 1st Team in 1979 Barbara had continued to do what she'd accomplished in the years before her senior season, an adept play-maker with an eye for the open team-mate, averaging 19.8 per game and 14 rebounds and being a force on the Mustangs best female team ever. One final note to Barbara's laurels – first female player in JFK history to score a thousand points in three years of play. The percentage there is 33 and a third.



'I-County hoop team



Coach of the Year Jim McFadden sits behind The News Tribune's All-County girls basketball team. Joining McFadden are (from left) Cindy Eckel of South Plainfield;

Terri Barthwaite, New Brunswick; Alice Slomko, Perth Amboy; Barbara Shissias, Kennedy; JoAnn Matusz, Woodbridge.

JFK girls nip Amboy; Barb Shissias: 1,017

Barbara Shissias of the John F. Kennedy High School girls basketball team scored the first five points of the game against Perth Amboy. It was point No. 4, however, that the 5-8 forward will remember.

Shissias, a senior, went over the 1,000 point career scoring mark career with that second bucket, and helped the Mustangs defeat Perth Amboy 51-46.

In the only other game this weekend, Carteret edged Cedar Ridge 41-40.

John F. Kennedy 51, Perth Amboy 46
Shissias, who also pulled down 17 rebounds for Kennedy, scored eight of her game high 21 points in the third quarter as the Mustangs entered the final period with

a 42-34 lead. Shissias now has 1,017 points for Kennedy (14-6), which has won five games in a row. Alice Slomko scored 17 to lead Perth Amboy (13-7), which got as close as three points late in the game.

Carteret 41, Cedar Ridge 40

Carteret scored only three points in the final period, but they were the last three points of the game as the Ramblers overcame a 40-38 score to post their 12th win in 19 games. A Linda King jumper tied the score at 40-40 for Carteret and a Marlene Dotegowski foul shot proved to be the deciding points. King led Carteret with 17 points, while Patty Malik scored 18 points for Cedar Ridge (7-13)



BARBARA SHISSIAS
tops 1,000 mark

Nancy Baureis McDonald '72

14 Oaktree Rd., Monmouth Junction, NJ 08852 (Tel.) 732-821-4565

Very often in life there is a price to pay for being a Patriot. In the case of Nancy Baureis McDonald the price was paid to the fate of timing and not for wearing the Blue and Gold of Colonia's Patriots. It was all a matter of just being two years younger and who among us today would not go for a deal like that!

It was obvious that Nancy had more than just a flair for athletics but unfortunately for her at that point in time the arena had not yet been built for her to perform in. Female scholastic athletics in the region did not take hold and start up in league or conference action until three years after Nancy walked off the high school grounds and onto the campus of what was then Trenton State College. But while in high school, in competition, Nancy showed herself to be an out-standing singles tennis player and led Colonia High to its best tennis season record to date in that informal setting. When not playing she supported those who were as a cheerleader.

At The College of New Jersey she played varsity tennis all four years and launched the javelin in spring track. After a teaching stint back at Colonia High, Nancy has settled into the South Brunswick school system where she's assistant soccer coach and varsity head coach of the Volleyball squad. She's also been a New Jersey certified track and field official for a decade.

Today Nancy joins sister Ellen who is two years younger, in the WTAAA Hall of Fame. There's that deuce in time again!



Joan Wataha

11 Simpson Place, Metuchen, NJ 08840 Tel. 908-549-6790

A Westfield High School graduate, Joan has contributed greatly to Woodbridge Township sports as a teacher and coach for 16 years.

She played basketball and field hockey in high school, but is best known at in Woodbridge as the head softball coach for 12 years. During her tenure she compiled many accomplishments:

- 1 State Group IV Championship
- 1 State Group IV runner-up
- 2 Central NJ Group IV Championships
- 1 Middlesex County Athletic Championship
- 2 Coach of the Year Awards

Joan is in the NJ Interscholastic Coaches Association Hall of Fame.

Woodbridge Girls Just Super Enroute to State Title

"They believed in themselves."
That's the way Coach Joan Wataha views the super season of the Woodbridge Senior High School girls softball team which startled the New Jersey sports scene by capturing the state softball championship.

