



Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame

Box 1192 – 15 W. 3rd Street - Jamestown, NY 14701

October 2026

Frederick B. Larson 1940-2026



Frederick B. Larson, affectionately known as “Ferd,” of Fredonia, NY, passed away peacefully on July 22, 2026, at the Chautauqua Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, at the age of 85, surrounded by family and friends.

He was the loving father of Amy Cassidy of Dunkirk, NY, and Rodney Larson of Rochester, NY. He was the son of the late Marcella Fox Larson Oviatt of Smethport, PA, and the late Harry W. Larson of Smethport.

Fred is survived by his sister, Pat Chapman of Youngsville, PA. He was preceded in death by his brother, Jack Larson of Fredonia, and a sister, Kay Caruso of Smethport. He was a proud grandfather to Dylan Cassidy of Fredonia; Tyler Cassidy of Buffalo, NY; Sophia Larson of Pittsburgh, PA; and Lia Larson of Kendall, NY.

Fred’s love of nature began while growing up on his family’s farm in Crosby, PA. His passion for distance running was expressed on the farm and the hills and trails of the surrounding landscape. An avid hiker and lifelong runner, he was a two-time Pennsylvania State Champion in the mile run. He received a scholarship to Penn State University where he competed on the cross country and track and field teams. He earned a degree in Health, Physical Education and Recreation from Penn State in 1962 and later a master of education degree from Buffalo State.

He began his teaching career in 1962 as a general science teacher and basketball coach in the Newark, NY, school system. In 1964, he came to Fredonia to teach physical education, a position he held until his retirement in 1995.

Fred became a revered and incredibly successful cross country and track and field coach at Fredonia.

Larson took over the Fredonia cross-country squad in '66. Over the ensuing 30 seasons, Larson led the Hillbillies to 25 CCIAC league championships, including an incredible run of 19 consecutive titles from 1967 to 1985.

His cross-country teams won 13 Section VI championships and created an amazing career mark of 568 wins against only 30 dual meet losses. During one stretch from 1971-1984, the Orange and Black runners went undefeated in 250 consecutive meets to set a New York State record.

Larson was the 1989 National High School Cross-Country Coach of the Year. Section VI chose the Hillbillies as its Cross-Country Team of the 1970s.

“Ferd” was equally successful as a track and field coach from 1966-1985 and then, after a short hiatus, from 1987-1995. Working along side his brother, Jack, he led his teams to 16 CCIAC league titles and 7 Section VI championships. His career record was 139 wins and only 28 losses.



Larson was inducted into the Fredonia High School Hall of Fame in 2001.

Inscribed on his plaque is one paragraph that reads “Coach Larson will always be known as a great cross-country coach. However, what made Coach Larson even more special was his ability to take a child that no one else saw as talented and convince those individuals that they could be great. Then “Ferd” would spend countless hours to ensure that they would be. Coach Larson gave to his athletes the inner self-worth, along with desire and dedication, to not only become wonderful athletes, but wonderful parents, employees and people.”

He retired to his homestead in Crosby for a decade before returning to Fredonia to be closer to family and friends. He was well-known throughout the village for walking with a purpose wearing an orange hat, yellow reflective tape and carrying an umbrella.

Larson was inducted into the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame in 2023.

CSHOF Turns 45

The Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 1981. Since that time, 257 deserving individuals have been inducted into its Hall of Honor. As we celebrate our 45th anniversary, we thought it was appropriate to take a look back at our very first induction banquet and the enshrinees in that inaugural class.



Chautauqua Hall of Fame Is A Reality

by Jim Riggs *The Post-Journal* February 8, 1982

After over a year of planning, the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame has become a reality. Walt Brown, Russ Diethrick, Kay Gould, Marty Haines, Mark Hammond, Jim McCusker, Lyle Parkhurst, Brad Rendell, Leo Squinn and the late Nelson Turnell were inducted before a full-house crowd of nearly 300. Hammond was unable to attend because of a recent operation and Mrs. Turnell represented her late husband.

It was announced by President Tony Milioto that the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame finally has a site which will be in the Chautauqua Mall in the near future.

An interesting sidelight was the induction of Rendell and his daughter Gould. She was the first to be inducted while her father was ninth. When making his acceptance speech, Rendell joked, "This is the first time my daughter ever beat me to the stand." The former track star added, "It's also the first time I've been in ninth place."

Two others that had something in common were inductee Jim McCusker and speaker Lou Groza who were teammates on the Cleveland Browns. The other speaker was Montreal Expos manager Jim Fanning who was in Germany Sunday but made every effort to attend the fete. He arrived in Montreal Sunday and headed to Jamestown Monday morning. He had been in Germany with Expos radio broadcaster Dave VanHorne to visit the Canadian service bases.

Former major leaguer Walt Brown was glad to have in the audience the man who convinced him to become a pitcher, his old shop teacher Dave Dorman.

Brown said Dorman told him, "If you can throw the ball from third to first you should be able to throw it from the mound to the plate."

Another pitcher honored was Lyle Parkhurst, while Haines was cited for his contributions to bowling, Squinn for his volunteer work in all sports, particularly baseball; Hammond for his long involvement in football, basketball and baseball; Gould for her outstanding coaching achievements in women's basketball; Diethrick for his involvement in sports at all levels in the Jamestown area; and Turnell for his dedication to teaching tennis.

The emcee for the event was someone who knows quite a bit about halls of fame, Tom Eakin. Eakin is the founder and president of the Ohio Baseball Hall of Fame and museum.

Fanning summed up the philosophy of the Chautauqua Sports Hall of Fame best when he mentioned that in addition to the many athletes who became professional stars, the ones who perform and serve without receiving a penny are just as important.



Left to right: Leo Squinn, Marcella Turnell accepting for her late husband Nelson Turnell, Walt Brown, Marty Haines, Jim McCusker, Kay Gould, Brad Rendell, Russ Diethrick, Lyle Parkhurst. Missing from the photo was Mark Hammond.