

2014 Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame



William "Billy" Schaffer

It is said "determination, effort and practice are rewarded with success," and no one exemplifies this more than one of this year's Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame inductees, William "Billy" Schaffer. Billy Schaffer was born July 8, 1963, and is the son of William "Boo" Schaffer and mom Nancy. Billy is the youngest of their four children. His siblings include sisters, Catherine Flanigan and Betsy Weber, and one brother, Stephen. Along with his dad and brother Stephen, Billy completes the Schaffer trio of Sports Hall of Famers.

Whether in sports, life, work or family, Billy drew inspiration from his dad, "Boo" and his mom Nancy, to not only become a great athlete, but also to be a role model for the youth here in Saugerties, as well as in his current west coast hometown Clayton, California, where Billy resides with his wife of 18 years, Jennifer, and his son, Billy Jr.

On the Saugerties sports scene Billy was a soft spoken force, with a laid back attitude that was never mistaken for indifference. Billy led by example, dedication and hard work and was well respected by not only his peers, but by all who were his teammates.

Growing up in the shadows of historic Nanny Goat Hill, Billy was destined to excel. In sports, being the son of a great athlete and the brother of another, sometimes makes the pressure to live up to expectations tough on a young man – but not Billy. Blessed with great athleticism, a cool temperament, and extreme focus, Billy's attributes began to draw notice from the coaches of all leagues in Saugerties.

Billy's baseball career began in 1970. He played for the White Socks in the Saugerties Grasshopper League, and was coached by Fritz Beckert and Charlie Cavanaugh. From 1971 to 1974 Billy played Saugerties Little League Baseball as an 8 year old with the Ferroxcube Pirates coached by Charlie Tobiassen and Mike McCarthy and was selected for the 1974 Saugerties Little League All-Star Team coached by Bob Lehman. From 1975 to 1977 he played Babe Ruth League baseball on the VFW team. His coaches were Gil Ricks and Donnie Myer. Said Billy, "We had our fair share of wins. How could you not have fun with these two coaches?" Billy was selected for the Saugerties Babe Ruth All-Star Team in 1977 under the coaching of Ray Scally. Billy commented "Without a doubt, Ray Scally knows baseball; we were loaded with talent and had great fun."

Billy then took his talents to the high school fields, starting as a 9th grader in 1978, under Coach Larry Neville. In 1979, his sophomore year, he became the starting shortstop for SHS, under Coach Tony Vizzie. In 1980, he was named all DCSL as a shortstop, and he served as co-captain in both his junior and senior year. One of Billy's most memorable sports moment was in 1981, his senior year. "My brother Stephen was on leave from the Marine Corps and it was the first time ever he saw me play high school baseball. I had told my Dad that morning it would be great to hit a homerun with my brother coming home. I went 3 for 4 with a 2 run homer, and we went on to beat Coleman and win the MHAL Championship." recalls Billy. SHS then advanced to the first round of the Class B Section 9 tournament beating Goshen at Cantine 3 to 0. Billy went 1 for 2 with 1 walk, 1 run scored and 1 stolen base. The Sawyer 9 beat Warwick in the second round at Cantine 2 to 1 to advance to the championship. SHS then traveled to Cornwall and defeated Albertus Magnus 20-4 on 23 base hits for the Section 9 Championship. Billy went 2 for 3 with a solo homerun, 3 RBIs, 3 runs scored and 2 stolen bases. Billy was voted to First Team All MHAL as a shortstop and was presented the Outstanding Team Contribution Award given by Coach Vizzie.

After that Billy moved on to Junior American Legion Baseball with coaches Earl Benjamin and Tony Konopka, in 1977 and 1978, and Mike and Bobby Dodig, in 1979 and 1980. Billy stated that "All four of these men, slept, ate and drank baseball. All were extremely knowledgeable and showed their love for the game and coaching. Kingston of course, was the rivalry, but the Greene County team always gave us a run for our money. The seasons were great fun and I learned the different schools of thought regarding play and coaching strategies of the game."

In 1982, Billy played for Middle Tennessee State University. One of Billy's fondest memories was the MTSU versus Alabama-Birmingham game. "We were behind the entire game and my buddy Brian Dial came in as a reliever in the middle innings. I hit a walk-off homerun in the bottom of the 9th to give Bryan the win." (Billy then brought Bryan home with him that same summer where he pitched for the Saugerties Dutchmen and Billy provided him with many more games of offensive support.) That same year the MTSU Blue Raiders won the Ohio Valley Conference Championship going on to the Mid-West Regional Championship, where they were defeated by Oklahoma State. In 1983, Billy ended his college career playing for Ulster County Community College leading the team with a .372 batting average and being selected to the Conference All-Star Team as an outfielder.