The Woodbridge girls accomplished what many considered to be an impossible mission late in June when they won the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Group IV state softball title.

For a varsity sport in existence only four years in the district, that was a truly remarkable accomplishment.

But the wonder of it all was that Woodbridge defeated previously unbeaten Westfield, 9-1, to gain the crown. Westfield had won 25 games and the best pitcher in New Jersey on the firing line.

Coach Wataha's Young Woodbridge team compiled an overall record of 24 wins and only four losses enroute to winning the Central Jersey Group IV title and the state championship.

Looking back, Wataha observed, "I think the mark of this team was the ability to come from behind. There were plenty of games when we fell behind but the girls never gave up and managed to fight back and win.

"They believed in themselves."
Coach Wataha also cited the team's defensive play.

"We worked very hard all year on defense," Wataha stated. "If your defense is sound, you can be very hard to beat in girls softball."

Woodbridge bowed to Sayreville, 4-1, in the championship round of the Middlesex County Conference Tournament, in a bid for another crown.

Betta White was the No. 1 hurler for Woodbridge, recording a record of 13 wins and three losses including the win over Westfield. Maura DiLeo won four games without a loss as did Donna Koperwhals. Jean Spangler was 3-1.

Koperwhals was named to the first team all-state squad at shortstop.

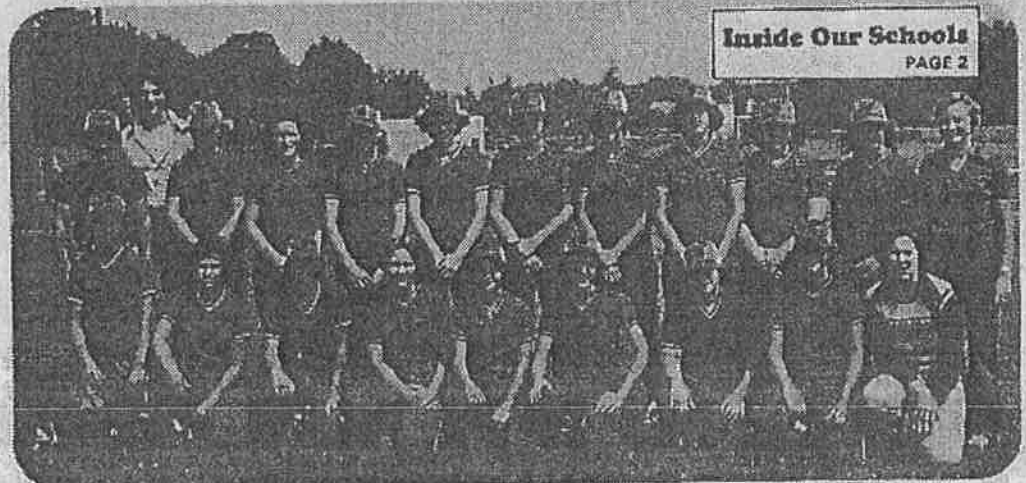
As a result of her efforts in molding the

players into such an outstanding unit, Mrs. Wataha was named "Coach of the Year" in Middlesex County.

Michael Yannazzo was assistant coach.

The girls and staff were honored at a year-end banquet at which time they received numerous awards including picture plaques from the Board of Education.

P.S. Most of the team members will be back next season.



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HAIL THE STATE CHAMPS! — Meet the Woodbridge Senior High School girls softball team which stunned the interscholastic athletic world by capturing the state Group IV championship.

Wataha guided Woodbridge High to two championships

By JOHN MALEY
Home News correspondent

WOODBRIDGE — It's harder to win the second time around. You will hear coaches, players and fans echo that phrase and it has become a cliché in the world of sports.

In this past year, we've seen the Dallas Cowboys defeated as NFL champions. We've seen the Washington Redskins pick their NFL title and most recently and more locally, we've seen the Woodbridge High School girls softball team relinquish its State Group IV crown.

But Woodbridge High softball coach Joan Wataha means the softening of champions and for her coaching because this season she has done it again. The Home News-Michigan County Coach of the Year for the second straight year.

