

## OHS's All-Class All-Section State Champions

Oneonta High School has a stunning history of winning New York State championships for all classes (regardless of school size), all sections (regardless of region), and all schools in the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA). The title for this championship depends on the sport and time, and some sports do not always offer this opportunity. Over the entire history of OHS, this ultimate feat, to our knowledge, has only been accomplished eight times:

1952	NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion	John Whitaker & Warren Gray
1953	NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion	John Whitaker & William Campbell
1955	NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion	William Whitaker & Pete Putnam
1956	NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion	William Whitaker & Pete Putnam
1982	NYSPHSAA Intersectional Golf Medalist	Kevin Burnsworth
1993	NYSPHSAA Ski Championship Giant Slalom Champion	Brooke (Baker) Bass
1993	NYSPHSAA Ski Championship Slalom Champion	Kara (Hattem) Balliet
2001	NYSPHSAA Federation Indoor High Jump Gold Medalist	Toni-Lee McDaniels

These nine amazing athletes defeated everyone else in the entire state in the NYSPHSAA. As Joe Hughes (OHS Athletic Director) aptly put it, these are “Hoosier-like wins!” These championship wins transcend all others.

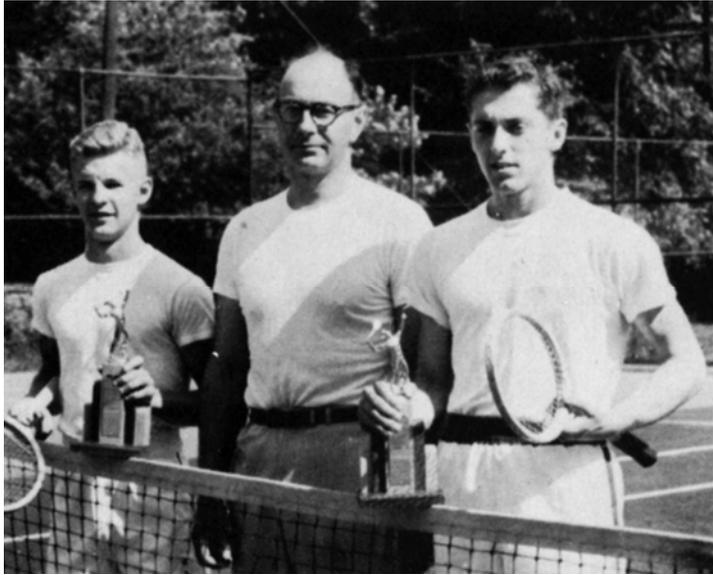
John Whitaker is a two-time tennis champion. Also a two-time champion is the doubles team of Bill Whitaker and Pete Putnam. All four of OHS's tennis championships involved one of the Whitaker brothers. OHS dominated New York State tennis doubles during the 1950s. Pete Putnam, Bill Whitaker, Brooke (Baker) Bass, and Kara (Hattem) Balliet won championships as sophomores. Brooke and Kara brought home two skiing championships in one year. Bill Campbell came back as a champion after being denied a year of sports and later coached at prestigious private schools. Warren Gray went on to start and develop successful high-school and college tennis programs. Kevin Burnsworth became a professional golfer and is now a PGA Class “A” head professional. Toni-Lee McDaniels dominates OHS track & field records and went on to win collegiate championships.

Please join us on a trip down memory lane to read more about the remarkable accomplishments of nine of OHS's most amazing student athletes.

### ***The Champs***

The following sections describe each of the eight championships and highlights of the nine champions' accomplishments and lives.

## 1952 NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion: John Whitaker & Warren Gray



John Whitaker, Coach Reynolds, Warren Gray (l-to-r) [OHSan '53].

John Whitaker ('53) and Warren Gray ('52) won OHS's first known NYSPHSAA Intersectional championship. They won this for doubles tennis in 1952 at West Point. John and Warren are pictured here with their State championship trophies and coach George Reynolds at the Wilber Park clay courts.

In tennis, the Intersectional champion is the winner of all Classes (all school sizes) and all Sections (all regions) of all schools in the NYSPHSAA.

First, the Section champion is the winner of all schools of all classes within the Section. Then, the Intersectional champion is the winner of all the Section champions. This is the ultimate achievement in tennis – the sole champion of the entire NYSPHSAA and the apex of high-school competition. OHS tennis doubles teams accomplished this amazing feat four times in the 1950s.

