

2011 Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame



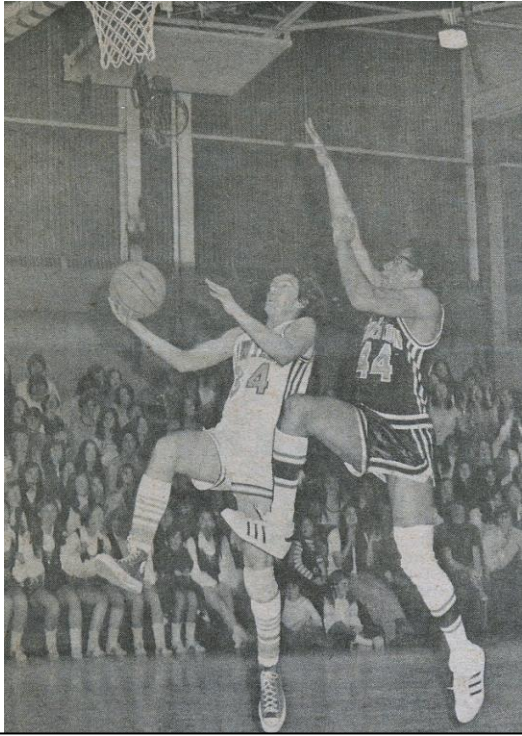
Clark J. Hackett

A sport is defined as “a physical activity engaged in for pleasure”. Most would make the association of an athletic team or skill sport, such as baseball, football, golf, etc., but often overlooked are the outdoor or natural sports, such as hunting and fishing. Clark Hackett had the unique distinction of excelling in both of these areas, and in acknowledgement of Clark’s achievements in sports, we proudly welcome him as a 2011 inductee into the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame.

Born December 4, 1955 at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland, Clark Hackett was the oldest of three sons and two daughters born to Jen and Vincent Hackett, a 1996 fellow Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame inductee. Upon moving to Saugerties, Clark grew up on Ulster Avenue, with brothers Arnie and Jim, and sisters Melissa (Ferrara) and Marie (Brandt). Living in the village of Saugerties provided close proximity to schools, and recreational venues such as the Donlon Auditorium and Cantine Field, not to mention the natural and wildlife resources of nearby fields, mountains, creeks, and the Hudson River. This proved to be an environment that excited and attracted Clark starting at an early age.

Like most active and athletic youths, Clark played in the Saugerties Little League from 1964 through 1967 for the Phillies. As a catcher, he would be later joined by his brother Arnie as shortstop, and 2009 Hall of Fame inductee Tom Hallion who played third base. Thereafter, Clark moved on to the Saugerties Babe Ruth League, playing 3 years for the Masons. As a Mason, an impressive highlight was Clark’s late-inning home run to win a game against the Saugerties Fire Department. In 1970 the Masons, managed by Cliff Snyder, won the Saugerties Babe Ruth League title, with Clark, brother Arnie, as well as fellow 2011 Hall of Famer Dave Fuller on the team .

Away from the baseball diamond, Clark evolved into a stellar performer as well on the basketball court. He began with the St. Mary's CYO basketball teams run by his father Vince, introducing Clark to the sport he



would continue to play and love for his lifetime. Clark Hackett became a household name on the Donlon hardwood, playing for many years in the SAA Premier full court league for Keeley's Corner and in the SAA Half-Court League for the Saugerties Fire Department. As a hoopster, Clark was best known as a tremendous team player. While able to score, Clark drew more satisfaction from a rebound or assist, or blocking out an opponent so his team could get to a rebound. As a member of the Fire Department-sponsored team, Clark became an instant hero to Saugerties sport scene legend Bobby Dixon (himself inducted in the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame in 1990). In one game, Clark was doing his usual hard work under the basket, when an opponent became frustrated, leading to a tense confrontation. Bobby decided that Clark needed some help and bounded on the court to put the opponent in his place. Jack Keeley, who was sitting court-side as the game's scorekeeper, let out one of the greatest belly laughs of all time.