As a 16 years old, Billy was given the opportunity to join the 1980 Saugerties Dutchman in their inaugural return by Dutchman manager and fellow Hall of Famer Dennis Sheehan. He slowly worked his way into the line-up as a third baseman but Dennis also utilized him at shortstop and second base, just so he could get more experience at this level. "I was in the starting line-up for my defensive play at third and for manufacturing ways of getting on base, steals and runs scored," said Billy. "Early on I drew my share of walks, and on occasion had a timely hit with some run production." No one was happier to see Billy on the Dutchmen than Hall of Famer Iggy Maines. Said Iggy, "We really didn't have anyone to play 3rd base one year, so I kind of volunteered for Dennis. I hadn't played there since little league. I did fine in road games but in one home game I had 3 errors in one inning and the Dutchman faithful started to turn on me. Dennis suggested, and I agreed, that Billy should play 3rd and I'd go back to left field."

Playing on average in front of 1500 people was quite an experience for Billy. “The whole town was abuzz and we went on to win the HVRL championship at Cantine Field,” said Billy. Billy went on to play three more summers with the Dutchmen under the direction of Rich Koegel. Said Billy, “I believe that 1984 was probably my best offensive season. That summer we traveled to Penn State to participate in the East Coast Semi-Pro tournament and matched up very well against the other teams. At the plate I went 6 for 11 with a couple of steals and runs scored. Greg Helsmoortel and his family, Roy and Alma, treated us like a professional organization and never hesitated to pull out all the stops. It was first class all the way, with Jack Keeley singing the “Dutchmen Fight Song” from the announcer’s booth on Saturday and Sunday afternoons, signing autographs for the youngsters, local television and radio spots, it was a blast. It was simply a fantastic time, and I was so fortunate to be a part of the excitement it generated on the ball field and in the Hudson Valley. It was a great learning experience for me. I was surrounded by veterans, all who had a wealth of talent and a team that was filled with great all around guys.”

Billy’s basketball career began as it did for many youths in Saugerties, at the Donlon Auditorium. Billy played CYO Basketball under coaches Charlie Cavanaugh and Fritz Beckert. He also played in the SAA Bidy League on the Lakers coached by George Haun. “George appeared to me as a giant when I was a youngster,” said Billy. “A big man, with a deep voice, and a huge heart. When George started to laugh it was contagious amongst us kids. He had the patience of a saint with all of us running around, but we learned the fundamentals of basketball at a very young age. George treated us all like we were his own kids. At this age George stressed, fun, fun, fun and he joined right along with us.” Billy played SAA Junior League Basketball with the 76ers coached by John Nollet and Jay Harris. After winning the league championship, Billy was selected to the All-Star Team that defeated the Kingston All-Stars in a best of 3 match-up.

In 1975-1976 Billy took his talents to the hardwood of SHS. He was the only 7th grader selected to the SJHS Freshman Basketball Team coached by Jerry Malgieri. Billy played Varsity Basketball from his sophomore year on. He was co-captain his senior year and he averaged 16 points per game. He was selected to the Onteora Christmas “All Tournament Team” with a two game total of 38 points. He received an honorable mention to the MHAL team. Billy’s senior year he received the David Myers Memorial Basketball Award. “My brother Stephen and I knew David well when we were kids, and he was popular with everyone who knew him. It was an extremely heart breaking chapter when we lost David that fateful afternoon to the Upper Esopus Creek. Even at a young age, David exhibited the natural talent of an athlete. If he were alive today, I am certain he would be in the Saugerties Hall of Fame,” said Billy.

