

SAINT MARY HIGH SCHOOL

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME

2012 INDUCTEES



Tom Kelly – 1941

Tom Kelly was a two-sport athlete who distinguished himself in both football and basketball in the early 1940s. As a powerful defensive end, Tom excelled at blocking punts and forcing fumbles. From his offensive end post, Tom was a deep pass threat and he finished sixth in Bergen County in scoring. Tom's coach in 1941 was football luminary, Jack Wallace, who had previously been head coach at Rutgers University. Our inductee and his twin brother, St Mary's Hall of Famer, Hugh Kelly, were vital members of the 1941 resurgent team that put St Mary's football "back on the map." Coach Wallace stated that Tom Kelly was the "best end he had ever seen in high school football." In recognition of his outstanding performance during the 1941 football season, Tom was elected to All-County teams by the Sunday Observer and the Herald News.

As a basketball player, Tom was a ball-hawking, playmaking guard who was elected to the Bergen County All-Stars coached by legendary NFL coach, Vince Lombardi. Tom was elected captain of the 1942 St. Mary's Basketball team, but his high school career was cut short when he enlisted in the U.S. Navy soon after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941. Our inductee was awarded a number of medals for his service in World War II, most notably in recognition of his distinguished service in the Allied landing on June 6, 1944 at Normandy Beach in France, one of the most famous battles of World War II. After his service in the war, Tom began a lifelong career in law enforcement, including service as a Rutherford police officer, and as a member of JFK Associates, Hugh Kelly Associates, and the New Jersey Casino Commission. Tom resided in Williamstown, New Jersey with his wife, Mary, and his two sons, Tom and Kevin before his passing.



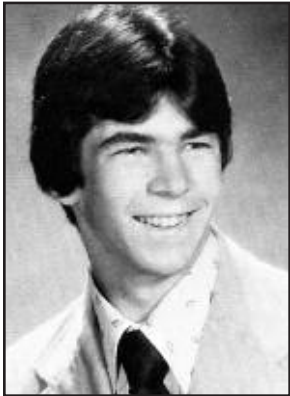
Steve Caputo – 1968

Inductee Steve Caputo stands tall in the long history of great St. Mary's runners dating back to 1935. Steve was an outstanding sprinter in the 100 and 220 yard dashes and a phenomenal long jumper, an event that he did not take up until his senior year. Our inductee was a multi-year letter winner in track and set the school record of 22.3 seconds for the 220 yard dash in his junior year. At the N.J. State Championship meet following his junior season, Steve placed fifth in the 100 yard dash in the Parochial B Division. In his senior track season, Steve was undefeated in his three events and set school records for eleven consecutive "triple wins" and most points with 205. During the post-season events in 1968, Steve placed first in both the 100 and 220 yard dashes at both the Catholic Federation B Division Meet and the Bergen County Track and Field Championship Group 1 Meet. At the N.J. State Championship Meet, our inductee won

two second place silver medals in the 100 and 220 yard dashes in the Parochial B Division. As a senior, Steve was co-captain and voted Most Valuable Player for his leadership and performance.

Our inductee was also a productive member of the great 8-1 football squad of 1967. He returned punts and kickoffs and was a quick, elusive tailback in the St. Mary's Power I offense. Steve received three varsity letters during his football career at St. Mary's.

After high school, Steve attended Marquette University and was a stellar performer on the Marquette University track squad. Steve received three varsity letters and received the Conrad Jennings Outstanding Performance Award in both his junior and senior years. Steve graduated from Marquette in 1972 with a BS degree with double majors in Economics and Business Administration. After graduation, Steve embarked on a 39-year career in New York City in the advertising industry, and recently retired as Vice-President of Advertising for Chanel, Inc. Steve has been married to his wife, Patricia, for twenty three years and they have a daughter, Jennifer, a college junior, and a son Scott, a high school senior. Steve stays busy now with golf, skiing and tennis.



Leo Connolly – 1977

Leo Connolly was a member of the Gaels' back-to-back State Championship baseball teams of 1976 and 1977. As a junior in 1976, Leo hit .348 and was among the team leaders in slugging, on-base percentage and fielding percentage. A slick-fielding 3rd baseman, Leo was known for his nimble, backhand, diving stops on balls down the line and his quick snagging of grounders headed for the shortstop hole. As a senior, Leo hit .372 with an on-base percentage of .589 and was among the team leaders in hits and runs batted in. Leo was named to the All-State Parochial, Third Team in the Star Ledger, to the All-League, Second Team, and All-County, Honorable Mention in the Record for his senior campaign.

