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FAIRFIELD COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME NAMES NEWEST MEMBERS

STAMFORD, CT – The Fairfield County Sports Hall of Fame today announced its new class of inductees, naming seven prominent sports figures into its three wings. The Hall of Fame, which is overseen by the Fairfield County Sports Commission, Inc., will honor the newly elected Hall of Famers with an induction ceremony at the Commission's 12th annual Sports Night awards dinner, Monday, Oct. 17 at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich at 6 p.m.

With the seven new inductees, the Hall of Fame has now recognized 78 county sports legends. For only the second time in 12 years, there was a tie in the voting and three inductees were selected in the amateur wing.

The class of 2016 honorees are:

Jackie Robinson Professional Wing: **J.J. HENRY (FAIRFIELD), RITA WILLIAMS (NORWALK)**

James O'Rourke Amateur Wing: the late **MANUTE BOL (BRIDGEPORT)**, the late **MAURICE (WILKY) GILMORE (NEW CANAAN), BILL STEINKRAUS (DARIEN)**

J. Walter Kennedy Community Service Wing: **LOU MARINELLI (NEW CANAAN) MIKE WALSH (STAMFORD)**

With Steinkraus' induction as the first Darien honoree a total of 16 different towns are now represented in the Hall of Fame.

Henry has established himself as a successful PGA tour pro over the past 19 years since making his professional debut in 1998. He has three tournament wins to his credit, including his first victory right here in Connecticut at the Buick Championship in 2006. His other two tour victories came in 2012 and 2015 at the Barracuda Championship in Reno, NV. The Fairfield High graduate also has five second place finishes to help boost his pro earnings to over \$15 million. Henry represented the U.S. as a member of the Ryder Cup in 2006. Prior to becoming a touring pro, Henry had an outstanding amateur career playing out of the Patterson Club in Fairfield as he was a three-time Connecticut State Amateur Champion (1994-95, 1998). He was undefeated in high school play (76-0-2) and was a four-time all-state selection. In 1998, he was a first-team All-American at TCU and took second in the NCAA individual golf championship.

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Williams played six years in the WNBA from 1998-2003 and rose to All-Star status in 2001 with the Indiana Fever. She began her pro career when she was drafted in the first round and 13th overall by the Washington Mystics in 1998. After two seasons with the Mystics, she was traded to the Fever, where she became the first all star in franchise history when she led the team in scoring (11.9 points per game) assists and steals. She later played for the Houston Comets and the Seattle Storm. The Brien McMahon High grad had a stellar career at the University of Connecticut for three years, the last two as a starting point guard. As a co-captain her senior year, she was named the Big East Championship Most Outstanding Player in 1998 and is 10th all time in school history in steals with 248. Williams was elected to the FCSC's UConn Wing of the Hall of Fame in 2009. At McMahon she was a Parade Magazine All-American and led the Senators to the 1994 Class L state title. After high school she played one season at Mitchell College and was a first-team junior college All-American

Bol was not only a one-of-a kind basketball sensation, but also spent much of his life as a humanitarian and political activist in the civil war that divided his native country of Sudan. Bol's one-season (1984-85) at the University of Bridgeport created the most excitement in the school's sports history. The 7-foot-6 center averaged 22.5 points, 13.5 rebounds and 7.1 blocks per game that year. The Division-II Purple Knights, which previously drew 500-600 spectators, routinely sold out their 1,800 seat gym when Bol was on the court. He was drafted in the second round and 31st overall by the Washington Bullets in 1985 and went on to play for four different NBA teams over the course of a 10-year career. He was one of the best shot blockers in league history, setting the rookie shot blocking record in the '85-'86 season. Bol finished his NBA career with 2,086 blocks and is the only player to have more blocks than points scored (1,599). He passed away in 2010 at the age of 47.

Gilmore was a four-sport letterman at New Canaan High, but it was in basketball that he made his name as one the legendary players of his era. He led the Rams to three consecutive state titles (1956-58), scoring a school record 697 points as a senior. While also earning varsity letters in track, golf, and football, Gilmore was heavily recruited for basketball by many college programs after being named all-state for three years. The 6-foot-6 center took his talent to the Big Eight Conference where he became a three-year starter at the University of Colorado, leading the Buffaloes to two straight conference titles in 1961 and 1962. Those same teams went on to the NCAA Elite Eight only to lose to eventual champion Cincinnati in both appearances. Gilmore averaged 14.7 points per game for his career and is in the school's top 30 all-time scoring list. After being drafted by the St. Louis Hawks in the 14th round in 1962, a knee injury curtailed his professional basketball career hopes. He passed away at age 53 in 1993.

Bill Steinkraus is one of the most decorated equestrians in U.S. history. He is a five-time Olympian and four-time medal winner, including being the first American to win an individual gold medal in equestrian jumping with his horse *Snowbound* in 1968. He also took home bronze in team jumping at the 1952 games as well as two team jumping silver medals at the 1960 and 1972 Olympics. Steinkraus, who was born in Westport but is a lifetime Darien resident, captained the U.S. Equestrian team for 17 years. Elected to the National Show Jumping Hall of Fame in 1987, Steinkraus continued his contributions to the sport as the president of the U.S team for 10 years. He also was a television commentator from 1976-1988, a judge at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona and is a noted equestrian author.