Billy played Varsity Football as a sophomore, junior and senior. He was co-captain in his junior year, made First Team All DCSL Defensive Safety, and was selected to the First Team All Freeman. He led the defense in tackles with 112 total tackles, 69 solo tackles and 43 assisted tackles, plus 7 interceptions. He was recognized by Coach Hank Smith with the “Outstanding Team Contribution” award. In his senior year he was tri-captain and was selected to the All MHAL First Team and All Freeman First Team as Defensive Safety. He led the defense with 86 total tackles and 5 interceptions. Billy had two punt returns for touchdowns and threw for 2 touchdowns while executing the half-back option. He made the Senior All-Star Team (West Division). Coach Fred Seither also presented him with the “Outstanding Team Contribution” award. In a game against Newburgh in 1979 Billy had a total of 18 tackles before he was forced to leave the game early in the 3rd quarter due to a concussion. Billy states “The truth is, I got an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty due to my delirium. According to Dennis Sheehan and Hank Smith, after I made a defensive tackle, I entered the Newburgh offensive huddle thinking it was my own. Once in Newburgh’s huddle, according to the referee, I yelled something to the effect of “Come on these guys hit like a bunch of girls!” The referee apparently threw his flag down, took me by the arm and escorted me to the waiting hands of Hank Smith, telling him that I needed to sit down and not return. Dennis Sheehan apparently was checking on me from time to time. He was asking “Schaff, you’re not all there are you?” and with a straight face I would state “No, not really.””

Billy recalls, “Dr. Wenger always attended the home football games in the event that a player suffered a serious injury. He would sit on his chair on the Sawyer sidelines with his stoic stature. During one particular play

Bobby Dixon was standing alongside Dr. Wenger, cheering on the home team, like he had done for decades. I had intercepted a Spackenkil pass and proceeded up the sideline. I put my head down and was “mauled” out of bounds by, three Spackenkil players. As I got up I saw Bobby Dixon with his left fist in his mouth and slapping and punching at the Spackenkil tacklers with his right. I looked over at Dr. Wenger sitting in his chair laughing so hard that his face was red. After Bobby got his pound of flesh, he came over to me and kept asking “You OK Billy, you OK boy, that a boy you’re OK, You’re OK, show ‘em you’re the boss?” I had known Bobby and Doc Wenger my whole life when living in Saugerties. Bobby’s actions did not surprise me a bit. What did surprise me was how hard Dr. Wenger was laughing. Until then, I had never even seen him crack a smile before.”

As icing on the cake of Billy Schaffer’s highly successful SHS sports career, he received the distinction of being selected the 1980-81 SHS Male Athlete of the Year as well as being selected winner of the Michael Bond Award in 1981. Billy’s receipt of the Bond award represented the 6th time the award had been given and the second time it had been awarded to someone in the Schaffer family with Billy’s brother and fellow Hall of Famer Stephen receiving the coveted award in 1977.

Billy played sporadically with various softball teams in the SAA. He didn’t like to mix baseball with softball. In the summer of 1977 he played for the Saugerties Fire Department with his buddy, Jay Mower. That same summer the team was asked to play in a charity event sponsored by the Hudson Valley Fireman’s Association in Rosendale. “Mousie Wolven was on the mound and in between innings, would whip pitch the ball behind his back to the catcher. We came in second for the event. I had a homerun and a couple of doubles, while Jay Mower was a vacuum at third base and was like 8 for 10 at the plate. The event raised about \$8,000 for charity,” said Billy. The summer of 1985 Billy played softball with Steve Martin’s team. Marc Becker was the homerun leader for the team and maybe the division that summer. Dude Campbell had his share of homeruns, while Steve Martin and Billy were close in batting average. Cliff Benjamin and Billy were close to the top for stolen bases and runs scored. In September of that same year, Mousie Wolven put together a powerhouse team for the Labor Day tournament. Tom Whitaker, Rich Koegel, John Speirs and Karl Lezette were on that team. We won the tournament and each of us received a small portion of the purse.

Billy played in the 1983 Full Court League in the SAA with Ken Swart’s team. He and brother Stephen finally got a chance to play together on the same team with Billy boasting a 22 point per game average. In the Half Court League, Billy joined the Winters Real Estate dynasty for two years. During those two seasons he played along with his brother Stephen, Iggy Maines, Clark Hackett, and Mousie Wolven along with Big John Winters, who mainly coached. They won the championship both years and Billy averaged 28 points per game. His single game high was 46 points.

Billy attributes much of his inspiration in life to his dad, Boo. “My father instilled in my brother and I loyalty to family and friends along with sportsmanship. Be a humble winner and a gracious loser; Carry yourself well on the playing field; jog on and off the field or court; hustle on every play and give 100%. Only you know the truth on how much effort you put it, whether on the field or in life. This is a reflection of your character and as such, is very important. The game of “life” is far more important than any sporting competition. You can’t lie to yourself. Be a leader by your actions, not words. Be confident in yourself and your decision making. Believe in the Lord when choosing the difficult paths throughout your life. Learn from your mistakes and don’t hesitate to admit when you’re wrong. Avoid physical confrontation but be “fierce” when you’re out of options. Don’t live in the past because there’s no future in it. Be the best husband and father you can be.”