During the past two softball campaigns, Wataha has guided the Barroos

to two Central Jersey Group IV championships, a state Group IV title, a Middlesex County Athletic Conference championship and a sparkling 44-0 record.

In two impressive seasons, Woodbridge posted identical 2-1 records. In 1978, she coached the Barroos to the NJNIAA State Group IV title with a 2-1 victory over Westfield. This season the Barroos made another appearance in the final but came out on the short end of a 4-7 decision at the hands of Ridgecroft.

When your the defending champion, everyone is gunning for you. What pressure the major factor which prevented the Barroos from winning two consecutive state titles?

"Yes, I think there was a little more pressure on the kids this year," conceded Wataha who resides in Matachuen. "The kids knew it would be hard to win it two years in a row and they

definitely had a bit on their minds going into the game."

The season for Wataha and her group was still enjoyable as it captured the Central Jersey Group IV crown with a victory against Hamilton East and also it won the tough Middlesex County Athletic Conference, a feat which last year's squad felt short of.

"We had one (the state final), but gained another (the conference)," noted Wataha.

Overall the Barroos season was quite a success and Wataha will be the first to admit it.

"It was a little bit of a let down being in the final of the state tournament, but the season was very successful and enjoyable," Wataha continued. "The season got very hectic towards the end. With the rains, we were playing five games in a row and we were all kind of relieved when the season ended."

But Wataha did not get the inclination weather as an excuse for the team's effort in the state final. "The weather had no effect because every team was in the same situation."

Of the 21 games in which the Barroos played, six were clearly stand out in Wataha's mind was the 3-0 victory over Sayreville in the semifinals of the Middlesex County Coaches Association Tournament, "under the lights at Memorial Stadium, in New Brunswick."

"The Sayreville game was by far the most memorable game of the season," explains Wataha who finished her fifth year as the Barroos' manager. "Sayreville knocked us out of the conference last year and it's always a good feeling to beat Sayreville."

When talking about the success of the Barroos the past few years, Wataha as East Stroudsburg State College graduate

she says, "We've had a bunch of talented kids. It goes in cycles, a couple of years seasons are just filled with talent."

Wataha continues, "A lot of the kids get along well together and play good together. They play other sports together, they've gone to junior highs with each other and that helps."

Wataha will be losing three of her star performers through graduation, but the outlook is optimistic for the enthusiastic Woodbridge High senior physical education teacher.

"We're losing some fine players this year too. I'm still optimistic. We have some good sophomores who I'll be counting on a lot," noted Wataha.

Donna Kaperchak is one of those fine players Wataha referred to. Kaperchak who was sporting a nifty .416 batting average going into the final game has been the Barroos' shortstop the past few years and replacing her will be Wataha's toughest task.

"I'll never be able to field a shortstop like Donna again. She's such an all-around athlete," praised Wataha of her star infielder who will be enrolling at Trenton State College in the fall.

Another "fine" player Wataha will miss a great deal is Jeanne Matins, the

catcher who was carrying a .487 average into her final scholastic game.

"Jeanne also is going to be very hard to replace. Shortstop and catcher are the two hardest positions and they will be missed," added Wataha.

The other major starter who will be among the missing next campaign is third baseman Curt Marshall, a .389 hitter.

Junior Blaine Dileo will be counted on heavily next year to guide the Barroos club. Dileo was the team's top batter with a .323 avg but her athletic ability might earn her a spot in the infield where batters will be needed as the Barroos start their quest for the Group IV crown.

"Blaine is a good all-around athlete. We might have to put her in the infield and we'll depend on some sophomores to pull it through," said Wataha.

Wataha has been teaching at Woodbridge for six years. Her husband, John, is the director of adult education for the Middlesex County Vocational schools.

The Watahas have two children, Pam (13), who was a former Matachuen High School softball athlete, and John (10), a former Matachuen High football player who graduated as a Thruway.



WINNING COACH—Joan Wataha, right, who was selected for the second time as Middlesex County Girls Coach of the Year, shares

the honors with other members of the family. They are daughter Pam, son John and husband John.

Home News photos by Nat Clymer

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