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*Honoring and Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County*

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## Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

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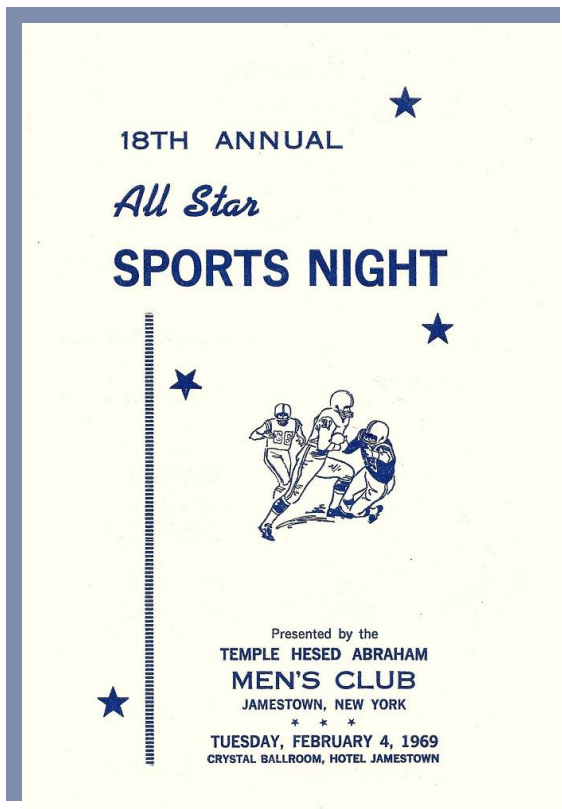
15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

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March 2018

### Temple Hased Abraham Sports Dinners



The Men's Club of the Temple Hased Abraham synagogue of Jamestown hosted a celebrity sports dinner as a fundraiser from 1952 through 1977. A "who's who" of sports stars trekked to the Crystal Ballroom in the Hotel Jamestown.

Through the efforts of such men as Si Goldman, Ben Rosenberg, Jack Haber, and Seymour Minsker, among others, the city, for one night anyway, might as well have been New York, Los Angeles or Chicago.

Along the way, such stars as Joe Louis, Jim Brown, Mickey Mantle, Pete Rose, Jesse Owens, Terry Bradshaw, Bob Gibson and Roberto Clemente visited Jamestown.

Other guests were Gale Sayers, Ernie Banks, Rocky Marciano, Johnny Unitas, Joe Paterno, Richard Petty, Bubba Smith and Howard Cosell.

Whitey Ford, Jim Bouton, Mercury Morris, Jim Palmer, Larry Csonka, Jim Kiick, Denny McClain, Floyd Little, Chuck Foreman and Alan Page also appeared at various times during the 24 years of dinners.

Use this link for a complete listing of all the attendees:

<http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/TempleHasedAbraham.pdf>

The 1956 Temple Heses Abraham All-Star Sports Night had a particularly interesting list of guests highlighted by famed baseball player Jackie Robinson, television stars Lucille Ball and husband, Desi Arnaz, and University of Pittsburgh football star, Jim McCusker, a future CSHOF inductee.

Lucy and Desi's appearance at the sports dinner coincided with the promotional visit to Ms. Ball's hometown for the premiere of the movie "Forever Darling." CSHOF inductee and former owner of the Jamestown Falcons, John Jachym, was instrumental in securing the appearance of his friend, Jackie Robinson. McCusker took advantage of the invitation to visit his parents on Kingsbury Street on Jamestown's north side.



Excerpts from an article written by Jamestown Post-Journal sports editor and CSHOF inductee, Frank Hyde, who attended the event, follow:

*A plea for tolerance toward the Negro race ... mingled with the usual humor and light banter that amused and held the attention of more than 800 sports dinner customers at the Hotel Jamestown last night.*

*Desi Arnaz was one of the speakers and his charming wife, home grown Lucille Ball, appeared briefly midway through the program and these added attractions no doubt contributed to the appeal of the fifth annual Temple Heses Abraham Men's Club affair.*

*Jackie Robinson, Brooklyn infielder and the first Negro to break organized baseball's color barrier, talked baseball – but he also dwelt to some lengths on the problems of his race and its progress toward recognition.*

*"We," Robinson said in speaking of the Negro race, "have made wonderful advances and have pushed aside many obstacles. We will never ease the fight until we have eliminated the obstacles that now face us and continue to put America in a bad light with the rest of the world."*