Billy also looks to Coach Hank Smith as a guiding force in his life. “Hank always emphasized the correlations between athletic competition and life. Throughout my life I have recognized these commonalities. Training, preparation and execution – as an athlete, one can play with desire, intensity and hard-nosed determination. Always keeping sportsmanship at the forefront; a rare quality I feel, has been lost over the years in sports. Hank taught me self-discipline, commitment and sacrifice. He was the best at motivating and inspiring young men to their maximum potential. In my opinion, no coach could do it better, past or present. Hank was “old school”.

He taught me that even though I was spent or banged up, I could still perform at a level that contributed to the team, which gives a source of pride to oneself. No matter the situation or the score, never give up. Through Hank's guidance and coaching, he shaped my character as a young man. Individual potential, pride, mental toughness, teamwork, class and respect - no matter the challenge or the adversity we faced on the football field, we as a team, showed up for the fight. Our record did not reflect this, but our opponents knew who they played. Saugerties football teams have always been known as a hard hitting club. Even through loss and frustration we would deliver a physical beating to our opponent; most of the time within the rules of the game."

"Hank showed his love for his players and made sure we thanked our Lord for the opportunities given to us. Hank was instrumental in giving me the opportunity to attend Division 1 Middle Tennessee State University to continue my baseball career as a freshman. It was an opportunity and learning experience for which I will always be grateful. Hank had a positive impact on my life not only as an athlete but as a man. Many of his personal teachings have remained with me throughout my life and in my law enforcement career. I am honored and extremely fortunate to have had Hank Smith as a role model and coach during my young adult life. It provided me with a foundation that I have built on and live by throughout my life."

After graduating from Utica College in 1985, with a degree in Criminal Justice, Billy moved to Clayton, California. He graduated from Oakland's Police Academy in 1986, and went on to work as a Field Training Officer. In 1988 he was transferred to the Special Operations Section (SOS) and assigned to the Special Duty Unit 2 Street Narcotics Task Force. SOS operated in an undercover capacity, purchasing narcotics with controlled currency then signaling the arrest team to swoop in and arrest all suspects associated in the transaction. There were three special duty units each having 8 to 10 officers. From January 1989 to January 1990, these three units combined made over 5000 felony arrests and recovered nearly 100 firearms; a record that will never be matched in the Oakland Police Department. Billy remained in SOS for 12 years.

In January 1990 Billy joined the OPDs (SOS) canine unit and was partnered with his boy "Arno". Together with Arno Billy was responsible for recovering close to 1.4 million dollars worth of narcotics and seized nearly 375 thousand dollars of US currency believed to be the proceeds from narcotics transactions. Arno's best talent was apprehending suspects, and he and Billy were often partnered with the FBI, DEA and ATF. During their six years together they logged more than 500 searches and apprehended more than 300 felony suspects. Arno and Billy also competed against other police K-9 teams on the west coast. The trials involved search, obedience, agility and protection. Arno and Billy won "Top Dog" and "Top Competitor" in 1992. Arno and Billy won a total of 103 trophies together. Billy retired Arno in 1995 so he could enjoy his time at home with Billy and his wife Jennifer, along with pal "Dalton" (Mastiff and Rhodesian Ridgeback). In 1999 they were forced to euthanize Arno due to cancer. Billy and his wife welcomed son "Billy" 3 weeks later. Billy says of Arno, "He was a loyal partner, companion, and a true champion both on the K-9 circuit, and on the streets of Oakland. He will always remain in our hearts."