John Whitaker and Warren Gray defeated teams from Binghamton, Bethlehem, and Flushing on the way to their Intersectional championship victory.

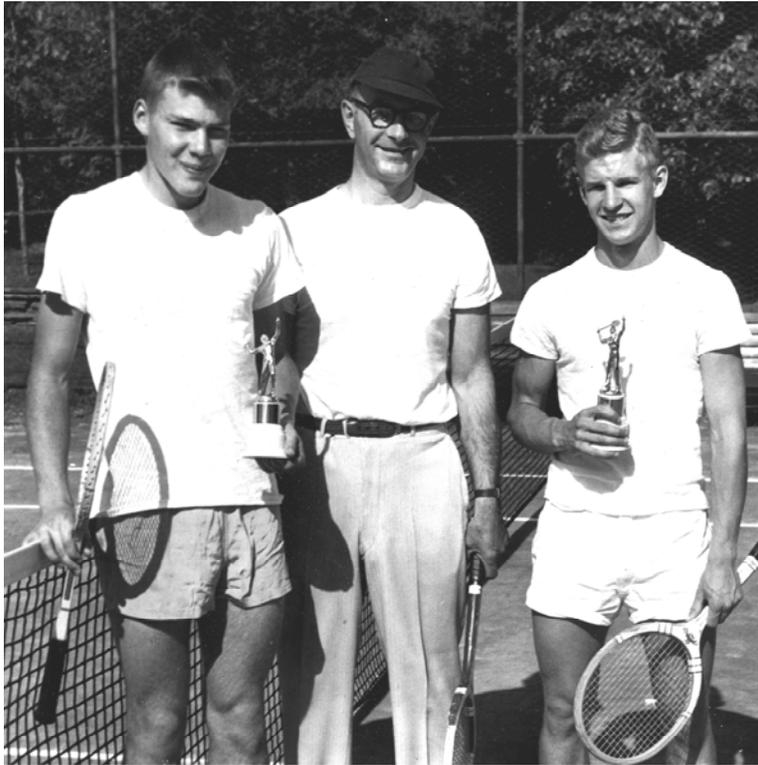
Warren attended Utica Tech after graduating from OHS. He then volunteered for the US Army during the Korean Conflict. While serving in Texas, Warren played tennis with world-class players in Waco. He returned to school at SUNY Oneonta, where he started the college's Tennis Team under Athletic Director Hal Chase. After graduation, Warren and his family went to live and teach in Newark Valley, NY. He started the high school tennis team, for both boys and girls, and they were very successful. Warren retired and started to play tennis again. He entered tournaments in Zephyrhills, FL, and, with capable partners, won a few of those. Returning to NY in April 2008, Warren entered the NYS Seniors and Senior Olympics, and he and his partners won Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals in various divisions.

Today, Warren Gray lives in Newark Valley, NY. He has been married almost 52 years and has six children and seven grandchildren (one grandchild is playing lacrosse for Syracuse University, who won the 2008 NCAA title).

John Whitaker lives in Terre Haute, IN, with his wife Royce (formerly Royce Bagg, OHS '54). They have three children: John, Lynne, and Bill. John is a professor at Indiana State

University, a world authority on bats (see <http://www.indstate.edu/ecology/faculty/whitaker.htm>), and the Director of the Center for North American Bat Research and Conservation at Indiana State University.

### **1953 NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion: John Whitaker & William Campbell**



Bill Campbell, Coach Reynolds, John Whitaker (l-to-r) [OHS 1953].

The OHS 1953 tennis doubles team of John Whitaker ('53) and William Campbell ('53) won the NYSPHSAA Intersectional Championship. Both John and Bill were coached by George Reynolds. Campbell and Whitaker defeated Newburgh, New Rochelle, Garden City (Long Island), and Hudson High, which are among the largest high schools in the State, in June 1953 to win the NYSPHSAA Intersectional at Syracuse University. News of their championship is one of the few mentions OHS sports in *The New York Times*

(6/7/53, p. S5).

In August of 1953, Whitaker and Campbell won the Doubles Championship in the Oneonta City Tennis Tournament, a title long held by older men, at the age of 18 years; they were the youngest ever to hold this title. In 1957, Campbell teamed with William "Bud" Pirone ('56) to win the Doubles Championship in the Oneonta City Tennis Tournament.

