



# **Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame**

5th Induction Ceremony  
Friday November 28, 2014

Langley's Restaurant at  
Great Neck Country Club  
Waterford, Connecticut

# Platinum Sponsor

The Mortimer Family  
and



The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame thanks the Mortimer family and the GNCC for their wonderful support of our efforts to honor those who have made special contributions to Waterford athletics. In addition to helping us with the induction ceremony, their support has helped us reach a goal of a permanent location to honor the members of the Hall of Fame. A perpetual plaque will be displayed outside the Francis X. Sweeney Field House at Waterford High School to serve as a lasting memory of the inductees.

**2014 Induction Ceremony - Program of Events**

**6:00 PM**      *Social Hour*

**7:30 PM**      *Welcome*

Jim Cavalieri, HOF Committee Chair

**7:40 PM**      *Hall of Fame Inductions / Honorees*

Jeff Hedden

Ed "Cactus Jack" Evento

Vicki (Bartolucci) Malone

Karlton Perkins

Lee Elci

1973 WHS Football Team

Jim White

Billy Gardner, Jr.

## **The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame**

The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame was founded by The Cactus Jack Foundation in 2002 to honor those who have made special contributions to Waterford athletics, as a player, coach, administrator, supporter or community volunteer.

This is the 5<sup>th</sup> Induction Ceremony with others being held in 2002, 2004, 2008 and 2010.

### **Class of 2002**

Howard Christensen  
Richard Cipriani  
Gerard Rousseau  
Francis X. Sweeney

### **Class of 2004**

Bill Gardner Sr.  
Arnold Holm  
Jan Merrill Morin  
Gary Swanson  
Joan Van Ness

### **Class of 2008**

Ron Bugbee  
Joe Carey  
Karen Mullins  
Gene Sutura  
Norman Tonucci

### **Class of 2010**

Marlene (Morth) Wiggins  
Liz Mueller  
Glenn Rupert  
David Sousa  
Warren Swanson

### **Committee Members**

Jim Cavalieri  
Tim Egan  
Rik Little  
Jack O'Keefe  
Rich Radicioni  
Dave Sousa  
Marlene (Morth) Wiggins

## The Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame



### **Waterford, Connecticut**

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### **Jeff Hedden**

Jeff Hedden was born and raised in Waterford and graduated from Waterford High School in 1981. He was born into a golf-loving family who taught Jeff how to play at a young age. Jeff's father Dick, and grandmother Dorothy, were long-time members of New London Country Club and each won multiple club championships. Jeff continued the family tradition, playing golf with tremendous success in high school and as an amateur most of his adult life. He turned professional in 2013. He currently plays out of Hilton Head, SC where he lives with wife Nicole and their 2 children, Tripp and Harper. Jeff also has 3 children from a previous marriage: Mallory, Lauren and Meredith.

At Waterford High, Jeff led the golf team to unprecedented heights, winning back-to-back state championships in 1980 and 1981.

The team was the 1<sup>st</sup> team from Waterford High to win a state championship in golf. Jeff also won back-to-back state junior championships in 1980 and 1981.

Upon graduation, Jeff continued to play as an amateur with great success while working and raising a family. He was a member of NLCC from 1976 – 2006, starting as a JR member. He was a 10-time club champion, winning 10 titles in a row from 1979 – 1988. He was also a member of Fox Hopyard Country Club and Black Hall Golf Club winning 3 club championships at those venues.

Jeff also competed with great success at the state, regional, and national levels. He won 8 state championships along the way (most ever by a CSGA player) and the New England Amateur championship in 2011. He earned participation at the national level numerous times at the individual and team levels. Jeff was named the ‘Player of the Year’ by the CT State Golf Association in 2008, 2009 and 2010 and was honored as the ‘Player of the Decade’ for the years 2000 – 2010. Jeff turned professional in 2013 and has recorded 1 win and 5 top-5 finishes in 11 events.