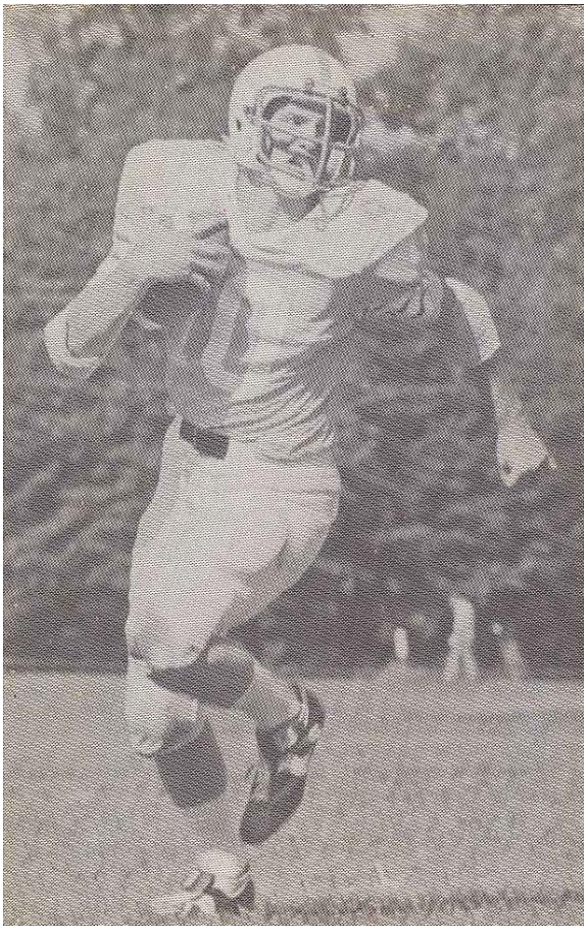
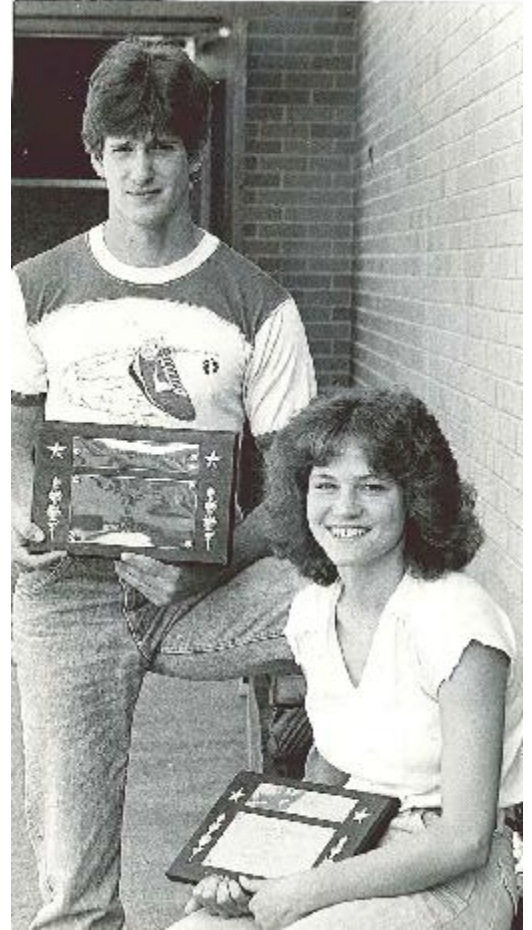
Billy left the Oakland Police Department in 2000 and joined the Bay Area Rapid Transit Police Department. He spent the majority of his time working the subways in downtown San Francisco. Billy retired from the Oakland Police Department in 2013 after 28 years of service in law enforcement. During his career he received 174 commendations, citations, awards and letters of recognition.

In his retirement Billy enjoys competitive fishing. He has participated in several striped bass/sturgeon tournaments in the last 8 years. Along with his son Billy, he has traveled throughout Northern California and the Central Valley, entering as many competitions as possible. They have had some success but Billy states "Nothing in the "real" money yet, but does it matter? It is great fun, competitive, and with beautiful surroundings."

Athlete, family man, role model, and community servant, are all attributes of a well rounded and highly respected individual. The Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame members and the Saugerties community are proud of Billy Schaffer and are honored to acknowledge him for not only his athletic achievements but also to honor him

for the way he has always conducted himself both on and off the field.. A true class act. To one of the great personalities in Saugerties sports history, we congratulate and welcome home William “Billy” Schaffer as a 2014 inductee into the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame.