Campbell and Whitaker earned Varsity Letters in tennis as freshman, became members of the Varsity "O" as sophomores, and they were three-sport athletes. Campbell earned 6 Varsity Letters in football, basketball, and tennis, despite missing his junior year of athletics due to an incorrect medical diagnosis. Whitaker earned 6 Varsity Letters in wrestling, basketball, and tennis, and he was captain of the OHS tennis team.

Bill was Vice President of the Student Council and also Vice President of the Varsity "O." John was the Vice President of his class and Treasurer of the Student Council. They were both very active as athletes, students, and leaders.

Campbell won a Dewar Scholarship at Hartwick College and played tennis in the #1 and #2 positions, with a record of 30 wins and one loss. Bill majored in physics with a minor in mathematics. He was a Senior Research Engineer (Applied Physics) for the Bendix Corporation and the Westinghouse Electric Corporation and a Project Engineer (Applied Physics) for the General Signal Corporation. He also coached tennis and taught mathematics and physics at two well-known New York City area independent schools: the Kew Forest School, Forest Hills, NY, and the Wardlaw School, Plainfield, NJ. Bill Campbell currently lives in Binghamton, NY, where he is active in politics and teaching.

John Whitaker (Terre Haute, IN) found approximately 150 species of parasitic mites of mammals that were new to science. He also has many publications, including the National Audubon Society's *Field Guide to North American Mammals* and he is a coauthor of *Mammals of Indiana* and *Mammals of the Eastern United States*.

### **1955 & 1956 NYSPHSAA Intersectional Tennis Doubles Champion: William Whitaker & Pete Putnam**



Pete Putnam and Bill Whitaker (l-to-r) [OHSan '57].

Bill Whitaker ('57) and Jim "Pete" Putnam ('57) won the NYSPHSAA Intersectional championship in doubles tennis in 1955 and again in 1956. This tennis doubles team won the NYSPHSAA Intersectional twice! They were both coached by George Waddington.

In 1955, Putnam and Whitaker defeated the top-seeded team from Garden City, Long Island, to win the State championship. The tournament was held at the Garden City Country Club. In 1956, Putnam and Whitaker beat the top-seeded team, again from Garden City, to win the State championship a second time. This tournament was held at the West Point Military Academy.

Bill Whitaker also played Varsity basketball and football. He was on the 1955 undefeated (7-0-1) football team that defeated Elmira Free Academy with the legendary Ernie Davis. Bill was the co-captain and quarterback of the 1956 OHS football team. He earned 8 Varsity Letters (3 in football, 2 in basketball, and 3 in tennis). Bill graduated from the US Naval Academy in 1961 and from Texas A&M University in 1967.

Pete Putnam also played basketball and earned 7 Varsity Letters. He was selected to go to Boys State in 1956 and for the first team of the All Iroquois League basketball team in 1957. Pete won the 1957 Oneonta City Tennis Tournament's Singles Championship in an epic 5-hour, 5-set final match.

Putnam graduated from the University of Rochester in 1961. While at U of R, he played #1 singles on the tennis team for 3 years and lost only 3 times (freshman did not play on the tennis team). Pete also played on the freshman basketball team and 1 year on Varsity.

Pete attended the University at Buffalo Dental School on a Regents Scholarship and graduated and married in 1965. He completed a 1-year dental internship for the U.S. Public Health Service at the U.S.P.H. Hospital on Staten Island, NY, in 1966. Then he was assigned to the Coast Guard and ran the dental clinic in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Pete left the Coast Guard in 1968 with the equivalent rank of Lt. Commander. He has practiced dentistry in the New Hartford/Utica area from 1968 to the present.

Putnam plays golf and continues to play tennis. He was a finalist in the NYS 35 and Over Indoor Tennis Championship and he won The Greater Utica Golf Tournament of Champions 65 and over. In 2007, Pete shot 68 to set a record for the youngest player to shoot his age at the Yahnundasis Golf Club in New Hartford, NY.

Pete recently celebrated his 43<sup>rd</sup> wedding anniversary with his wife, Jo Ann. They have two children and two grandchildren. Pete is still practicing dentistry in New Hartford, NY, (see <http://www.wellness.com/dir/2276255/dentist/ny/new-hartford/putnam-james-h-dentist>) and has no plans to retire!