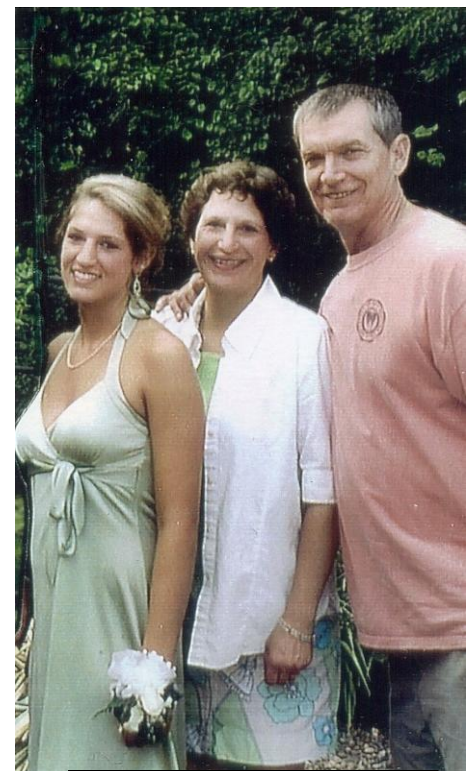
1973 Saugerties vs. Kingston. Clark drives against Kingston's Chuck Jackson.

On the half-court side, Clark was part of a team appropriately named "The Hacketts", consisting of the 3 Hackett brothers (all who excelled at basketball), as well as neighbor and fellow 2011 Hall of Fame inductee Joe "Iggy" Maines. Rounding out the Hacketts roster were 2010 Hall of Famer Steve Schaffer, and 2008 Hall of Fame inductee, the late Scott Emery, forming one of the best all time teams

in the Donlon half court league history. The SAA Half-Court League and its games were localized and fun and Clark greatly cherished the memories of playing with this team for many years, as he got to play with his buddies while enjoying the satisfaction of clearing out the middle for his brothers. The core of The Hacketts half-court team also formed the nucleus of the Premier League Keeley's Corner team, which again maintained a high level of success on the hardwood, winning two championships between 1983 and 1985. The same group also played on Winters Real Estate's teams from 1982-1985, coached by John Winters. Fellow teammate Steve Schaeffer recalls: "I don't think there is anyone I've played more basketball with than Clark Hackett, both half court and full". "We won championships each year and according to John Winters, our team never lost a game, however I seem to remember maybe losing one."

Clark's basketball prowess was mirrored on the interscholastic court. First as a member of the Saugerties High JV squad in his freshman & sophomore years, then with the varsity as a junior & senior. In his sophomore season of 1971-1972, the SHS basketball squads had an exceptional year as Clark's JV team finished with a 9-9 record while in that same season the Varsity team made the sectionals. As a varsity team member in '72 & '73, Dave Fuller and Scott Emery were also Clark's teammates. Clark played with the same intensity and selflessness while with the Sawyer Varsity as he did in the local leagues, and was highly respected as a "blue collar work horse" and "true team player". Clark's basketball style was physical although with a finesse. Shooting the ball and scoring was always secondary on Clark's mind and he was a player that knew his role, cherished it, and mastered it. His value to the teams he played for was high because of this and when looking at the root of a team's success, Clark Hackett was always there.

After graduating high school in 1974, Clark Hackett attended SUNY Brockport, earning a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education in 1979.



l-r; Daughter Alissa, wife Alice, and Clark

In 1983, he began working at IBM, initially in Kingston and later Poughkeepsie where he had a long career starting in computer operations and then moving into computer programming

In 1986, Clark and his wife Alice (Schell) were married and shortly after became the proud parents of daughter Alissa. Alissa currently attends SUNY Cortland and will graduate this year with a teaching certification in Special Education.



1984 A-Division Softball Champs Greco Motors. Clark, front row far left.

Upon returning to Saugerties, Hall of Famer Joe Benjamin, noting Clark's passion and experience in basketball, encouraged Clark to become a certified basketball official. Taking Clark under his wing, Joe shared his vast knowledge and officiating experience in grooming

Clark as a solid and respected high school basketball official. Clark worked hard on his way up as an official, and under Joe's watchful eye, developed a keen sense of control working games throughout Ulster and Greene County.

Following high school and college, Clark's athletic adventures led him to the fields of adult softball leagues. As a pitcher, and outfielder, as well as an excellent hitter, Clark Hackett played for many successful and highly competitive teams. Initially with Lezette Express and later with Weber Construction, Clark had many notable highlights, including some memorable home runs. With Weber Construction, one of his fondest memories was defeating Riozzi's in breaking their 10 game winning streak. Clark also pitched for the First National Bank of Rhinebeck team in the A division. One fond memory was as a pitcher when Clark was locked in a tight game, where runs were hard to come by. Down 4-2, Clark kept his team close in a game where they were heavy underdogs. Late in the game it took the bats of fellow Hall of Famers Rich Koegel (2009) & John Carnright (2011), along with other softball league standouts Randy Nilsen, John Stote, and John Jorgenson to key a rally for an 11-5 win.

