

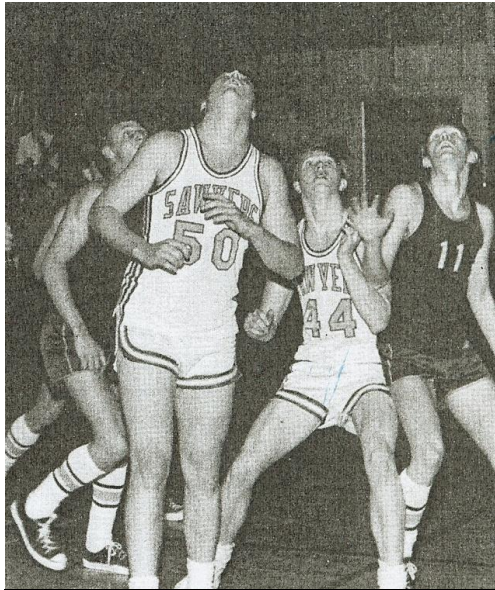
2012 Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame



Holley Carnright

Over the 49 years of existence of the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame, many great athletes, coaches, sponsors, volunteers, and administrators have been honored for their achievements in sports, not only in Saugerties, but on the national and international levels as well. Any organization approaching its 50 year anniversary certainly becomes an integral part of a community's identity. Inclusion is truly cherished by all who become members, especially in light of the fact that entry is gained by a vote of the members. In the case of one of our Class of 2012 inductees, Holley Carnright, his election came as somewhat of a pleasant surprise, but no one has ever been happier to get the call or more deserving of the honor. As for the aforementioned criteria, Holley would probably be the first to tell you that he wasn't the greatest athlete of his era. But taking into consideration all he has done in sports and adding this to his accomplishments as an athlete, it becomes crystal clear that this is a man who has earned his place in the Hall of Fame alongside many family members, including his late dad, Robert, late uncle John II, and of course, 2011 inductee and cousin, John III (Butch).

Holley Carnright was born on February 2, 1952, in Saugerties, to Robert and Virginia Carnright. Growing up in such an athletic family it was only natural that Holley's introduction to sports came at an early age. He played Bidy League basketball and Little League baseball, but the sport that piqued his interest during these years was football. Holley's dad would take him up to the high school to watch Varsity football practices which featured some of his many inspirations in sports. There were the Schirmer boys, Chuck and Bill, and Al Hrdlicka, and the practices where Holley watched and admired the tough, intense sessions. Holley knew that one day he would be one of the guys in these practices playing for the Sawyers and legendary coach Fred Seither.



Holley, #44, works for position as John Carnright (#50) eyes up rebound

When Holley entered 7th grade, he began a long six-year career as a three-sport star, playing football, basketball, and his new sport, track. He played at the 7th and 8th grade levels, continuing his march through freshman, J.V., and all the way to the Varsity in all three sports. In fact, in his junior year of 1969 and senior year of 1970, Holley was chosen as an All-DCSL Honorable Mention quarterback, playing alongside Hall of Famers Roger Praetorius and cousin Butch. Roger became a true friend from the beginning when Holley came up to the Varsity team. He took Holley under his wing, showing him that he had become part of a focused, single-minded team, always advising Holley that "this is what we need to do." Holley knew that this was a team that would be hard to beat because of this mindset. It also didn't hurt to be able to hand off to Roger and throw to guys like Butch and Mark Ishkanian.

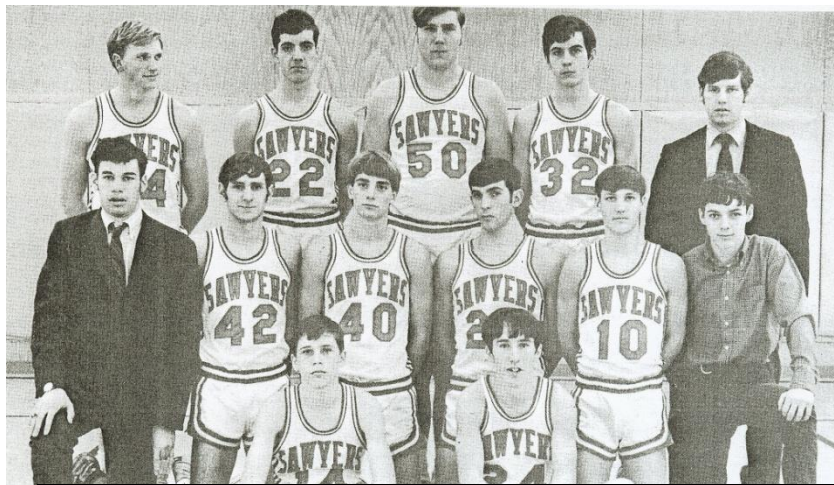
Holley became Coach Seither's coach on the field