*Jackie emphasized the importance of the present moves toward non-segregation on the world's diplomatic stage. "The entire world is watching the progress of the Negro in America and the entire world is wondering," he said in a quiet, well-modulated voice that rose only when he wished to drive home a point. "We can preach democracy as much as we wish but the world will never truly and fully accept our democracy as long as racial discrimination exists for no nation is stronger than its weakest link."*

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| <b>Program</b>   |  |   |
| NATIONAL ANTHEM<br>SUNG BY LOU RUSSO   |  |   |
| <i>Invocation</i><br>RABBI ABRAHAM SCHWARTZMAN   |  |   |
| <i>Opening Address</i><br>HARRY PECK<br>President, Men's Club  |  |   |
| <i>Welcome</i><br>MAYOR CARL F. SANFORD  |  |   |
| <i>Introduction</i><br>SAMUEL SIEGEL<br>Chairman, Sports Night   |  |   |
| <i>Toastmaster</i><br>PAUL "DIZZY" TROUT<br>Former Star Pitcher, Detroit Tigers  |  |   |
| ●  |  |   |
| <b>Guests</b>  |  |   |
| <p>LUCILLE BALL and DESI ARNAZ<br/>No. 1 Comedy Team of Television</p> <p>STANLEY BENHAM<br/>World's Champion Bobsledder</p> <p>TONY BETTENHAUSEN<br/>Ace Automobile Racing Driver</p> <p>JUDGE HUGH V. N. BODINE<br/>Chautauqua County Judge</p> <p>STEVE GROMEK<br/>Star Pitcher, Detroit Tigers</p> <p>HAL LAHAR<br/>Football Coach, Colgate University</p> | <p>JERRY LAWSON<br/>Business Manager, Jamestown Falcons</p> <p>BOB LUNDELL<br/>President, Jamestown Falcons</p> <p>JIM McCUSKER<br/>Star Tackle, University of Pittsburgh</p> <p>JOHN MICHELOSEN<br/>Football Coach, University of Pittsburgh</p> <p>ED "BIG MO" MODZELEWSKI<br/>Fullback, Cleveland Browns</p> <p>CURLY MORRISON<br/>Halfback, Cleveland Browns</p> | <p>PAT MULLINS<br/>Field Manager, Jamestown Falcons</p> <p>JOE NORRIS<br/>Member Bowling "Hall of Fame"</p> <p>JACKIE ROBINSON<br/>Brooklyn Dodger Star</p> <p>NORM ROTHSCHILD<br/>Outstanding Syracuse Boxing Promoter</p> <p>WES SANTEE<br/>Ace American Miler</p> <p>MICKEY WALKER<br/>Former World Middleweight and<br/>Welterweight Champion</p> |

***1956 Temple Hased Abraham All-Star Sports Night program***

*Robinson traced his baseball career briefly and his trials as a professional player. He lauded Branch Rickey, now retired president of the Pittsburgh Pirates who, as general manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers, brought Robinson into the major leagues. “Mr. Rickey’s guidance and assurance, many times volunteered by long distance telephone, helped me over the bad spots,” he added.*

*Baseball, he said, is proving to the doubters that all races work and play together for the good of mankind. Support of the minor leagues is baseball’s biggest problem, Jackie concluded in appealing to Jamestown fans to show faith in their home team, understand its problems and get behind it by attending its games.*

*Lucy arrived as Desi held the stage, kissed her famed husband and described the Jamestown and area reception as “out of this world – far beyond our wildest imagination.”*

*President Harry Peck of the Men’s Club presented Jim McCusker, big Pittsburgh tackle, a trophy as the outstanding college athlete from Jamestown in 1955.*



Desi Arnaz looks on as Lucille Ball speaks during an appearance in the Hotel Jamestown at the Temple Hesel Abraham’s Sports Night. Also pictured, at right of Lucy, is Harry Peck, Temple Hesel Abraham Men’s Club president; Jackie Robinson of the Brooklyn Dodgers; and Jamestown native and University of Pittsburgh football player Jim McCusker.

Photo by Charlotte Brooks, courtesy of Look magazine and the Library of Congress

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Jim McCusker: <http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/jimmccusker.php>

John Jachym: <http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/johnjachym.php>

Frank Hyde: <http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/frankhyde.php>