The majority of Clark's SAA softball career was spent with the Greco Brothers Amusements team, sharing a strong passion for softball with team manager and sponsor John Greco. Playing in the upper divisions of the SAA's A or B divisions, Clark's teams were consistently in contention for league playoffs and championships, against such heralded rival opponents as Glasco Athletic Club, Tom's Sports Shop, Sawyer Motors, and Cementon Sportsman's Club. In 1984, Clark led Greco's to the A-division title, tossing a 4-hitter and a 5-hitter back-to-back, after many years finishing as a runner-up to Glasco AC's. In doing so, he was always a big bat in the middle of the lineup, and often produced big hits and RBIs in key spots. Most of all, outside of his own obvious accomplishments found in the box scores, he was the ever consummate teammate, helping them improve a part of their game or imparting some knowledge or tip, as well as being one of the hardest workers and hustlers on the diamond. One particular moment that stands out was a situation where Greco's was in a tight game and Clark hit a hard 'comebacker' to the pitcher, which appeared to be a routine out. Clark, hustling all the way, caused the pitcher to rush the throw and with Clark safe on first, the inning was prolonged. Later in the same inning, Sal Misasi Jr. capped a big rally with a 3-run homerun, which would have never occurred if not for Clark's hustle.

In addition to the SAA, Clark also played on teams in the Red Hook Northern Dutchess Softball League, initially with Greco Brothers when they played in the league, and later with other Dutchess County teams. While at IBM, Clark also played in both the IBM Recreational basketball and softball leagues. Much as he did in Saugerties in the SAA basketball and softball leagues, Clark's involvement in the IBM leagues grew. In addition to the IBM leagues, Clark also participated in the Kingston "Over 30" basketball leagues and his

involvement with IBM and Over 30 leagues resulted in numerous championships over the years with Clark at the helm organizing and managing most of those highly successful teams.

After his own softball career had wound down, Clark remained involved with the game as a coach in the Town Of Ulster Little League Girls Softball League coaching his daughter Alissa's teams from 2002 to 2005. In working with the girls, Clark instructed the girls on many different aspects of the game, such as base stealing strategies, and getting the girls to be competitive, working hard, and having respect for the game. Clark's wife Alice recalls; "He brought a lot of laughter to the practices and games, bringing out the best they had. But, what I'll remember about Clark forever is how much of a natural teacher he was - always finding a way to work with his teams to bring out their talents, help them learn from mistakes using humor in every situation, and above all how much happiness he got from their successes. I don't think he was ever into coaching for his own gain or popularity. Also, I saw how he learned to adjust his competitive streak when he worked with the girls. His own natural competitiveness to win was toned down to a level appropriate for the girls, but ramped up when with the guys." In doing so, one of the greatest thrills Clark Hackett enjoyed was his coaching the Ulster Girls Senior League All Stars in winning the District 16 championship in 2004.

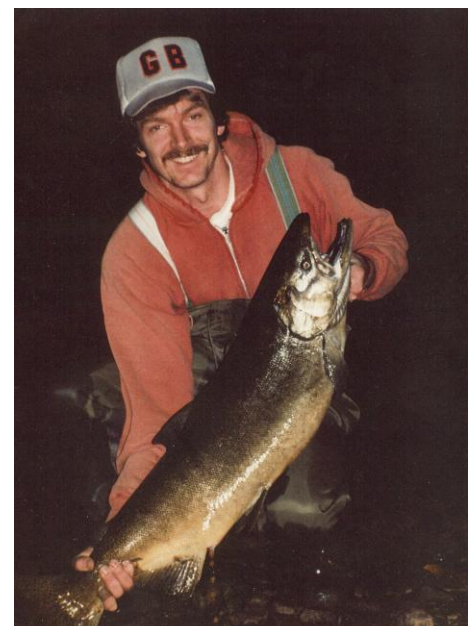


Clark and daughter Alissa-2004 Ulster Senior League Girls All Stars

One of the things most people who have played basketball or softball with Clark don't know is the fact that he was just as avid and passionate in the great outdoors, as a hunter and fisherman. As a long-time NRA and Vly Sportsmen Club member, Clark was one of the best hunter/fishermen in the area, with an uncanny ability to find the best streams and hunting spots and then putting them to use. Recalls his father Vince "I got him started trout fishing when he was just a little tyke and I can remember my wife yelling at me for taking him to places where he got into poison ivy. He wasn't too old, maybe 9 or 10 when I used to take him squirrel hunting. When it came to fishing, Clark was unbelievable...he found trout streams in areas no one believed could have trout in them. One such stream was up in Brockport, where he went to college. In that area there were a number of famous streams, with runs of salmon and brown trout off Lake Ontario. Clark and his college buddies caught a couple salmon, and brought them back to their room and put them in the tub to the dismay of their roommates. Later that year I went up to see for myself. Clark, (brother) Arnie, and myself made the trek

up to that stream for a number of years, even after Clark graduated. We normally fished at night, sat on the bank with a couple of cases of beer, and when the salmon moved out of the holding holes and up the streams, we'd hear them going up the rapids and chase after them. Back then you could snare the fish, which proved interesting."

