



Panthers & Saints: High School Sports in Geneva



For 120 years, sports have been part of Geneva's high schools. People have questioned the balance between sports and academics, and the amount of money spent on teams and facilities. "Jocks versus nerds," or athletes versus scholars, has been a social struggle in schools.

Sports fit educational missions by teaching teamwork, sportsmanship, and the steps of reaching goals. Geneva High School and DeSales High School (1912-2012) have offered programs for boys and girls in various sports and at different skill levels. Whether a star or a junior varsity athlete, everyone learns something from being on a team.

"I loved to play baseball and there was a group of kids, boys, who played in the field near my home. They would let me play with them because I knew enough about baseball to play." – GERALYNE (Mrs. Ed) CUONY



The 1931 Geneva High School football team reflected the city's diversity: African, Irish, Syrian, and Italian.



Like the 1953 DeSales varsity basketball team, girls and women played sports whenever they could. Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act guaranteed equal opportunity for young women to play sports.



Coaches like Jim Loman (1923 - 1949) often are full-time teachers. They influence students on the field as well as in the classroom.

Sports Go To School

In larger cities during the 1860s, boys began forming sports clubs in their high schools. Clubs were modeled after college teams that played football, baseball, and track and field. Student managers handled schedules, finances, and transportation. The youth clubs affiliated with adult athletic associations when they needed facilities and expensive equipment.

In the 1890s, physical education programs brought sports into the school. Students learned how to play safely and fairly. Extracurricular teams developed around the same time as school newspapers, yearbooks, and other student clubs. Together, these activities created school spirit and pride.

BASE BALL.—A match game of base ball was played on the Walnut Hill School grounds Saturday, May 30th, between two picked nines of the Walnut Hill and Atlanta Clubs of Geneva. The playing up to the sixth innings was as fine as ever witnessed by two junior clubs. The fielding was of the very best, and this constituted the most attractive part of the game.

This May 1868 baseball game is an early example of Geneva school club sports. Walnut Hill School was on the present-day site of Hobart & William Smith Colleges' Houghton House.



Geneva Classical and Union School's (it later became Geneva High School) first football team, 1891. Back row, left to right: Townsend, Jay B. Covert, M.H. Sandford, Malcolm Johnston, Harry Sill, and L.M. Vail. Front row, left to right: W. Brush, Clayton Kent, William Sill, William Eddy, Thomas Folger, and Mather Sill. The gentleman in the coat was John Richardson.



Between 1948 (shown here) and 1950, Geneva High School wrestling teams won 18 individual sectional titles and two team championships.



Lacrosse was an early sport at Geneva High School. Although the sport remained popular in town, there was no school team from the 1940s to 1960.



In the early 1900s, sports were less prominent in yearbooks. Although DeSales had sports teams for many years, the 1941 yearbook was the first to include team photos.

Players in Pigtails

The Geneva High School Girls' Athletic Association first appeared in the 1932 yearbook. It "foster[ed] highest ideals of good sportsmanship and good fellowship" through interclass contests in basketball, field hockey, and tennis. There were also "Play Days" against area schools.

In 1946 the DeSales yearbook noted the second season of a girls' basketball team. Along with playing in a YMCA league, the team played home-and-home series with Canandaigua, Rochester, and Auburn schools.

As sports teams expanded at both schools in the 1970s, young women joined and excelled. Many of them went on to play at William Smith and other colleges.



Basketball Girls in Action

A four-sport athlete at DeSales High School, Jody Lavin was named 1982 NCAA Division III Basketball Player of the Year at the University of Rochester. Since then she has coached basketball at colleges and high schools, and is a television game analyst.

Left row, down—Joan McCafferty, Jean Ann Enright, Janet Densmore, Joan Cummings.
Right row, down—Veronica McLaughlin, Ellen Henratta, Joyce Wilson, and Helen Walsh.