### **Awards / Recognition**

CT State High School Champions:	1980, 1981
CT State Junior Champion:	1980, 1981
NLCC Club Champion:	1979 – 1988
Fox Hopyard Club Champion:	2003
Black Hall Club Champion:	2005, 2007
CT State Amateur Champion:	2003
CT State Mid-Amateur Champion:	2003, 2005, 2007, 2009
CT State Open Champion:	2008
New England Amateur Champion:	2011
US Amateur Participant:	2003, 2010
US Mid-Amateur Participant:	2003, 2005, 2007, 2009
USGA State Team Participant:	2003, 2007, 2009, 2010
CT State Tri-State Team Participant:	2003 – 2010



## **Ed “Cactus Jack” Evento**

Ed Evento (better known as “Cactus Jack”, a name bestowed on him by a Hollywood Director and that stuck with Ed forever) lived in Waterford for 30 years with his wife, Carrie, and their 3 children: Karen, Nick and Susan. Ed was many things in his life, including: an inn owner, carpenter, trailer court owner, welder, cowboy, professional rodeo participant and caretaker of the C-Lazy Y ranch in Waterford. He was a true jack-of-all-trades. Beyond all of those things, Ed was fully vested in our community in many ways. He had a special place in his heart for athletics and recreation, along with a burning desire to provide opportunities for young people to be able to participate in those areas.

Ed was a member of the Waterford Recreation Association in the late 1950s. The group was instrumental in planning and organizing for the needs of Waterford citizens in regard to recreation and eventually led to the formation of today’s Parks and Recreation Department. He was a member for many years of the Parks and Recreation commission which worked closely with the Parks and Rec Director, crafting the programs and facilities for the Town of Waterford.



Ed was a member of the first Conservation Commission in town, a lifetime member of the Waterford Historical Society and served on the RTM for 4 years.

Ed began a long involvement in baseball by coaching in Waterford North Little League and in Waterford Babe Ruth. He did everything he could for the leagues, including taking care of the fields, recruiting volunteers to help and coach and promoting the game to the kids in town. He managed the first Waterford Babe Ruth 13YO team that ever won a state championship and also managed a 14/15 YO team to a state final. Cactus spearheaded the building of a new field for WNLL at Hirschfield Farm when the lease on the old field at Harrison's Landing expired. Ed formed many pick-up baseball leagues over the years to allow all kids that wanted to play a chance to play, regardless of skill level. That philosophy was at the heart of everything that he did.

The list of projects and organizations that Ed was involved in is too long to list in this space but include:

- Organizing the construction of the first soccer field in the town (used by the high school team), and adding 2 additional fields at Oswegatchie School in the 70's
- Helping with, and running in, the Strides for the Handicapped road race well into his 70s
- President of the Waterford Booster's Club which was instrumental in the building of the ticket booths, concession stand and storage building at WHS
- Formation of a men's basketball league in the 60's that had close to 400 participants in any one year and still continues to this day under his name "Cactus Jack"

Ed began a close and long relationship with head football coach and AD Dick Cipriani in the early 70s who said of Ed in an interview with The Day newspaper: "When he says something will be done, it is done".

Ed "Cactus Jack" Evento passed away on April 27th, 1987 leaving a legacy of community spirit and a willingness to get involved which has been passed down to a countless number of people he inspired.



### **Vicki (Bartolucci) Malone**

Vicki (Bartolucci) Malone grew up in Waterford and attended Waterford High School from 1982 to 1986. She was an outstanding athlete throughout her youth playing softball and basketball in town leagues. Vicki went on to have one of the most decorated athletic careers in WHS history and continued to add to her athletic legacy starring in softball at The University of Connecticut. Vicki currently lives in Huntington Beach, CA with her husband Keith and their 3 children: Dominick, Morgan and Jake.

As a softball player, Vicki made an immediate impact on the Waterford High program which was one of the stronger programs in the area. She played softball all 4 years, earning all-conference and all-state honors 3 times. She was a key player on the 1983 team that won the state championship, the 1<sup>st</sup> softball state championship in WHS history.

Vicki was a key player and leader on the Waterford Senior League Softball team that earned their way to the 1984 Senior League Softball World Series in Kalamazoo, MI. The team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the country and was the 1<sup>st</sup> Waterford Softball team ever to play in a World Series.