and in his senior season accomplished something very few Sawyer quarterbacks were allowed to do...he called his own plays, earning the trust of his coaches and teammates. The team went 6-1-1 in 1969 and struggled early in 1970 only to jell late in the season, winning the last three games by a combined 94-20. In his junior and senior seasons, Holley amassed 1,300 yards passing, with over 700 coming in his senior year. This was in large part due to Roger Praetorius' graduation, which led to the Sawyers opening the passing attack up a bit more. In basketball he became a reliable, tenacious, heady guard for Coach Bud Smith, and in track, again rose to the occasion for Coach Smith's team. Holley set a school record in the 110 High Hurdles of 15.6 seconds, a record which has stood for the past 42 years! His selfless, team-first attitude helped lead his teams to success in all the sports he played.

Holley's hard-nosed playing style was not only important to his athletic career, but provided a seamless transition to his college and adult life, serving him well in his chosen profession of law as an attorney for many years, culminating in his present position as a two-term Ulster County District Attorney. Holley graduated in 1970, having enjoyed a stellar career in high school sports. Then it was on to Union College, where he played freshman basketball and ran for the freshman track team. He then turned his full attention to his studies, where he earned his J.D. Law degree from Suffolk University Law School. He joined his dad's law firm in Saugerties, practicing for many years until his election as District Attorney. In 1981 came a life-changing experience when, on October 10, he married Denise Doudreville in Princeton, Massachusetts. The union has been blessed with two daughters, Kimberly Morgan Mathesen and Cassie Carnright, and two grandchildren, Benjamin and Zoe Mathesen. While practicing law with his dad, his daughters were growing up and becoming athletes themselves, leading Holley to the next phase of his athletic career, that of coaching, sponsoring, volunteering, and officiating. He volunteered as a referee in basketball and soccer for AYSO, and as an umpire for Saugerties Little League Softball. He coached his two girls all through their involvement in youth sports, including four years of softball and 13 years of AYSO soccer. He has sponsored AYSO for 15 years running, and sponsors the Kingston Recreation Summer Sizzle youth basketball league. His coaching career continued on to the high school level, where he was head girls modified soccer and basketball coach,

followed by three years of girls J.V. basketball and a stint as an assistant for the girls Varsity basketball team.

Holley says about his girls, "To be able to coach and watch my daughters grow as athletes and young women definitely brought our whole family so much closer together. Coaching also gave me a chance to give back to the community all the support it gave me growing up and was a great way to stay involved with my daughters as they progressed in their careers. The main drawback to my present position is that there isn't time for me to continue coaching, which was about as rewarding as anything I've done." About his girls, Holley says his fondest memories are these, "Cassie came home one day and said that a coach wanted to start a girls lacrosse program. The coach asked Cassie to go before the School Board and explain why there should be a team. Cassie wrote a speech with her reasons and presented it to the Board so convincingly that they agreed, and it led to the start of the girls lacrosse program at SHS. Kim went to Australia on an exchange program, and when she returned, she told me she wasn't sure she wanted to continue playing soccer, but didn't want to disappoint me. She then expressed interest in playing tennis, and became a very successful player in doubles, and was happy doing it."

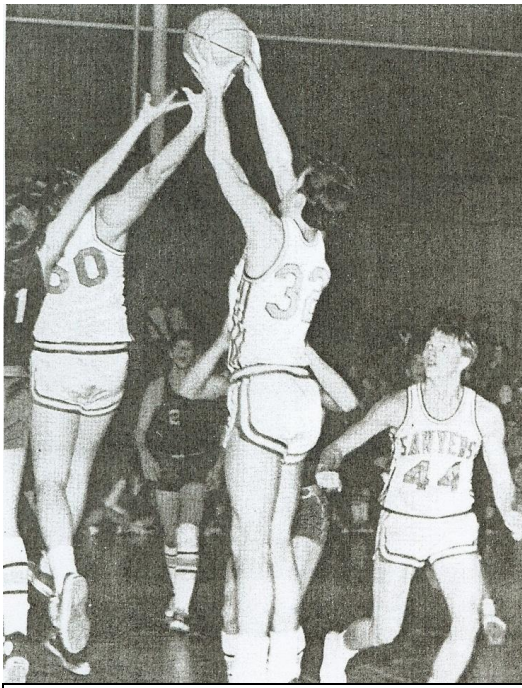


Holley, (Top Row and as far left as you'll ever see him) with 1969-70 Sawyer teammates including Hall of Famers Jerry Malgieri #10, Rich Koegel #32, John Carnright #50 and Dennis Sheehan (middle row far right).