To Clark, just as with other sports, he enjoyed seeing others have success. Vince Hackett continues: "I was never into deer hunting, but I used to go with Clark, mostly as company rather than hunting myself. Clark found his own hunting spots but for a number of years he was not able to get the big racks. He solved that problem by checking out big farms in Dutchess County and asking permission to hunt. He came across one hunting spot by exchanging his labor for the privilege to hunt there. He took me along as a pusher and I pushed out his first big rack, which I helped him clean and ended up with a tick bite. Clark took many more like it with the bow, shotgun, and more recently black powder. My grandson was 13 when he took him on his first deer hunt, with me in tow. "I want you and Mike to stand there" as Clark pointed out to me. Mike and I proceeded to the spot and Clark disappeared in another direction. I don't know how long we waited, but eventually 6 or 7 deer came down a gully, and Mike got the lead deer. Clark heard the shot and came over to

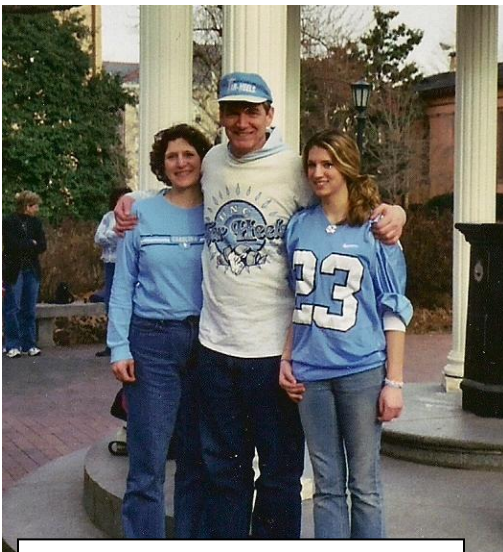


Clark with one of his many big catches

the spot and congratulated Mike. This was Clark getting enjoyment from my grandson's good fortune. That's the way Clark was".

Adding to Clark's sportsman adventures was a memorable caribou hunt, which he and brother Arnie embarked on which took them deep into northern Canada on the fringe of Hudson Bay. Spending 5-7 days camping in tents in weather ranging from 10 degrees at night to 30 degrees during the day, 100 miles short of the Arctic circle, they returned home having shot 4 caribou, all with antlers with a 42-inch spread. However due to severe weather, they had to fly out earlier than expected. At the time, they were told they would have to leave their prized racks behind and only after some choice words and convincing by the Hackett brothers, the pilot agreed to meet their demands and everything made the trip home.

It is clear that Clark Hackett's main inspiration came from his parents, Jen and Vince Hackett, as well as his family and his friends. One can learn much from the ethics that Clark applied to his life as a competitor and sportsman. Clark's personal accomplishments in sports were never of importance to him and ironically his induction into the 2011 Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame represents a rare opportunity to recognize Clark on a personal level. Clark Hackett was unique. While most compete with personal success in mind, Clark Hackett competed with only his team and the success of others in mind. Playing the game hard, doing what it took to help the team, leading and being there for his teammates was the essence of Clark Hackett. All of his team and outdoor sport accomplishments were done with the joy of knowing he was part of a team's success whether in the woods on a hunt or on the courts or softball diamonds with his family and close friends. To Clark Hackett, his success in sports could only be enjoyed and measured if the team succeeded.



Clark, Alice, and Alissa in Clark's beloved Tar Heels blue

With his untimely passing in 2009, unfortunately Clark is no longer with us to join us in celebrating his lifelong sports accomplishments. Following his father Vince into the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame is something that Clark would have been very proud of, although knowing Clark, he would have probably thrown out the names of teammates who he would have felt were more deserving. That is who Clark Hackett was. To Clark, it was never about him, it was about his teammates and the joy of achieving the common goal.

We honor and congratulate Clark J. Hackett posthumously in 2011 as he joins his father Vince and many friends and teammates as he is enshrined in Saugerties sports history. He truly represents the spirit in earning the honor and privilege of being inducted into the Saugerties Sports Hall of Fame. Clark you are missed... but your memory lives on.