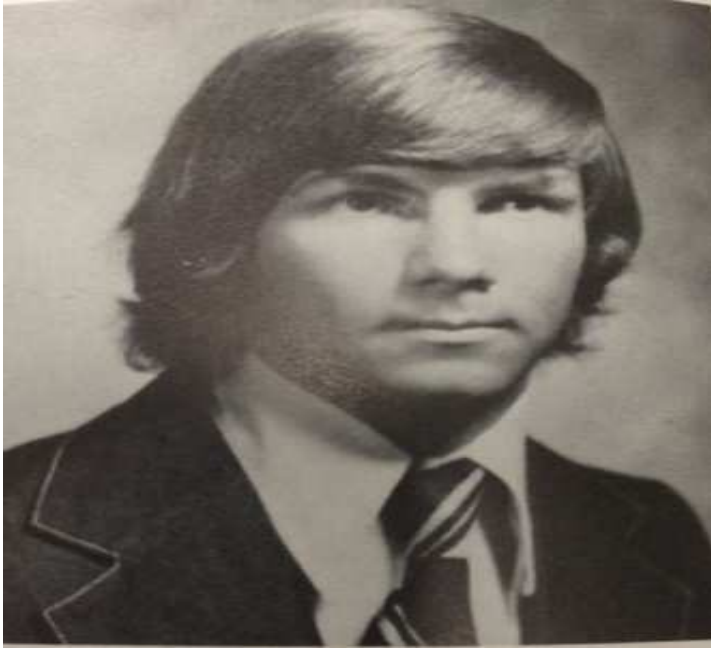
Vicki was a dual-threat in high school as she also played basketball for 4 years. She was selected all-conference 2 times and earned all-state recognition as a Senior in 1986.

Vicki was offered a full athletic scholarship to play softball at the University of Connecticut where she starred from 1987 – 1990. In her sophomore year, she batted .420 and led the nation in triples with 13. She is the all-time UConn career leader in triples with 31 and is 2nd on the all-time career batting average list at .362, trailing only fellow Waterford Athletic Hall of Famer, and long-time UConn Head Coach Karen Mullins (.370). She is also among the UConn career leaders in 8 other offensive categories. Vicki was awarded all-New England each year at UConn and capped off her career by being named a softball All-American as a Senior.

After graduation from UConn, Vicki was named the 1<sup>st</sup> Youth Services Director in the Town of Waterford in 1992. She held that position until 1996 after which she stayed at home to raise her 3 children. Vicki went on to coach the Granby High School softball team for 5 years, from 2007 - 2012. She led them to the class M state championship game in 2012 where they ended up as state runner-up. A highlight of that season was beating a highly ranked Waterford team in the semi-finals. She currently works as a chef for the University of California, Long Beach.

### **Awards / Recognition**

All-ECC:	1984 - 1986 (softball) 1985 - 1986 (basketball)
All-State:	1984 - 1986 (softball), 1986 (basketball)
All New England:	1987 – 1990 (college softball)
All-American:	1990 (college softball)
1996:	Inducted into the CT Scholastic and Collegiate Softball Hall of Fame



## **Karlton Perkins**

Karlton Perkins grew up in Waterford, attended Waterford public school and graduated from Waterford High School in 1975. He starred in multiple sports during his time at Waterford High, including football, wrestling and track & field. He lives in Waterford with his wife, Robin (Petchark) and their 2 children, Gene and Jordan.

Karlton played varsity football at defensive end for 3 seasons from 1972 – 1974. The Waterford High football teams at that time were some of the best teams in school history. They went 26-3 over that span, were ECC co-champions in 1972 and ECC champions in 1973 and 1974. Karlton was a defensive stalwart on those teams and was called by Head Coach and Waterford Athletic Hall of Famer Dick Cipriani as “the best defensive lineman I have ever coached”. As a junior, Karlton earned all-ECC and all-state honorable-mention honors.

In his senior year, he was voted team MVP and earned all-ECC and all-state 2<sup>nd</sup>-team honors.

Karlton was as outstanding a wrestler as he was a football player. He wrestled varsity for 3 years. He was an ECC champion in 1974 as a junior. His senior season was one for the record books. He was named a captain and went through the season undefeated with a 29 – 0 record in the 167 pound weight class. He won both the Class M and State Open championships and participated in the New England Regional's. He set a WHS record for the fastest pin, defeating an opponent in 11 seconds.