In football, Leo was a member of St. Mary's undefeated and untied 10-0-0 State Championship Team of 1976. His versatility was an integral part of the team's success.

Leo started on both offense and defense, and was the team's punter and holder for placekicks. On offense, Leo was an elusive split end who caught 5 touchdown passes and was a skillful, tenacious downfield blocker. Our inductee's crushing blocks on the corner propelled the Gaels Wishbone attack to 3,000 yards rushing for the 1976 season. On defense, Leo started at cornerback and led a secondary that supported the front seven in holding opponents to only 5.2 points per game. Leo was named to the All-State Parochial, Third Team at the End position by the Star Ledger, to the All-League, First Team and to All-County, Honorable Mention in the Record. Also a fine punter, Leo averaged over 33 yards a punt as a senior, his longest a 63 yarder.

After graduation, Leo attended Franklin & Marshall College, earning a degree in Sociology. In 1995 Leo and his family moved to Vermont to live in the mountains and to enjoy his great passion for skiing. Truly a man for all seasons, Leo has run the New York City Marathon in 3:45, and has competed in many other half marathons and triathlons. He remains an avid skier and golfer, and is an active member of the Rotary Club and several local boards.

Leo currently resides in Randolph, VT with his wife Sheila, and children, Kacy, Courtney, Liam, and stepchildren, Ember and Mariah.



Benn O'Hara – 1981 – Contributor

Since its inception, the St. Mary's Hall of Fame has inducted special individuals who, by their tireless and selfless work and devotion to St. Mary's athletics, richly deserve recognition as Contributors. Such unforgettable Hall of Fame Contributors include George Vuyosevich, Hugh Kelly, Jack Jones, Vince Mariano, Angelo Capodanno, Tom Ferguson, Dr. Michael R. Loreti and many more. This year, another worthy Contributor, Benn O'Hara, follows in their footsteps to be recognized for his years of devotion to St. Mary's.

Benn O'Hara began his career with St. Mary's Catholic Youth Organization (CYO) in 1987 as an assistant coach. He moved up to head coach of the 6th grade team in 1990 and was named CYO Director in 1995.

When Benn took over the program there were only two levels of basketball, 6th grade boys and 8th grade boys. Through initiatives introduced by Benn in 1997, the first 8th grade girls' team was added to the program, and two years later, a 6th grade girls' team was formed. In 2010, Benn also initiated 3rd and 4th grade boys' teams.

Currently, St. Mary's CYO has three different levels for both boys and girls, and averages approximately 75 student-athletes in the program. Four of the six teams compete in two different leagues, and play between 40 to 50 regular season games a year, followed by tournament play. This adds up to a total of about 200 to 250 games played each year within the program. Benn has served as head coach at every level except 6th grade girls. He has won multiple league titles at each level, and his peers estimate that his winning percentage is over .600, although Benn is too selfless to keep track of wins and losses.

Benn's CYO tutelage has had a direct impact on the success of St. Mary High School basketball programs. Over the last 25 years Benn has instilled his basketball knowledge and life lessons in a generation of St. Mary student-athletes.

During his schoolboy years at St. Mary's, our inductee played football and basketball at a very high level, most notably as a valued member of the undefeated 1980 State Championship Football team. As a three-year starter at the tackle position, Benn cleared the way for a 1,000 yard rusher in each of his varsity seasons. He was named to the All-League, First Team and the All-County, Honorable Mention list after both his junior and senior seasons.

Benn resides in Rutherford and works for the Borough's Department of Public Works.



Trinette Gooding-Carruthers, Ph.D. – 2000

Trinette Gooding Carruthers was a strong, powerful athlete who excelled in basketball, cross-country and track and field at St. Mary's. Our inductee was a natural leader and embodied the team concept in sports. On the basketball court, Trinette was a three year varsity player and captain during her senior year. As a power forward, Trinette was a force to be reckoned with inside the paint, as she dominated the boards and had an explosive drive to the basket. Her endless dedication and tremendous work ethic inspired all of her teammates. Trinette's basketball prowess earned her well-deserved spots on the BCSL National All-League team for three years, the All-County team for two years, the Bergen-Passaic County Girls All Star Basketball Classic, and the New Jersey North-South Girls All Star Basketball Classic. During her final two seasons as a Lady Gael, Trinette averaged 11.5 points per game and led the team in rebounds with 14 per game.