The 1945-46 "Girl Basketeers" of DeSales High School



SENIOR HOCKEY TEAM

For many years, girls' teams were in the "Activities" section of yearbooks rather than "Sports." In 1937 the senior girls won the interclass Hockey Cup.



In the mid-1960s Roxanne Logue, right, was among the top six age-group sprinters in the country. She competed several times in the National AAU Junior championship in the 100 and 220 yard dashes.

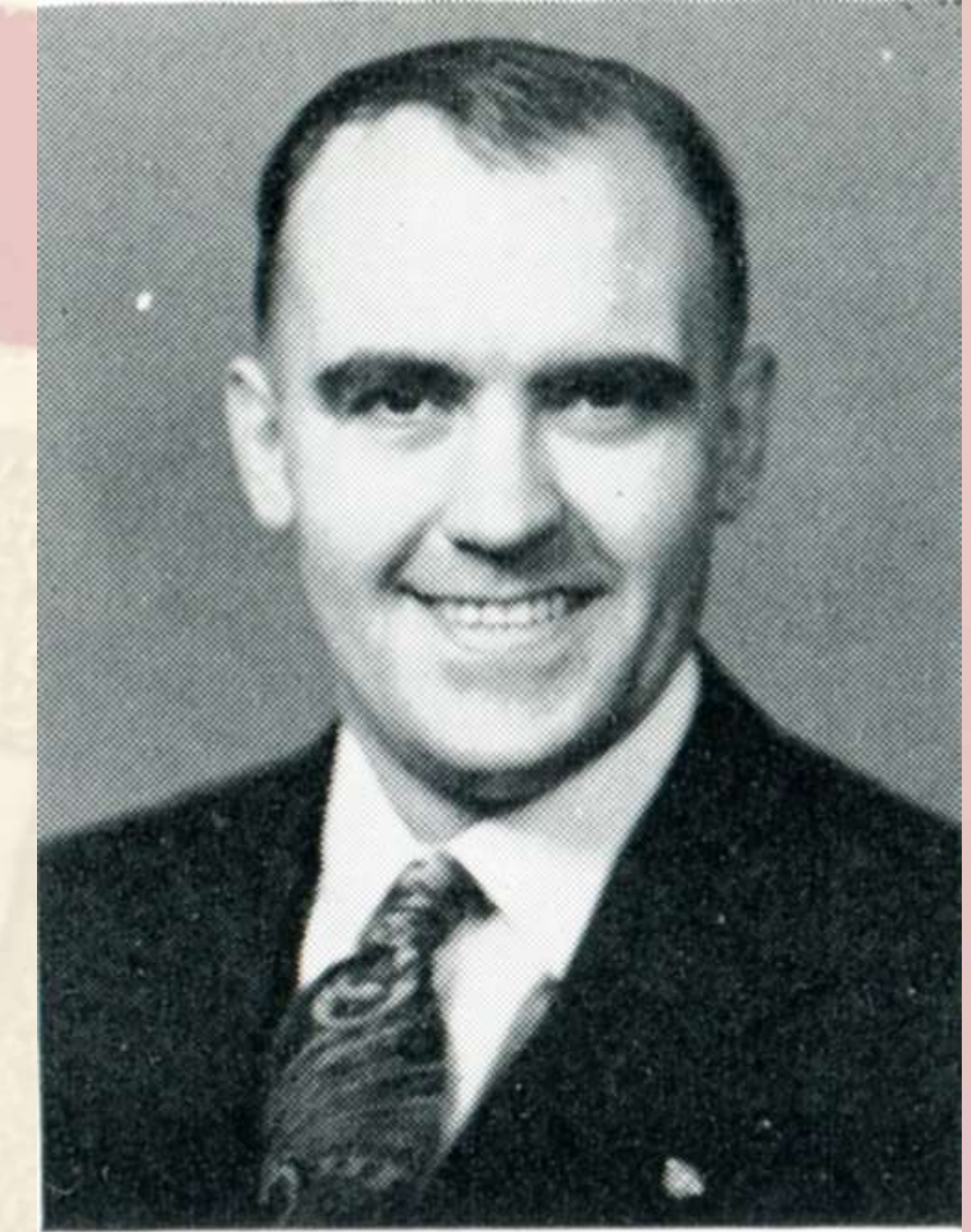


In the 1950s, physical education teacher Nan Demuth created sports opportunities for girls outside of school. Through the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) she started girls' track and field, cross country, volleyball, and softball teams.