Karlton was a true 3-sport athlete as he was also a varsity member of the track & field team for 3 seasons where he competed in the javelin and the high jump.

After graduation, Karlton received an athletic scholarship for football and wrestling from Northland College in Wisconsin where he competed for 2 years. He started at defensive end as a freshman but the school dropped the program following that season. In wrestling, he went 14 – 1 and 15 – 0 in his two years and won the North Central All-Collegiate Open in his last season, defeating 2 wrestlers from Division 1 schools during the tournament. He went on to compete in the national finals that year in Cheney, Washington where he finished in the top six.

### **Awards / Recognition**

All-ECC:	1973 – 1974 (football) 1974 – 1975 (wrestling)
All-State:	1973 (football, honorable-mention) 1974 (football, 2 <sup>nd</sup> team) 1975 (wrestling)
1974:	ECC Champion, Wrestling
1975:	State Class M Champion, Wrestling State Open Champion, Wrestling New England Regional's Participant, Wrestling
1977:	North Central All-Collegiate Open Champion



## Lee Elci

Lee Elci was born and raised in Waterford and graduated from Waterford High School in 1984. He attended Clemson University and Old Dominion University, playing baseball for both schools. Lee played professional baseball for several years after college and then became an actor and radio personality. He lives with his wife Christine and their dog Ozzy in East Lyme.

Lee excelled in baseball throughout his youth, starting at Waterford Little League South, then in Waterford Babe Ruth, WHS and New London American Legion. He also played football for Waterford Youth Football and for WHS. During his time in Babe Ruth, he was a key player on the 1979 13YO state championship team. In the following year, he led the league in HRs (17) as a 14YO and helped lead the 14 / 15YO team to the Babe Ruth World Series in Williston, ND where they finished 4<sup>th</sup> in the country. The team was the 1<sup>st</sup> Waterford Babe Ruth team to play in the Babe Ruth World Series.

He continued his baseball success at WHS and in the powerful NL Legion program. He was a 3-year varsity starter at WHS and served as a captain in 1984. The NL Legion program won the zone championship 4 years in a row during this time. Lee was also a 3-year varsity starter on the WHS football team. Upon graduation, Lee received a baseball scholarship to play for Clemson University where he played for one year before transferring to Old Dominion University. He enjoyed an excellent career at Old Dominion where he played for 3 seasons.

Lee signed a professional baseball contract with the St. Louis Cardinals in 1988 and played in the Cardinals organization for 2 seasons. He also played professionally in Holland and Australia. Lee continued to play amateur baseball for many years in the Norwich City League and Eastern CT Major League where he remains the all-time leader in HRs, RBIs and batting average. His professional life turned to acting and radio when he became a card-carrying member of SAG-AFTRA in 1996. He has appeared in many television shows including The Sopranos, Sex and the City, Guiding Light and As The World Turns. He has been a radio talk show host at several stations in the area and is currently the morning drive-time host on radio station 94.9 FM.

### **Awards / Recognition**

All-ECC:	1982 – 1984 (baseball) 1982 – 1983 (football)
All-State:	1984 (baseball)
All-Zone:	1983 – 1984 (American Legion baseball)
All-Conference:	1987 – 1988 (college baseball)
1979:	13 YO Babe Ruth State Champions
1980:	14 / 15YO Babe Ruth World Series team
1981:	WHS State Champions
1981 – 1984:	American Legion Zone Champions



## **1973 Waterford High School Football Team**

The 1973 Waterford High School football team was the 1<sup>st</sup> team in school history to go both undefeated (9 – 0) and to win the ECC championship outright after being ECC co-champions (with Ledyard) in 1972.

The football program, led by head coach and Waterford Athletic Hall of Famer Dick Cipriani was an ever-improving program since “Cip” became the head coach in 1971. They finished with a winning record for the first time in school history that season with a mark of 5 - 4. The program took a step further in the 1972 season, led by all-state performers Jim White and Steve Harper, finishing with a record of 7 – 2, and earning a share of the ECC championship along with Ledyard. Coach Cipriani and the team were excited for the 1973 season as they thought they could achieve great things and they didn't disappoint.