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Marinelli's career as one of the state's greatest high school football coaches began in 1981 when he came to New Canaan High after three years as a head coach in New York state. He quickly began what has become an unprecedented success run by turning a program that had been 0-29-1 into a state champion in just two years. Now entering his 36th season, Marinelli has continued his amazing success with 34 consecutive non-losing seasons, 11 state titles (1982,1993, 2001, 2002, 2006-09, 2013-15) and five FCIAC championships (1993, 2000-01, 2008, 2013). His record at New Canaan is 300-92-6 (319 coaching wins total) and he is first all time in wins of active coaches in Connecticut and third overall. Marinelli has been recognized as FCIAC Coach of the Year, National Football Foundation Coach of the Year, and in 2002, Connecticut High School Coaches Association Coach of the Year. He also was a finalist twice for the National Coach of the Year by the National High School Coaches Association. In 2009, he was inducted into the Connecticut High School Coaches Hall of Fame and in 2013 he was selected for the FCIAC Hall of Fame.

Walsh's accomplishments as both a highly-successful high school basketball coach and an equally successful career as a youth baseball coach is a rare combination. His coaching prowess at Trinity Catholic High in Stamford and with Stamford's storied Babe Ruth baseball programs spans more than 40 years. Walsh has turned the Crusaders into one the state's basketball powers in his 37 years there and his 596 wins rank him fifth all time in the state. His first state title came in 1996, starting an annual run to the state championship game, coming away with six state crowns in 12 total appearances, including seven consecutive from 1999-2005. Walsh has also captured six FCIAC titles in 10 appearances, including three straight championships from 2003-05. As a youth baseball coach for 40 years, he led 10 Stamford Babe Ruth All-Star teams to World Series appearances. Walsh was awarded the Gold Key from the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance in 2012.

The list of previously enshrined FCSHOF inductees follows:

JACKIE ROBINSON PROFESSIONAL WING

2005-Julius Boros (Fairfield), Kristine Lilly (Wilton), Calvin Murphy (Norwalk), Steve Young (Greenwich)

2006-Bobby Valentine (Stamford), Mo Vaughn (Norwalk)

2007-Mike Gminski (Monroe), Charles Nagy (Fairfield)

2008-Chris Drury (Trumbull), Tim Teufel (Greenwich)

2009-Jennifer Rizzotti (New Fairfield), Charles Smith (Bridgeport)

2010-Garry Cobb (Stamford), John Hirschbeck (Stratford)

2011-John Bagley (Bridgeport), Bennett Salvatore (Stamford)

*Andy Robustelli (Stamford)-selected 2005, inducted 2011

2012-Wes Matthews (Bridgeport), Sue Merz (Greenwich)

2013-James Blake (Fairfield), Mark Hirschbeck (Stratford)

2014-Craig Breslow (Trumbull), Julie Chu (Fairfield)

2015-Ted Drury (Trumbull), Max Pacioretty (New Canaan)

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JAMES O'ROURKE AMATEUR WING

2005-Dorothy Hamill (Riverside), Bruce Jenner (Newtown), Bill Toomey (New Canaan)
2006-Joan Joyce (Stratford), Walter Luckett (Bridgeport)
2007-Jerry Courville, Sr. (Norwalk), Donna Lopiano (Stamford)
2008-Gary Liberatore (New Canaan), Lou Saccone (Bridgeport)
2009-Pete Demmerle (New Canaan), Dick Siderowf (Westport)
2010-Alvin Clinkscales (Bridgeport), Amanda Pape (Stamford)
2011-Joe DeSantis (Fairfield), Ceci Hopp St. Geme (Greenwich)
2012-Ed Finnegan (Stratford), Harold Jensen (Trumbull)
2013-Dennis Paglialunga (New Canaan), Allyson Rioux (Stamford)
2014-Harry "Mickey" Connolly (Norwalk), Nadine Domond (Bridgeport)
2015-Lisa Brummel (Westport), Lambert Shell (Bridgeport)

J. WALTER KENNEDY COMMUNITY SERVICE

2005-Dave Bike (Bridgeport), Jerry McDougall (Trumbull)
2006- Ray Barry (Norwalk), Frank Vieira (Bridgeport)
2007-Nick Koules (Stamford), Bruce Webster (Bridgeport)
2008-Ralph King (Norwalk), Tom Penders (Stratford)
2009-Joe Benanto (Shelton), Terry Lowe (Greenwich)
2010-Mickey Lione, Jr. (Stamford), Vito Montelli (Trumbull)
2011-Charlie Bentley (Bridgeport), Albie Loeffler (Westport)
2012-Jim Penders, Sr. (Stratford), David Strong (Monroe)
2013-Don Cook (Fairfield), Earl Lavery (Fairfield)
2014-Efrain "Chico" Chacurian (Bridgeport), John "Sharkey" Laurenno (Stamford), Marty Roos (Fairfield)
2015-Jack Kvancz (Bridgeport), Angela Tamaro (Greenwich)

The Hall of Fame is housed at the University of Connecticut Stamford Campus in downtown Stamford. The Hall of Fame is open 6 days a week from 9 am-5 pm.

The Fairfield County Sports Commission, Inc. is a 501c (3) non-profit charitable and educational organization that promotes fitness, an active healthy lifestyle and personal development through sports. The Commission, other than the executive director position, is an all-volunteer group dedicated to creating and supporting programs for fitness awareness education, primarily centered on the 110,000 school age children in the 16 communities it serves. It's Chelsea Cohen Fitness Academy is the countywide umbrella for all of its programs. For more information, go to www.fairfieldcountysports.com.