Bill Whitaker retired from the Navy as a Commander in 1981. He has been a stockbroker since then and is currently working for FSC Securities in Oneonta. Bill is married to Esperanza Roncero and they have two children, Carmen Maria (age 4) and Lucas (age 2).

## 1982 NYSPHSAA Intersectional Golf Medalist: Kevin Burnsworth



Kevin Burnsworth [The Ithaca Journal, 8 Jun '82].

Kevin Burnsworth ('82) earned 6 Letters in golf and 3 Letters in soccer, for a total of 9 Varsity Letters. Kevin also played 2 years of Varsity basketball. The soccer team won two Southern Tier Athletic Conference Championships. In his senior year, Kevin won the individual New York State Intersectional Golf Championship in June of 1982 under Coach Tony Drago. This competition included players from all over the State of New York. Kevin competed in Sectionals, Intersectionals, and, finally, States. The local qualifier was at the Oneonta Country Club. Kevin was low qualifier. The Intersectional was at the Cornell University Golf Course in Ithaca. He finished second out of five qualifiers taken. In the State finals a week later, also at Cornell, Kevin defeated John Hulbert (who became a club professional and once qualified for the U.S.

Open) in a sudden-death playoff to claim the overall State Championship. This championship included all golfers in the State of New York, both public and private. Kevin beat everyone!

Unable to play on the baseball team due to the one-sport rule, Kevin played on the local American Legion team and pitched a complete no-hit game against Morris for the club. In his senior year, Kevin was named co-winner of the Oneonta High School Athlete of the Year award and winner of the Oneonta Jaycee's Service Award.

Following graduation, Kevin achieved considerable success in golf. He won the Otsego County Championship and holds several course records, including the 9-hole record at Oneonta Country Club with a score of 29. Kevin graduated from Old Dominion University, where he was on a full athletic scholarship during his last three years and co-captain of their Division I golf team in his senior year. At ODU, and later after turning pro in 1986, he played against Davis Love, Jack Nickalus, Jr., Billy Andre, Brad Faxon, and David Duval. As a PGA professional golfer, Kevin earned a spot in the B.C. Open PGA tournament, where he played along side Fred Couples, John Daly, and other greats. He served on the 2006 PGA President's Council. Kevin has also had success in bowling, with a 300 game at Lane-Glo Lanes North, Port Richey, FL, in the Suncoast USBC BA association.

Kevin has been a PGA Golf Professional for 22 years, the last 10 as a Head Professional. He is the Head PGA Class "A" Golf Professional at Heritage Pines in Hudson, FL. Kevin, his wife of 16 years, and their family live in New Port Richey, FL.

## 1993 NYSPHSAA Ski Championship Giant Slalom Champion: Brooke (Baker) Bass



Brooke (Baker) Bass [The Mountain Eagle, 2 Mar '93].

Brooke (Baker) Bass ('95) was a champion Alpine skier. She was coached by David Perry. Brooke won the NYSPHSAA Giant Slalom Championship at Lake Placid on Whiteface Mountain in 1993.

Brooke participated in a total of four varsity sports during her tenure at Oneonta High School. She was a member of the Varsity Ski Team for 6 years, joining in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and served as co-captain in her senior year. Brooke played Varsity Soccer and Varsity Track & Field for 3 years and also competed on the Varsity Tennis team for 1 season. She lettered 6 years in skiing, 3 in soccer, 3 in track, and 1 in tennis for a

total of 13 Varsity Letters. During Brooke's tenure with the OHS soccer team, they were Susquenango League Champions three times, Co-Section IV Champions with Maine-Endwell, and State Section IV Semi-Finalists once.

Brooke won numerous individual achievements in skiing at the local, sectional, and State levels. During her skiing career, Brooke competed against racers from all high schools in New York State, regardless of size, and won two Section IV Championships in 1995 (Slalom & Giant Slalom) and the State Championship in Giant Slalom in 1993, besting all female skiers (those that qualified for the State races) from all Sections in New York. The Section IV female ski team (comprised of the best female skiers from Section IV, the racers that go on to compete as individuals and Sectional "teams" at the State Championships) won the Alpine division of the State Championships in 1994. Brooke won the Coaches Award for three consecutive years as the top female skier in Section IV. She also was awarded the E.C. Dutch Damaschke Award for sportsmanship at the Varsity "O" awards ceremony in her senior year.