Our inductee was also an outstanding varsity performer for four years on the cross country team and for three years in Track and Field. As a senior, Trinette won the NJSIAA Girls Parochial "B" State Championship in the shot put with an astounding heave of 35'07.00. For good measure, Trinette played softball and participated as a cheerleader in her freshman year, was the 1999 Homecoming Queen and graduated with a 3.4 GPA.

Following graduation from St. Mary's, Trinette received a four year Division I Athletic Scholarship for basketball to Iona College, where she was named captain and Most Improved Player during her senior season. In the classroom, our inductee was named to the Dean's List for four years and to the New York Lottery Academic Honor Roll for two years. Trinette graduated cum laude in 2004 from Iona with a 3.69 GPA and a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. She went on to C.U.N.Y. Hunter College where she graduated magna cum laude with a 3.8 GPA and received her Masters of Science Degree in Special Education for Students with Disabilities. In 2011 Trinette received her Doctorate degree in K-12 Educational Leadership from Jones International University.

Trinette is currently a dedicated Special Education Teacher for the NYC Department of Education where she has worked since 2005.



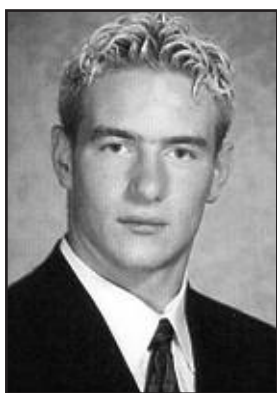
Jeff Cruise – 2002

Jeff Cruise was a skillful and talented performer in football and baseball for the Gaels. On the football field, Jeff is remembered for his speed and quickness at the running back position and for being a huge contributor to three league championships, two state semi-final appearances, and one state final game. As a junior, Jeff rushed for 1,100 yards and scored seventeen touchdowns, finishing in the top 10 in Bergen County. In a memorable performance against league rival North Arlington, Jeff scored five touchdowns and rushed for 230 yards. His stellar performance as a junior earned him a well-deserved spot on the 1st team All-League team. During Jeff's senior season, he rushed for 1,400 yards, scoring twenty touchdowns which ranked 5th in Bergen County. Our inductee had two especially memorable games recording four touchdowns against both Weehawken and Secaucus, where he also rushed for 260 yards.

Jeff's exploits on the football field during his senior season earned him 1st team All-League, 2nd team All-County, and 2nd team All-Parochial honors.

On the baseball diamond, Jeff helped his team win two Parochial "B" North State Sectional Championships. He recorded a 5-0 pitching record as a junior, receiving 2nd team All-League honors. During his final season as a Gael, Jeff recorded a remarkable batting average of .448, while slugging three home runs, knocking in twenty runs, and working twenty bases on balls. Once again Jeff's tremendous efforts earned him 1st team All-League honors.

Upon graduating from St. Mary's, Jeff went to college at East Stroudsburg University where he graduated in 2006. He continued his education at Montclair State University, where he completed his MBA. Jeff currently works for Prudential Financial.



A.J. Dolan – 2002

A.J. Dolan is the first wrestler in the school's history to be inducted into the St. Mary's Hall of Fame. In the early 2000's St. Mary's wrestling program began to attract County-wide attention, and A.J. Dolan was a catalyst in the wrestling program's success. A four-year starter and three-year captain, A.J. tallied a career match record of 91 wins and 19 losses. During a time when the state produced some of its best wrestlers, A.J. dominated the mat in the sport's toughest weight classes.

During his freshman year, A.J. immediately made a name for himself, wrestling in the 130 pound weight class, finishing with a record of 17 wins, 7 losses and All-League honors. During his sophomore year he gained even greater notoriety wrestling in the 152 pound weight class, compiling a record of 19 wins, 5 losses and earning 1st Team All-League honors. During his junior season our inductee shined like a seasoned veteran,

wrestling into the top percentile of the 172 pound weight class and finishing with a record of 23 wins and four losses. He completed his Gael career in his senior year with a virtuoso performance of 32 wins and 3 losses. During his junior and senior years, A.J. dominated the 172 pound weight class, where wrestlers typically exhibit the best combination of technical skill and power. In recognition of his grappling excellence, our inductee made 1st Team All-League, and All-County Honorable Mention in his junior year and 1st Team All-League, and 3rd Team All-County, after his senior campaign. During his career, A.J. also achieved two St. Mary's wrestling firsts, placing in both the District and Region post-season matches, highlighted by a second place finish in the Region in his senior year.