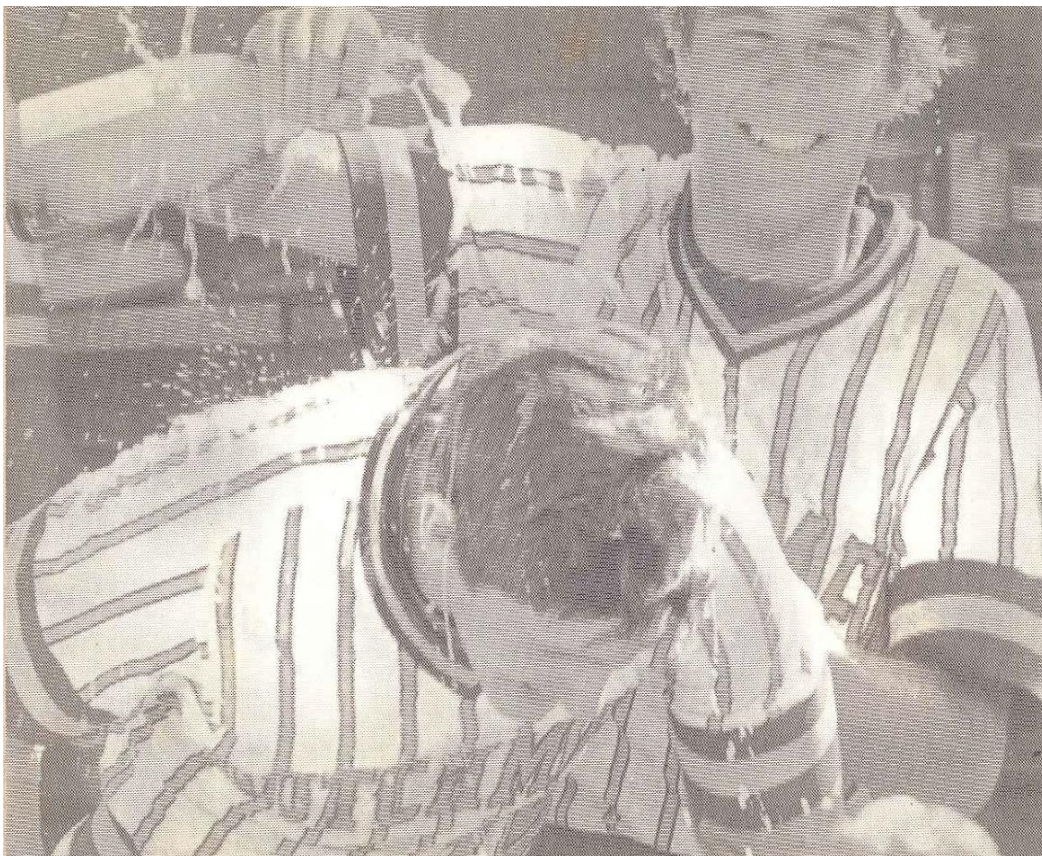
**Billy Schaffer and Cathy Miron; 1980-81 Saugerties High School
Male and Female Athletes of the year.**



**Billy in action with Sawyer Football Team
In 1980.**



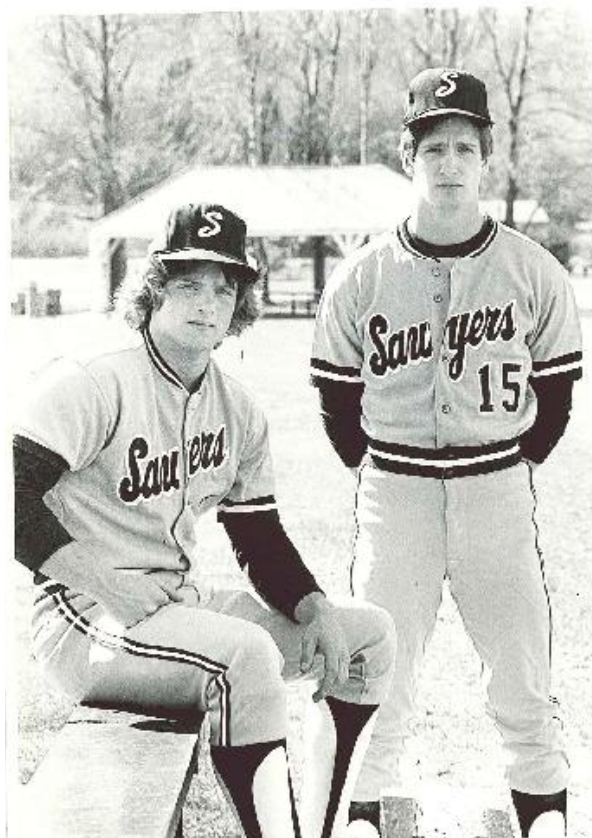
Billy with wife Jennifer and son Billy Jr.



Fellow Hall of Famer Jay Harris douses Billy with a non-alcoholic beverage after 1980 Dutchman Championship win.



Billy with "Arno", his K-9 partner and loyal companion, at the Petaluma, California K-9 Trials in July 1993, winners of the overall competition.



1981 Sawyer Baseball co-captains: Billy (right) and John Parker. Team captured MHAL and Section 9 Class B championships.