The 1973 team was lead by tri-captains Dave Davies, Kevin Wilkinson and Mike Logan. They opened the season on the road against defending ECC co-champion Ledyard whom they defeated 20 – 14. They went on the road again the next week to face a favored New London Whalers team, forced 6 turnovers and won easily 25 – 7.



From that point on, the wins kept coming and the team began garnering attention around the state. They first received some votes in the New Haven Register's all-state poll after a week 3 win over Killingly. They eventually began to move up in the poll, to 10<sup>th</sup> after week 5 and advanced each week from that point on, up to 9<sup>th</sup>, then 7<sup>th</sup> and then 6<sup>th</sup> before the final Thanksgiving Day game against rival East Lyme. They defeated East Lyme 33 – 6 to complete their undefeated season at 9 – 0 and win the ECC championship. Along the way, they outscored their opponents by a combined score of 241 – 67, allowing only an average of 7.4 points per game.

The team finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the final state poll (there was no playoff system in place at the time) and were easily named the "Outstanding Team of the Year" by the New London Day. Individually, the following players were named to the all-ECC team: Keith Burrows, Dave Davies, Mike Logan, Karlton Perkins, Dave Sousa and Ron Twitty. Sousa earned all-state 2<sup>nd</sup> team honors with the other 5 earning all-state honorable-mention honors. This was a notable accomplishment as 1973 was the first year that players from all CT schools were chosen for the all-state team versus choosing all-state teams in each class (L, M and S).

### 1973 Schedule and Results

Waterford at Ledyard	20 – 14 (W)
Waterford at New London	25 – 7 (W)
Waterford at Killingly	26 – 14 (W)
Stonington at Waterford	28 – 0 (W)
Fitch at Waterford	24 – 12 (W)
Waterford at Montville	48 – 8 (W)
NFA at Waterford	10 – 0 (W)
Waterford at St. Bernard's	27 – 6 (W)
East Lyme at Waterford	33 – 6 (W)



### **Jim White**

James Wilson "Jimmy" White was born in Southbridge, Mass., grew up and attended public schools in Waterford and was a 1973 graduate of Waterford High School where he excelled in football and baseball. Upon graduation, he attended Central Connecticut State College (now University) where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in finance and then went on to work for 33 years at Electric Boat. He married the former Mary Grossetti and together they raised 3 children: Matthew, Cara and Genia. Jimmy passed away earlier this year on Jan. 24, 2014, after a valiant eight month battle with cancer. A ceremony for his induction was held on Jan. 18<sup>th</sup> which Jimmy was able to attend via video feed from his hospital room. It was an incredibly special day full of friends, family and supporters of Waterford athletics.

Jimmy excelled in any sport he played, whether it was baseball, football, basketball, tennis or men's softball. He played baseball, football and basketball at WHS and also played baseball for Niantic American Legion.

Jimmy elected not to play sports in college to concentrate on academics but it was noted at his induction ceremony that during a pickup game of basketball with the Central CT varsity players, one of them was astonished at how good he was, and remarked that he could start on the varsity team.

Jimmy truly made his mark at Waterford High in baseball and football. He shined as a running back during his time as a Lancer, rushing for over 2,800 yards in his career and earning all-ECC honors in his junior and senior years. As a senior, he became the first running back in school history to rush for 1,000 yards in a season (1,506), led the ECC in points scored (136), and became the first offensive player in school history to be named all-state by the New Haven Register. Jimmy was a key contributor on the first teams in school history to post a winning record (1971) and to win an ECC championship (co-champion in 1972).

Jimmy was a dynamic and tough-nosed player on the baseball diamond where he was a 3-year varsity starter at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. He was named all-ECC in all 3 of those seasons. He was also the starting 2<sup>nd</sup> baseman for Niantic Legion during this time and helped lead them to back-to-back zone championships in 1972 and 1973.

Jimmy was named the “Most Outstanding Athlete in Southeastern CT” by The Day in 1972 and is considered by many to be the finest running back in WHS history. His work ethic, tenacity and spirit of team led him to excel on the field and earn the lifelong respect and friendship of his teammates.