As captain and inspirational leader of the 2001-2002 wrestling squad, A.J. led the Gaels to a team record of 19 wins and 3 losses and to our school's first League and Parochial B North State Sectional championships. That same year St. Mary's wrestling team ranked 9th among all of the wrestling powerhouses in Bergen County.

Our inductee was also an exceptional football player. As a three-year varsity starter, A.J. earned spots during his career on the All-League, First and Second teams as well as All-County, Honorable Mention. In his senior year, A.J. averaged 15 yards per catch and 7.5 yards per carry. He led the football team to three consecutive League championships and to the State Championship game in 2000. A.J. also played baseball his freshman year and ran track during his sophomore and junior years.

In addition to his athletic exploits, A.J. Dolan was also a star in the classroom, ranking in the top percentile of his class and earning the NJSIAA Scholar/Athlete award. He went on to study at Fairfield University in Connecticut after his memorable years at St. Mary's.



1974 Sectional State Championship Baseball Team

The 1974 baseball team is one of the great "Cinderella" stories in St. Mary's history. Led by new head coach, Joe Wladyka, the team entered the season with little expectations and without several non-returning starters from the previous year. After an uninspiring pre-season, the Gaels turned things around immediately and won six of their first seven games. Led by a scrappy crew of seniors and juniors and contributions from the underclassmen, the 1974 team amassed twenty victories by season's end. The first team in school history to do so. In the State Tournament, the Gaels had an impressive, "naïlbiting" victory over Immaculate Conception of Montclair by a score of 1-0, and then shut out the #2 ranked team in the state, St. Patrick's of Elizabeth, by a resounding score of 6-0. The trip to the "Ball" was completed when this historical team outscored St. Anthony's of Jersey City 2-0 for the Sectional State Championship.

The roster included, seniors Pete DeLuise, John McMaster, Andy Conte, Chris McCarthy and Joe Butler. Juniors Bob McGowan, Roger Pizsel, Chuck Stuis, Ed Ryan and Brian Bagden. Sophomore Bernie Good and freshmen Mark Giordano, Mike Sheridan, Jerry Nealon and Gabe Tufano. The assistant coaches were Rich Vuyosevich and Phil Facendola.

The 1974 team established the championship standard for St. Mary baseball in the following years, as the underclassmen from the 1974 team led the Gaels' diamond squads to numerous playoff victories and two overall State Championships in 1976 and 1977.



SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

1967 Football Team – “Unsung Heroes”

The 1967 St. Mary's Football team ranks among the finest the school has ever produced. The Gaels were coached by New Jersey and St. Mary's Hall of Fame immortal, Jack Jones. The team compiled a record of 8-1 with victories over such traditional powers as St. Joseph of Montvale, East Rutherford and Our Lady of the Valley. The Gaels participated in the Northern New Jersey Catholic Conference and because of a mistake in scheduling were denied a share of the championship based on their final record. On offense, the “Power I” system generated over three thousand yards in total offense with a great balance between rushing and passing. The passing attack was led by Hall of Fame quarterback, Farrell Sheridan, who connected with Hall of Fame All-County split end, Bill Byrne, for a school record fourteen touchdown receptions. The potent running game was spearheaded by Hall of Fame running back, John Kelly, who broke the school record for rushing yards in a season. A stalwart wall of blockers led by Hall of Fame right guard, Duke Custer, and blocking back, Paul Murphy, smashed open the holes to generate over nineteen hundred yards in rushing as a team. On defense, St. Mary's held six opponents to a touchdown or less from its punishing 4-4 defensive alignment masterminded by coach Jim Kelly. The Gaels defense was led by All-State tackle and Hall of Famer, Charley Tyburski, Hall of Fame linebackers, John Resch and Andy Cefalo, and cornerback Bill Sauthoff. Many team members continued their football careers after St. Mary's at such colleges and universities as Boston College, Minnesota, Villanova, Jersey City State, Fairleigh Dickinson, William Penn, and Wesley College.

**To read about all of St. Mary's Hall of Famers
visit our Website at www.stmaryhshof.org**