Holley's own athletic career continued in the local adult leagues, particularly in basketball, where he played SAA Half-Court and in the prestigious full court Premier League. He has had many memorable moments throughout his sports career. He lists as his biggest sports thrills setting the 110 High Hurdles record, scoring 22 points as a 5'10" center on the J.V. basketball team against Lourdes and in that same season throwing

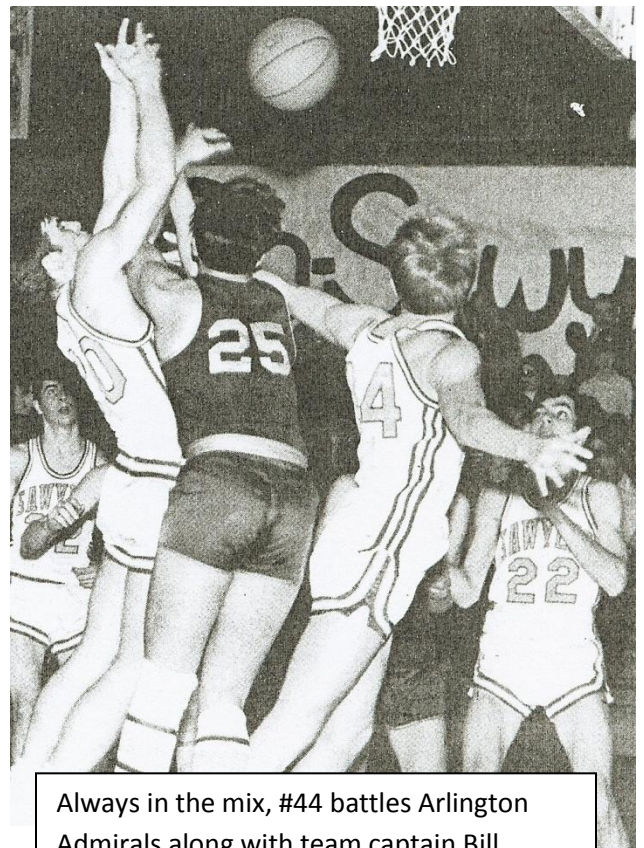
up a "prayer of a shot" to beat Beacon High School, a team which Saugerties hadn't beaten in many years. Adding to his memorable moments Holley recalls hitting Mark Ishkanian on a long pass to beat Arlington in 1969 with the Sawyers as underdogs and not expected to challenge the mighty Admirals. Holley says his most memorable moments in sports include all the exciting games he quarterbacked, beating Arlington his junior year, losing by 2 points to them in his senior year, as well as coaching his daughters. Holley's number one inspiration in sports was his Dad, who took him to practices and games and with whom he shared a very close relationship. Others include Roger Praetorius, Bill and Chuck Schirmer, and Al Hrdlicka, Hall of Famers all, who became friends as well as people Holley looked up to.

Holley's life in sports has been one of personal fulfillment and relationships enhanced by his experiences. He wishes to thank his parents, Virginia and Bob, his wife, Denise, his daughters, Kim and Cassie, all his teammates and coaches over the years, and, finally, the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame Club for this honor. He says "I'm a very



The ever hustling Holley Carnright coming to the assistance of John Carnright and Rich Koegel.

lucky guy and I know it for sure.” An athlete, coach, sponsor, volunteer, and official throughout his career, Holley surely made full use of his talents, tenacity, and winning personality wherever the competition took him. These qualities no doubt translated to his success in his family life, as well as his law career, leading him to achieving the highest law office in Ulster County. The court of law is Holley's playing field these days, and he has proven himself worthy of this challenge as our District Attorney as he has all his life in the sports community. For these reasons the Saugerties Hall of Fame is very lucky indeed to add a stellar athlete and even better person to the ranks of those who have written our sports history. Congratulations Holley, you have made your family and community proud and continue to do so today.



Always in the mix, #44 battles Arlington Admirals along with team captain Bill Benham (#20), while #22 Dave Smith and #32 Rich Koegel look on.