Brooke set two Varsity Track & Field records during her time at OHS. She was a member of the Sprint Medley Team that set a school record in 1993 that still stands. She set the Triple Jump record in 1995 (later to be broken by Toni-Lee McDaniels).

Brooke was also a top academic student at OHS. She received the New York State High School Athletic Association's Academic Recognition during Soccer, Skiing, and Track & Field season in grades 10-12 and joined the National Honor Society in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. In her senior year, Brooke was first chair, first clarinet in the concert band.

Brooke went on to play three varsity sports (Soccer, Skiing, and Lacrosse) at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Division III. (Collegiate ski racing is one division; hence, Brooke raced against skiers from many DI, DII, & DIII colleges and universities, such as Boston College, UMass, Plymouth State, Smith, Colby-Sawyer, Brown, Harvard, Dartmouth College, Middlebury College, UNH, and UVM.) She was elected captain of the Varsity Soccer and Ski Teams for her junior and senior years. Without ever having played lacrosse before, Brooke was a walk-on for MIT's team and was a starter on defense for 3 years. Baker capped off the most successful 4-year career of any Alpine racer in the history of MIT women's skiing. Her accomplishments have yet to be eclipsed. She was a top 10 racer in the Osborne Division of the ECSC and went on to race in the NCAA Regional competition in her sophomore and senior years.

Brooke graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and then from the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth. She now lives in Massachusetts and is an Assistant Vice President – Property Claims at the Liberty Mutual Group in Boston and recently became a designated CPCU.

### **1993 NYSPHSAA Ski Championship Slalom Champion: Kara (Hattem) Balliet**



Kara (Hattem) Balliet [OHSan '93].

top five racers from each Section's ski team; their finishes determine the champions in the combined slalom and giant slalom events. Over 70 competitors took part from different Sections in New York State.

Kara (Hattem) Balliet ('95) was a champion Alpine skier. She was coached by David Perry. As a sophomore in 1993, Kara took first place in the Slalom event at the New York State High School Championships in Lake Placid to become the NYSPHSAA Slalom Champion. Her Slalom performance, plus a top-5 finish in the Giant Slalom, also earned Kara the Combined Championship.

As a junior in 1994, Kara was a key performer in leading the Section IV Ski Team to a combined Alpine Championship (Slalom & Giant Slalom events) in Lake Placid. Overall standings are based on the

As a senior in 1995, Kara took second place in the Slalom event at the New York State High School Championships in Lake Placid and she was a co-captain of the ski team. She was a consistent premiere skier throughout her years at OHS. In addition to skiing for OHS, Kara (and Brooke) also skied for the USSA Ski Team. Kara later coached young skiers on the Scotch Valley USSA Ski Team during her college vacations.

As well as her skiing championships, Kara received additional recognitions at OHS, including National Honor Society, Scholar Athlete, and Service Club. She was also exceptional in horseback riding, equestrian competitions, and raising horses.

Kara graduated from James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA, and earned an MBA at the University of Phoenix. She was the Manager of Sales and Marketing for University Physicians Health Plans in Arizona. Kara is now a Provider Contracting Consultant with Humana, Inc. and is on the Board of Directors of the Arizona Small Business Association and on the Board of Directors of the Southern Arizona Association of Health Underwriters. Kara lives in Arizona.

### **2001 NYSPHSAA Federation Indoor High Jump Gold Medalist: Toni-Lee McDaniels**



Toni-Lee McDaniels [Courtesy of The Daily Star, 14 May '99].

Toni-Lee McDaniels ('01) was the Federation High Jump Gold Medalist State High-Jump Champion in 2001. She was coached by Helen Sandford and David Forbes in outdoor and indoor Track & Field. Toni won championships every year she attended OHS in individual and in team sports. She played 3 sports per year and earned 10 Varsity Letters in 4 sports. Toni was the captain of the Indoor and Outdoor Track Teams in both her junior and senior years and also a captain of the Soccer Team in her senior year.

Toni was on the Varsity Track Team in her freshman year and was the Susquenango League Champion in the high jump. She was also a member of OHS's Susquenango League Championship 4x100 meter relay team. Toni placed second in the pentathlon at the Sectionals, tied for high-jump Sectional Champion (Section IV), and then went on to States and finished 4<sup>th</sup> to set the OHS girls high-jump record of 5' 5".

