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*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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*January 2023*

### **CSHOF Banquet February 20**

The Board of CSHOF John Directors of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame will enshrine eleven individuals at its 41st Annual Induction Banquet, Presidents' Day, Monday, February 20th, at the Lakewood Rod & Gun Club.

The inductees are **Bob Barlette, Sheldon Battle, Kirsten Green, David Hinson, Frank Jagoda II, Bruce Johnson, Scott Kindberg, Fred Larson, Marty Nichols, Jay Sirianni and Amy (King) Swanson**

Tickets are available by calling Chip Johnson at 716-485-6991 or online at <https://www.chautauquasportshalloffame.org/banquettickets.php>.

### **Another Honor for Cheryl Bailey**

CSHOF inductee Cheryl Bailey (Class of 2019) received another prestigious honor when she recently was inducted into the University of Wisconsin Athletic Hall of Fame. Bailey worked in senior management in Wisconsin Athletics from 1990-2005.



- Instrumental in the remarkable resurgence of Badger Athletics during her 15-year tenure, serving the last three years as the Senior Associate Athletic Director for Sports Administration
- Served as the Senior Women Administrator to the Big Ten Conference and the NCAA
- Served as the lead administrator in bringing the UW Athletic department into gender equity compliance with the Office of Civil Rights
- Outspoken advocate and champion of the student-athlete experience and highly regarded administrator in the conference and national ranks in this respect
- Brought a number of high-profile NCAA events to campus including the Division I volleyball Championships (1993, 1998), the Division I Women's Golf Championship (1998), the Division I Men's Hockey Tournament (2006), as well as other NCAA qualifying events
- Gave UW Athletics a voice on numerous NCAA committees including in her role as chair of the NCAA Division I women's basketball committee and as a member of the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA) executive committee
- Following her tenure at UW Athletics, was named the general manager of the United States women's national soccer team for the medal winning 2007 (Bronze) and 2011 (Silver) FIFA World Cup teams and the Gold medal-winning 2008 Olympic team
- Founding executive director of the National Women's Soccer League (NWSL) from 2012-2015
- Inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame and the Section VI New York State Public High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame in 2019
- Inducted into the Denison University Hall of Fame in 2020 for her coaching and administration accomplishments



**Cheryl Bailey (center, pink dress) is pictured with her fellow inductees of the 2022 University of Wisconsin's Athletic Hall of Fame.**

**'He Believed In Us'**

## **Longtime Falconer Coach Meszaros Passes Away At 78**

*By Scott Kindberg, Post-Journal, November 23, 2022*

Jay Grann remembers it well.

He was a sophomore on the 1996 Falconer Central School varsity baseball team, a young player just trying to leave his mark on a program coached by Denny Meszaros.

*"I had just hit a double and I was feeling pretty good about myself," Grann said. "He called time out and made me run over (to the third-base coaching box) and he started getting after me a little bit because I missed the take sign."*

*"With him," Grann said, "he was such a good guy and he was always taking care of us, but he loved to win, too."*

Few did it better.

Few, if any, were more adored by his players.

That's why the news of Meszaros' unexpected passing on Monday at age 78 has hit the Falconer community so hard.



*"It's been a rough day or two," said Joe Mistretta (Class of 1977). " ... I've talked to four or five guys that I graduated with and they are just as upset as I am, because they had a great mutual respect for him. He believed in us kids so much."*

Meszaros (photo, left) guided the Golden Falcons' varsity team for 32 years; amassed 509 career victories; and claimed a New York State Public High School Athletic Association championship in 2000, which was his final season. He also served for years as the NYSPHSAA, Section VI and Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Athletic Association baseball chairman; and was an assistant coach for a decade for the New York State Empire Games.

Those accomplishments earned Meszaros induction into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 2008.

*"Not only was he an inductee of this organization," CSHOF president Randy Anderson said, "he was a great friend of everyone associated with the (Hall of Fame). Denny was a big supporter and loyal member who always attended our annual banquet and other activities. Although Meszaros was originally from the Pittsburgh area, he was Chautauqua County through and through."*

He was Falconer Central School through and through as well.

*"I'll never forget when I was in 10th grade, we played a football game in Frewsburg at 1 o'clock," Mistretta recalled. "(After the game), my parents let me jump in the car with him to meet his family (in Pennsylvania). Then he took me to the Pirates' playoff game."*

Nearly 50 years later, Mistretta hasn't forgotten that act of kindness.

*"He was just one of those special people, I guess," he continued. "I was blessed. His biggest attribute was he was just always positive, always talked his kids up. He had scouts come in from Buffalo and Pittsburgh, because he believed in the kids and it made them better."*

Meszaros, who taught mathematics at FCS beginning in 1966, made his students better, too.

*"Denny had a way of breaking down what I perceived to be complex concepts into understandable thoughts,"* said Tom Ames (Class of 1979). *"He set me on my path to majoring in math."*

*"Denny also had great command of his classroom. Believe me, if I and my fellow poorly behaved classmates smelled disciplinary weakness, we pounced. No one ever pounced in Denny's class."*

But the Golden Falcons sure seized the moment on a sizzling hot June day at P&C Stadium in Syracuse in 2000. That was the afternoon that senior Sam Marra drilled a laser-like home run to left-center field with two outs in the top of the ninth inning that carried Falconer to a 5-3 victory over Saratoga in the NYSPHSAA Class C title game.

It just so happened to be Meszaros' last.

Asked after the game if Marra, his unofficial captain, had said anything to him after his historic blast, Meszaros looked away from a Post-Journal sportswriter ever so briefly so he could compose himself before responding.

When he was ready, the Charleroi, Pennsylvania native looked at the reporter and uttered the following seven words: *"He said he did it for me."*

Judging from the impact Meszaros had on countless lives spanning decades, there's nothing his former players and students wouldn't do for him.

*"I'd have to say my greatest memory of Coach Meszaros was just seeing how happy he was that he finally won a state title,"* Marra said. *"After teaching and coaching baseball at Falconer for many years his last game ever was winning the biggest game of them all."*

*"Not a bad way to go out."*



Left photo: In this June 2000 file photo, Falconer head baseball coach Denny Meszaros shakes the hand of Sam Marra at Falconer Central School. Right photo: Meszaros won a state championship as head coach of the Golden Falcons that spring. P-J file photos.