

BLOOMFIELD

Educational ★ Foundation

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Bloomfield Educational Foundation Announces Annual Gala and Bloomfield High School Hall of Fame Inductees

Bloomfield, NJ -- Bloomfield Educational Foundation (BEF) will hold their 2019 Annual Gala Dinner on May 3, 2019 at the Forest Hill Field Club in Bloomfield, N. J. A sell out crowd is expected as eight athletes will be inducted into the Bloomfield High School Hall of fame that evening. Tickets are \$100 each and \$50 for children under twelve. All proceeds benefit the Bloomfield Educational Foundation, a registered 501-c-3, supporting the Bloomfield Public Schools.

About the 2019 Bloomfield High School Athletic Hall of Fame Inductees:

The following will be inducted into the BHS Athletic Hall of Fame:

Robert Byars '71
Joseph Chiaravallo '00
Craig Epley '78
Howard Friedman '59
Sam Fusaro
Wali Muhammad '01
Vincent Russo '78
Stefanie Petine Stickles '04

About BOBBY BYARS - Football-Basketball-Track

The remarkable Bobby Byars will enter his third Hall of Fame with his induction into the Bloomfield Hall of Fame. Byars starred as a defensive back for the Bengals in 1970 and was an outstanding guard on the George Cella-coached Bengals basketball team in 1971 that won the NJSIAA Group 4 championship. He also ran track for his high school. It was coach Cella who said to Byars, "You should get into coaching." Cella's talent evaluation was always on point as Byars would go on to star in football at Cheyney State (Pa.) before he was drafted by the Houston Oilers in 1976. As Cella could foresee, Byars would become a remarkable college basketball coach. He coached Delaware Community College in Media, Pa. 1984-'86 before moving on to Lincoln University (Pa.) and coaching there from 1986-2004. Byars' Lincoln teams made six ECAC tournament appearances, reached the final four times and won three championships.

About JOE CHIARAVALLO - Wrestling

Joe was a remarkable wrestler who capped his amazing career by finished second in the NJSIAA tournament in 2000 at 189 pounds. He followed that up with a third place finish at the Senior Nationals, earning an All-American designation. Chiaravallo graduated in 2000 with wrestling records he continues to hold for most wins, pins and team points in Bloomfield High School history. An excellent student, Joe went on to wrestle at Columbia University, where he had earned a full grant for his academic and athletic achievements.

About CRAIG EPLEY - Football

Craig was a two-way tackle on perhaps the best Bloomfield High football teams of the past 40 years. Affectionately known as “The Coneheads,” the 1977 Bengals went 9-1 behind a stunningly potent wishbone attack under the direction of Hall of Fame coach Sam Cavallaro. Epley was the best lineman on a line that cleared the way for more than 4,000 rushing yards. On defense, Epley was one of several punishing defenders that made Bloomfield a feared opponent in North Jersey. From there, Epley shined at Temple University, where he started on the line for three seasons.

About HOWARD FRIEDMAN - Track coach

The 1959 grad teamed with then track throwing coach Steve Jenkins to create what many refer to as the golden age of throwers at Bloomfield High. Bloomfield boasted a staggering 50 county, sectional, group or Meet of Champion place winners from 1998 to 2013. Friedman is credited with introducing the discipline of weight training to Bloomfield’s girl athletes, helping to turn many into outstanding high school and eventually college athletes, and set the tone for future athletic development.

About SAM FUSARO - Wrestling coach

Sam’s no nonsense and team-first approach resonated with his wrestlers and is reflected in a remarkable coaching career on the wrestling mats. Fusaro’s 2006-'07 team won the NJSIAA North Jersey, Section 1 Group 4 championship and he was subsequently bestowed the honor of New Jersey State Coach of the Year by The Star-Ledger. For Fusaro, however, it was never about wins and losses. It was about shaping and molding his athletes and teaching them about life through the sport of wrestling. Fusaro coached dozens of wrestlers who qualified for the NJSIAA tournament. Sam was enshrined in the New Jersey Wrestling Coaches Hall of Fame in 2008.

About WALI MUHAMMAD - Football

Wali Muhammad is a living, breathing Hallmark movie for his perseverance and relentless pursuit of success both on and off the football field. Wali had to fight his way through junior college before earning a full ride to University of Nebraska. A dominating defensive end at Bloomfield High, Muhammad set the school record for sacks at Coffeyville Junior College in Kansas. He would prove equally dominant for the Nebraska Cornhuskers, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in Sociology. Wali is now a powerful force and role model for re-integrating individuals with behavioral or developmental delays back into a meaningful part in society.

About VINNIE RUSSO - Wrestling

Upon his graduation from Bloomfield High in 1978, Vinnie held the school record for wrestling wins, pins and team-points-scored. His love for wrestling never waned, so Russo found a way to stay close to the sport, becoming a wrestling referee. Russo excelled at that vocation so well, he became recognized as the New Jersey’s finest scholastic wrestling official. Russo is in fact the Chief Wrestling Official in the state and head assigner. Each year, the Wrestling Officials Association honors its top official with the Vincent Russo Golden Whistle Award while Vinnie continues in his role of head state official.

About STEFANIE PETINE STICKLES - Track

The most decorated track athlete, male or female, in Bloomfield High School history, Stefanie didn't begin throwing the javelin until her sophomore season but won the Sectional and Essex County javelin championships three straight years. Petine placed second and fourth, twice, at the prestigious NJSIAA Meet of Champions. She was part of the county javelin relay championship team three straight years. When she graduated in 2004, she owned the Essex County Javelin record. She went on to star in the event at Rutgers University.

About The Bloomfield High School Athletic Hall of Fame

The Bloomfield High School Athletic Hall of Fame was established in 2012, to promote the achievements of those exemplary student-athletes, coaches and contributors to the athletic program that through performance, leadership, and teamwork carried on the proud Bengal tradition. The selection committee pledges to maintain integrity of the Bloomfield High School Athletic Hall of Fame and the characteristics of dedication, pride and tradition.

The BHS Athletic Hall of fame Committee is compromised of Steve Jenkins, Chairman, BHS Athletic Director; Christopher Jennings, Vice-Chairman, BHS Principal; John Baltz, Bob Behre, Michael Carter, Robert Fetterly, Howard Friedman, Samuel Fusaro, Robert Mayer, George Middleton, Michael Moretti, John Stanford, and Robert Storm.

About The Bloomfield Educational Foundation (BEF)

Founded in 1999 by Chairman-Emeritus, Joseph Kliminski and Past Chairman, Robert Fetterly, the BEF is a registered 501-c-3 Foundation, which strives to enhance the educational experience for all Bloomfield Public School children, grades K-12. This year marks a milestone of giving that exceeds three quarters of a million dollars in college scholarships, teacher classroom grants, and extraordinary grants for larger projects. Some of the projects most recently funded include:

- funding for academic/study skills program for all members of the Freshmen Football team;
- donations to support Art and Music endeavors outside of the basic curriculum;
- funds to support BHS students' AP tests, AP Institute classes for AP teachers, and professional SAT preparation courses for all BHS students;
- ongoing support for the V.E.S.T. program, which teaches vocational and career skills to intellectually disabled high school students;
- teacher grants for innovative programs, school wide, in Reading, Forensics, Science and more.

To make a reservation for the Gala, or place a congratulatory message in the commemorative program, call the BEF at 973-403-0032 or visit the BEF website

www.bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org or email info@bloomfieldeducationalfoundation.org