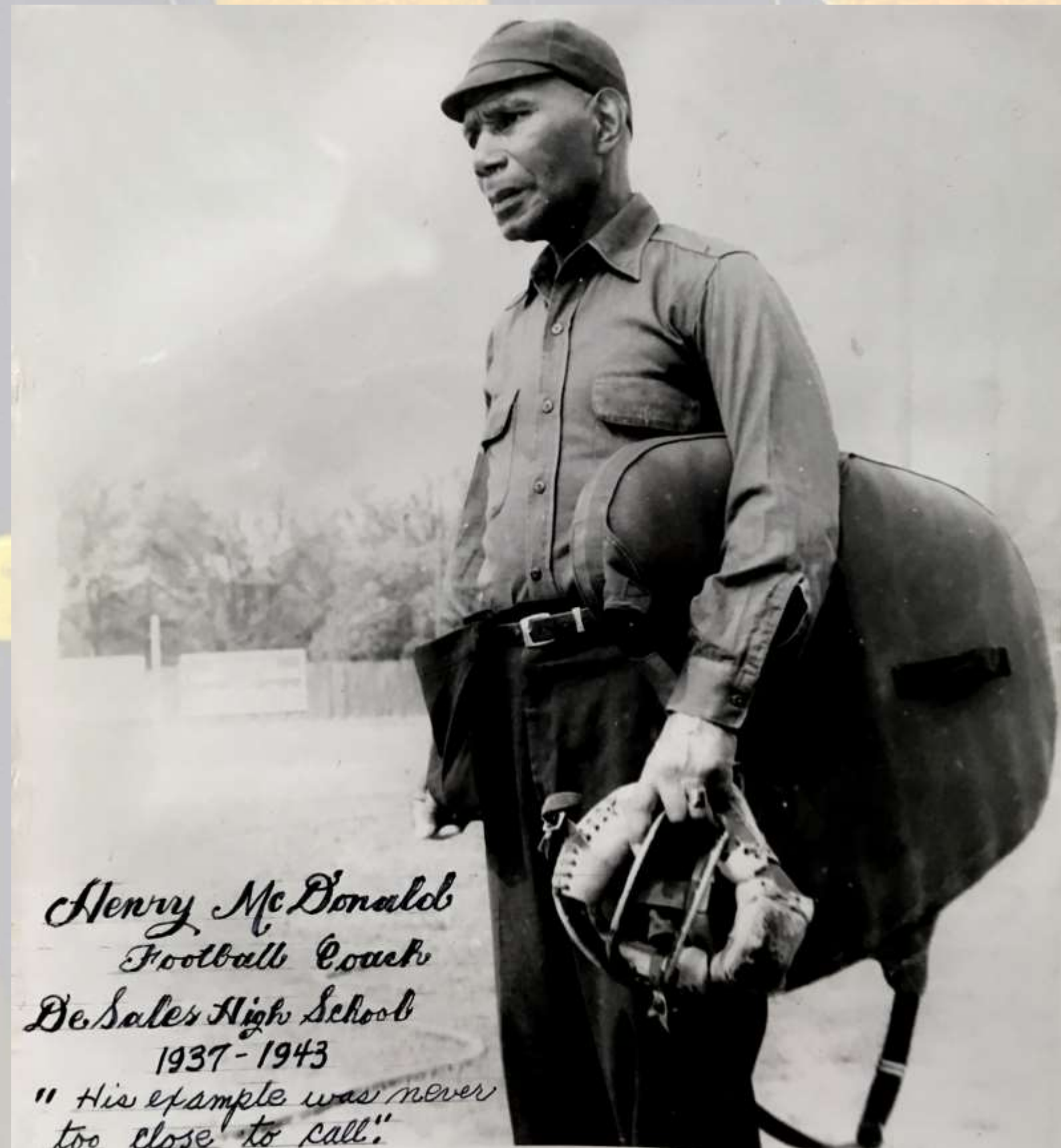
Coaches

An athletic experience depends upon the individual, the team, and the coach. A coach sets the training schedule, selects starters, and runs strategy. Each athlete has an opinion about the coach, and success breeds many good opinions.

High school coaches are paid a lump sum for each sport. The hourly rate shrinks when one considers practices, road games, and post-season play. There are easier ways to earn money, but coaches do it for the love of the sport and the chance to share that with young athletes.



"Some of you may know Dr. Cuony. He was a great influence... He was the [football] line coach and he was tough. When I went to college, it was easy because I had had tough, good coaching." – Sam Passalacqua.



*Henry McDonald
Football Coach
DeSales High School
1937-1943
"His example was never
too close to call."*

Henry McDonald was the first African American head football coach in New York State. Coach McDonald played professional football in the early 1900s, and umpired local Little League games.



"Jim Loman coached basketball, football, lacrosse, and he taught algebra. It was a full-time job for him, teaching and coaching, and he certainly did have some effect on my life and on the life of most of the young men that are about my age here in the city of Geneva." – Charles Kenny



"Our coach, Mrs. [Sherry] Wild, has taught us everything we know...We would still be cheering like we did when we were on the [Junior Football] Giants if it weren't for [her]....She has been named Coach of the Year for the past two years. With hard work, Mrs. Wild told us we could do anything." – Kristin Addona, JoAnn Diduro, Gretchen Shultz



Beginning in 1969, Harry Furman was the DeSales head football coach for 16 years. Players on his team were called the "Wharf Rats," and Coach Furman's famous phrase was, "Put a little heat on it, you'll be fine."

Geneva Sports Hall of Fame



The Geneva Sports Hall of Fame was founded in 1989 to recognize Geneva High School and DeSales High School athletes. Many nominees achieved more success after graduation, but all began their careers in Geneva. Coaches and special contributors to high school sports are also recognized. Hall of Fame plaques are displayed at the Geneva Community Center and on www.genevasportshof.org.

Many of the honorees earned college scholarships, continued playing as adults, and coached their sport at some level. There are a number of families with siblings, parents, or grandparents honored in the hall.



Amanda Martin Airth attended both Geneva and DeSales High Schools, earning 13 varsity letters in five different sports. She played soccer, volleyball, tennis, basketball, and lacrosse which she continued in college.