### **Awards / Recognition**

All-ECC:	1970 – 1972 (baseball) 1971 – 1972 (football)
All-State:	1972 (football)
1972:	ECC Co-Champions (football)
1972:	Named the “Most Outstanding Athlete in Southeastern CT” by The Day
1972 – 1973:	American Legion Zone Champions



### **Billy Gardner, Jr.**

Billy Gardner, Jr was born and raised in Waterford, graduating from Waterford High School in 1984. Upon graduation from Waterford High, he went on to play baseball at Rhode Island College and Mitchell College and then earned a Bachelor's degree in education at the University of Hartford. Billy then began a long career in professional baseball, which continues to this day, as a player, coach and manager. Billy lives in Westlake, OH with his wife Kristie and their 3 children: Josh, Jaycie and Abbie.

Billy played baseball and basketball in the Waterford Youth leagues, including Waterford North Little League, Waterford Babe Ruth and Waterford Pre-Teen Basketball. He then lettered in both baseball and basketball at Waterford High. In the 1984 season, he set a new WHS HR record hitting 12 for the season. Billy earned all-conference honors in both baseball and basketball in that 1984 season. Billy moved on to the college-level, playing baseball at Rhode Island College and Mitchell College and earned a Bachelor's degree in Education at the University of Hartford.

After college, Billy began what would turn out to be a long and successful career in professional baseball.

Billy played in the Kansas City Royals organization for 2 years before turning his attention to coaching. He began his coaching career in 1990 in the New York Mets organization where he coached for 3 seasons. He coached in Butte, MT and High Desert, CA from 1993 – 1995 while working for MLB in player development. Billy then went on to become a successful manager at different levels in the Boston Red Sox organization from 1996 – 2002. His coaching ability, intelligence and work ethic made him a very well-known and sought-after coach in the professional ranks. Billy went on to coach or manage at various levels for the Kansas City Royals, Cincinnati Reds and Tampa Bay Rays, as well as in the Australian Baseball League and in the California and Arizona Fall Leagues. He is currently a Manager in the Washington Nationals organization where he was named the International League Manager of the Year this past season.

Billy joins his father, Bill Gardner, Sr. as a member of the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame.

### **Awards / Recognition**

1984:	All-ECC (baseball / basketball)
1998:	Midwest League Manager of the Year Edward F. Kenney Player Development Award
1999:	Manager of South Atlantic League Championship team
2004:	Dick Howser Player Development Award
2007:	Manager of Southern League Championship team
2012:	Southern League Manager of the Year
2014:	International League Manager of the Year

## **The Cactus Jack Foundation**

The Cactus Jack Foundation is a 401(c)(3) non-profit organization that had its origins in 1989 as a grass roots charity who's mission is to aid individuals, families and other charitable organizations in need throughout Southeastern Connecticut. Ed "Cactus Jack" Evento was a free spirit, who for many decades gave countless hours of his time to people from all walks of life. He was a firm believer in giving something back, and not in small doses. Cactus Jack was an inspiration to many and it is with his sense of community that the foundation is named.

Cactus Jack's memory and spirit were honored each year from 1989 through the mid-1990s with a softball tournament that attracted teams throughout New England. Since 1997, the foundation has held the annual Cactus Jack Charity Golf Classic. In 2002, the foundation joined with The ARC of New London County as co-sponsors of the annual Jack O'Keefe Strides for the Handicapped Road Race and also formed the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame.

The foundation is proud to be able to give back to the community in the same spirit of Cactus Jack himself.

### **Cactus Jack Foundation Board of Directors**

Tim Arsenault  
Rick Beaney  
Tim Gigliotti  
Dan Pickett  
John Ryan  
David Sutera  
Jack Voelker



The Cactus Jack Foundation salutes this year's inductees to the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame. Congratulations on an honor well-deserved!

We would also like to thank all of the members of the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame for your contributions to Waterford Athletics and the fond memories that you have given to the Waterford community!

Thanks to the Waterford Athletic Hall of Fame Selection Committee for another outstanding job and for your dedication in honoring those who have made special contributions to Waterford Athletics!

Finally, a big thank-you to all of you for your continued support of The Cactus Jack Foundation. We could not do what we do without your help and generosity. It is truly appreciated!



*Great Neck*

COUNTRY CLUB