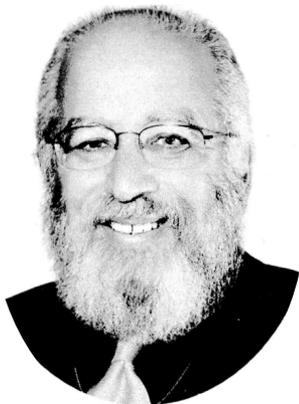


George Albano



For the past 14 years, George Albano has introduced every Norwalk Old Timers honoree in his role as master of ceremonies at the annual awards dinner.

Tonight, it's his turn to be introduced as a Norwalk Old Timer.

Albano has written about sporting events, milestone moments and athletic achievements involving local teams, athletes and coaches in Norwalk and throughout Fairfield County for the past 37 years.

Most of that has been as a longtime sports writer and columnist at The Hour Newspaper of Norwalk, where he is currently the associate sports editor.

The Norwalk native began his career in 1974 when, as a 19-year-old sophomore journalism student at the University of Bridgeport, he joined The Hour as a part-time sports writer covering high school events.

Albano eventually became a fulltime staff member in 1979 and remained at The Hour until 1985 when, with the birth of his second son, he decided to take a break from the night shift and left the paper to join the media relations department at the University of Bridgeport – his alma mater – as the college's first fulltime Director of Sports Information.

During his two and a half years at UB, Albano remained involved in the newspaper business as a freelance sports writer for The Stamford Advocate, writing a popular boxing column and Norwalk sports features. He also wrote several freelance stories for national and international boxing magazines.

In the fall of 1987, Albano returned to The Hour as an assistant sports editor, a position he held for 23 years until he was named associate sports editor in 2010. He is now in his 35th year overall during his two tenures at the newspaper.

For several years, in addition to writing for The Hour, Albano wrote sports features for several weekly newspapers in Fairfield County, freelancing under the pen name "Jerry P. Weir" as a tribute to his favorite band members in the Grateful Dead: "Jerry" for Jerry Garcia, "P" for Phil Lesh, and "Weir" for Bob Weir.

During his 37-year career, Albano has been honored with several awards for his work in the sports writing field, the first coming in 1979 when he received the Fairfield County Interscholastic Athletic Conference Media Award for outstanding sports coverage.

He was also the recipient of the News Media Award from both the Connecticut Girls Soccer Coaches Association in 1995 and by the National Football Foundation and Hall of Fame Ralph DeSantis Fairfield County Chapter in 2004.

Five of the most prestigious awards Albano has received have all come in the past four years. In May of 2008, he was honored by the Sportsmen of Westport as only the fourth recipient of the William A. Krause Jr. Humanitarian Award.

Six months later, in November 2008, Albano was inducted into the Connecticut High School Coaches Association Hall of Fame, only the third sports writer and the first from Fairfield County to be so honored. For this achievement, he was recognized at a Norwalk Common Council Meeting and presented a proclamation from Mayor Richard Moccia, who declared Jan. 29, 2009 "George Albano Day" in Norwalk.

In October 2009, Albano became the second sports writer to receive the Bill Gonillo Local Sports Media Award from the Fairfield County Sports Commission. Then in June 2010, he was the first member of the media inducted into the FCIAC Hall of Fame.

And tonight, George Albano will be honored by his hometown.

A lifelong Norwalk resident and 1973 graduate of Brien McMahon High School, Albano has also been actively involved in his community during his sports writing career. He has been a board member of the Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association for the past 17 years, including two years (2001-02) as president. He is chairman of the Scholarship Committee, Awards Committee and Publicity Committee in addition to his usual duties as Dinner MC.

He is also a voting member with the Fairfield County Sports Commission and for the past five years has served as chairperson of its Norwalk Sports Person of the Year committee.

For the past four years, Albano has been the only Fairfield County representative in the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance, and in September was elected as the organization's 51st president.

In addition, he is an honorary member of the Laurel Athletic Club and has served as a Deacon as well as chairperson of the Board of Deacons at the United Church of Rowayton.

Albano has also chaired a number of local projects and dinners in Norwalk honoring local sportsmen, including the naming of two softball fields, two trophies, and one street, Buschbaum Boulevard. One of the city's leading sports historians, Albano assisted the Norwalk Museum in its "Sports in Norwalk" exhibit in 2009.

Before he wrote about sports, Albano participated in them. At Brien McMahon, he played soccer for Ralph King and wrestled and ran track for Jack Casagrande, both Hall of Fame coaches and past Norwalk Old Timers honorees. Albano was a member of the Senators' 1972 FCIAC championship wrestling team.

Shortly after high school, Albano became involved with the Norwalk Athletic Association and Norwalk Senior Babe Ruth League, handling publicity for both, and at the age of 24 was elected president of the Senior Babe Ruth League. He was also a head coach in the Norwalk YMCA Calvin Murphy Biddy Basketball League for two years, where his Edwards Company team posted back to back 16-0 championship seasons in 1978 and '79.

The 56-year-old Albano and his bride of 29 years, Diane, have two sons, A.J. and Georgie, both former athletes at Brien McMahon who are now in the education field and coaching high school sports.