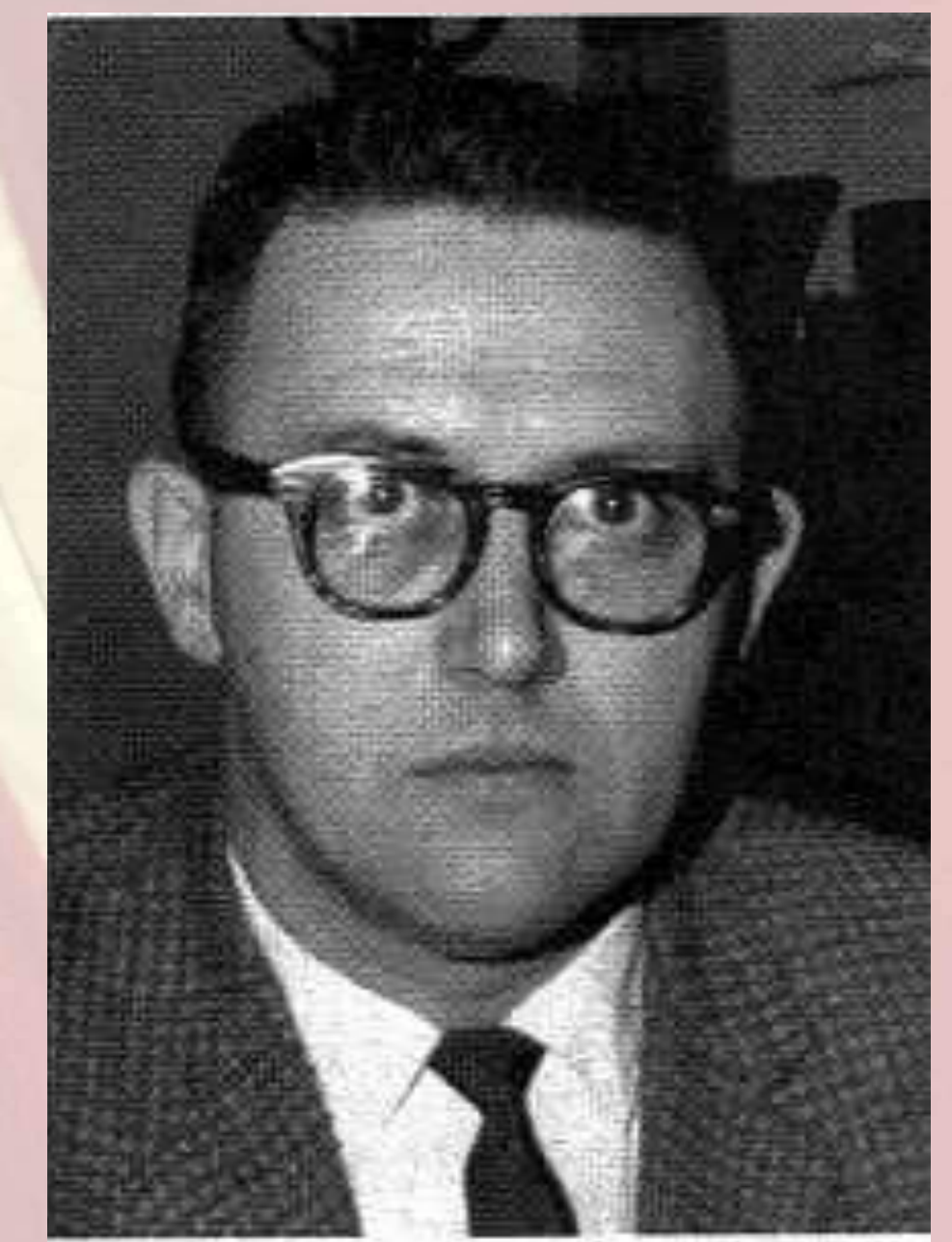
The 1999 Geneva High School Girls Softball team captured the NYSPHSAA Class B State Championship. The Panthers were coached by Randy Grenier, Pat Luzzi, and Greg Sterman. Members of the team were Tara Balistreri, Liz Breese, Kathy Caito, Anessa Ciancaglini, Wendy Dox, Jen Felice, Santina Grenier, Tiffani Mantegna, Emilee Massa, Caronda Miller, Terese Puma, Jen Roberts, Allissa Robson, Sarah Sterman, Krista Smallwood, Beth Teague, Holly Townley, and Sara Villani.



Between them, Guy Spader, Sr. (top) and Guy Jr. coached Geneva High School baseball for a total of 42 years with a combined record of 542-218, 18 Finger Lakes League titles and three Section V Championships.



Joe Iaconis, Jr. has spent his life supporting sports in Geneva. A few roles include score keeping and announcing for the Geneva High School boys basketball team and keeping score for the Geneva High School baseball team.



Between 1955 and 1991, Norm Jollow expanded the *Geneva/ Finger Lakes Times* sports coverage to cover 27 school districts, and three colleges in the four-county area. Norm was known for his Press Box Banter column and his Fearless Fred predictions during football season.