
Preserving the Sports History of Chautauqua County



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

15 West Third Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

May 2012

Hugh Bedient – 100th Anniversary Celebration



100 years ago Fenway Park became the new home of the Boston Red Sox. A 22-year-old rookie pitcher from Falconer, NY, Hugh Bedient, helped lead the Red Sox to the World Series by compiling a remarkable 20-10 record during that 1912 season. Facing the New York Giants in the World Series, the 1908 Falconer High School graduate tossed 18 innings in four games while compiling a sterling 0.50 earned run average. In the pivotal fifth game, he defeated Giant's ace and future Baseball Hall of Famer Christy Matthewson 2-1. Bedient also started the final game of the series and pitched seven strong innings before being lifted for a pinch hitter with the score tied 1-1. The Boston Americans ultimately won the match 3-2 in ten innings to capture the 1912 World Series Championship.

Following the Series, Bedient returned to his home in Falconer and was honored by a parade witnessed by an estimated 25,000 people. Although no official Rookie-of-the-Year was awarded until 1947, the Society of Baseball Research polled its membership of historians and declared Bedient the 1912 winner.

Hugh Bedient first drew the attention of baseball scouts on July 27, 1908 when he was a member of a semi-pro squad from Falconer that squared off against a team from Corry, PA. In an effort considered to be a "world's record", Bedient struck out 42 Corry batsmen while pitching 23 innings. His brilliant effort resulted in national attention and 19 offers to play professional baseball. He signed with Fall River, MA for 1910 and played at Providence in 1911 before making the Red Sox in 1912.

Following his 1912 World Series Championship, Hugh pitched two more years with Boston then jumped the Buffalo of the upstart Federal League in 1915. He completed his baseball journey with minor league seasons at Toledo (1916-17, 1921-23), Portland (1924) and Atlanta (1925).

To commemorate the 100th anniversary of Bedient's 1912 World Series Championship, the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame, in cooperation with the Village of Falconer, the Falconer Central School System, the Chautauqua Region Community Foundation and community-minded citizens from Falconer, has planned a number of celebratory events for Saturday, May 19.

Sue Seamens will have a display of Bedient memorabilia and baseball related literature at the Falconer Public Library. Falconer merchants will have student created baseball themed artwork in their storefronts.

At 10:00, the Falconer Central softball team will take on Frewsburg at Ernie Strickland Field.

At 11:00, a parade will step off from Davis Park, across from the Falconer Community Building, and proceed east on Main Street to Falconer High School. Sam Ognibene of the Falconer Highway Department is parade marshal. The public is invited to walk.

At 11:30, Mayor David Krieg of Falconer will issue a proclamation naming May 19 as Hugh Bedient Day in the Village. The baseball field at the end of East Avenue will be dedicated and renamed Hugh Bedient Field by Falconer school superintendent Stephen Penhollow. A Falconer youth league t-ball game will christen the new field.

At 12:00, the Falconer varsity baseball team will compete in a game versus Frewsburg Central at Denny Meszaros Field.

Following the high school games, Falconer alumni baseball and softball players will take the fields to relive their glory days. The alumni softball game will begin at 2:00 followed by the alumni baseball game at 4:00.

The public is invited to all events on May 19, Hugh Bedient Day in Falconer.

Volunteers

Volunteers are needed to supervise the CSHOF exhibit hall in downtown Jamestown in order to increase the number of days the hall can be open. If you can volunteer even one three-hour afternoon per month, kindly contact Randy Anderson at 716-640-6219.

John O'Neil



John F. O'Neil, 91, of Emeritus of Lakewood, formerly of 126 Merlin Ave., died Wednesday April 18, 2012, in WCA Hospital.

A native of Shelbiana, Ky., he was born April 19, 1920, the son of the late Dewey and Lula Roberts Johnson.

He was involved in professional baseball for more than 45 years serving from 1939-86 as player, player/manager, manager, general manager and scout. He participated in over 1,800 minor league games. He played shortstop for the Jamestown Falcons in 1941 and 1954. As part of the 1941 season was named Most Popular Jamestown Falcon by a vote of the fans. The Philadelphia Phillies called him up to the majors for a portion of the 1946 season. He returned to the Jamestown Falcons in 1961, this time as general manager. From 1964-84 he worked as a major league scout for various teams including Milwaukee Braves, Atlanta Braves and Los Angeles Dodgers.

O'Neil was honored by the Chautauqua Hall of Fame at Diethrick Park in the summer of 2011. It was the 70th anniversary of Diethrick Park, then called Municipal Stadium, and O'Neil, the lone survivor of the 1941 Jamestown team, was honored by throwing out the first pitch.

John O'Neil was the oldest inductee placed in Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame at the organization's 31st annual induction dinner on Feb. 20, 2012.

Outside of baseball he was an avid golfer and fisherman with memberships at Chautauqua and Corry Hills golf clubs. He was also a member of Lakewood Rod and Gun Club.

Surviving are a daughter, Bonnie (James) Green of Myrtle Beach, S.C. and Jamestown; six grandchildren: Thomas M. Green of Manhattan, Daniel R. (Angela) Green of Maumelle, Ark., Cindy (Jeff) Alper of Randolph, N.J., Jim (Cheryl) Green of Mt. Pleasant, S.C., John (Cheryl) Green of Greensboro, N.C., and Jason (Jeanette) Green of Jamestown; and eight great-grandchildren.

He was preceded in death by his wife the former A. Janette "Suzy" Swanson, whom he married Nov. 16, 1943, and who died Aug. 28, 2008.

Les Beck



Leslie A. Beck, 98, formerly of 199 Hazeltine Ave., Jamestown, died April 3, 2012, in the Heritage Park Rehab and Skilled Nursing Facility.

A lifetime resident of Jamestown, Leslie was born January 15, 1914, the son of LaMott and Nellie Beck. He was a 1932 graduate of Jamestown High School. He played football as well as competing in track in high school and was a member of the National Athletic Scholarship Society.

Once out of school he continued to pursue sports by playing football, softball and baseball in Jamestown and other area sports leagues, becoming a roller skating floor manager and instructor, and organizing the Chautauqua Lake Archers.

Leslie served in the United States Army during World War II as a second lieutenant and was a paratroop and demolition instructor. He was stationed in Japan during the years that the Pacific Olympics were held, and was a captain on the football team from the 11th Airborne which won in 1945 and 1946 at the Army Pacific Olympics championship held in Tokyo.

In 1999 Les was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame.

He spent 26 years in the Jamestown Fire Department with 8 years as assistant fire chief. After retirement Les enjoyed golf, bowling, and was an active member of the JHS Sports Boosters. In addition to his parents, Leslie is preceded in death by his wife Viola Beck and his brother Orsell Beck.

Leslie will be dearly missed by his stepdaughter Lonnie Kish of Florida, nephew Richard Beck of Connecticut, niece Linda Beck of Lakewood, and devoted friend Jodi Crawford of Jamestown, with whom he enjoyed a father/daughter-like relationship for many years.

Photos from the 2012 CSHOF Induction Banquet can be viewed at the links below:

<http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/albums/2012banquet2/album/index.html>

<http://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/albums/2012banquet/index.html>