In Toni's sophomore year, she was on the Varsity Soccer Team and the Varsity Basketball Team. Both teams won the Section IV and Susquenango League championships. She won the Track & Field Susquenango League triple jump, high jump,

100 meter hurdles, and pentathlon; breaking all of OHS's school records in these events at that track meet. Toni then won the Section IV high jump, 100 meter hurdles, and pentathlon. In the States, she placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in high jump and 5<sup>th</sup> in the hurdles.

As a junior, she was the Indoor-Track High-Jump State Champion. Toni was the Outdoor Track & Field Susquenango League Champion in the pentathlon, high jump, and 100 meter hurdles. In the Sectionals, she was the champion in the 100 meter hurdles, high jump, and the pentathlon. Toni was also the Sectional champion and set the OHS school record in the triple jump at 36' 11". She went on to States in the pentathlon and placed 3<sup>rd</sup>. Also at the States events, Toni broke the OHS record in the high jump with a jump of 5' 7" and it was the best jump in the whole State that year! At that meet, however, the individual events results of pentathlon participants are not recognized as official individual events results. Likewise, Toni also broke the OHS long-jump record at that meet and would have been 3<sup>rd</sup> in the State with a jump of 16' 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>".

In Toni's senior year, she was a captain of OHS's Class B State finalist Varsity Soccer Team. Toni was the NYSPHSAA Indoor High-Jump Federation Gold Medalist State Champion. On 10 March 2001, she won the girls high jump in the NYSPHSAA Indoor Track & Field State Championships held in the Carrier Dome at Syracuse University. Toni jumped 5' 6" to win. She beat 27 jumpers from high schools such as Port Jefferson, Garden City, Bronxville, Syracuse, Edison Tech, and Horseheads (see <http://www.armoryfoundation.org/in01/nys.htm>). Toni went on and placed 6<sup>th</sup> in the high jump at the indoor Nike Nationals in NYC. Toni was also the NYSPHSAA Class B Federation Outdoor High Jump State Champion.

Toni holds more indoor and outdoor combined track & field records than anyone else, boys and girls, in the history of OHS (the indoor program has existed for over a decade). She holds a total of six records: indoors for the 55 meter hurdles (9.1s) and high jump (5' 6") and outdoors for the pentathlon (3007 points), high jump (5' 7"), long jump (16' 10 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>"), and triple jump (35' 9"); see <http://ocsweb.oneontacsd.org/hs/sports/teamrecords.html>. During Toni's high-school career, she was also a three-time Empire State Games Champion in the high jump.

Toni attended the University of Rhode Island on a full athletic scholarship. At URI, Toni was a two-time Atlantic 10 Conference Champion for both Indoor and Outdoor Track & Field. She high jumped 5' 7" to set URI's all-time fourth highest jumps indoors and outdoors (see [http://publish.netitor.com/photos/schools/uri/sports/w-xc/auto\\_pdf/w-track-xc-brochure-2003.pdf](http://publish.netitor.com/photos/schools/uri/sports/w-xc/auto_pdf/w-track-xc-brochure-2003.pdf)). Tony graduated from University of South Florida and currently lives in Florida.

## ***Congratulations Champs!***

Please join us in congratulating all nine champions, and their coaches and families, for their supreme athletic achievements and for the recognition they brought to OHS! Please contact us if you know of any other champions who have accomplished this amazing feat.

## ***Acknowledgments***

Thanks to the following people who contributed to this article: all the champions; parents Carol Baker and Chuck Burnsworth; coaches Tony Drago, David Forbes, David Perry, and Helen Sandford; and Joe Campbell (Sr.), Linda Castor, Kathryn Dailey, Vince Foti, Mark Friery, Mary Colone Hathaway, Joe Hughes, Julie Lewis, Madolyn Palmer, Norm Payne, Bud Pirone, and Raphael Sason.

*Joseph P. Campbell, Jr.*

*Class of '75*

*Lexington, MA*

*September 2008*

Note: This article originated as a posting on 6/4/08 to the OHS Mailing List, which connects alumni via e-mail and is free to all alumni. The beginning portion of this article was recently published as "OHS's All-Section All-Class State Champions" on pages 10 and 12 of the *Oneonta High School Alumni Newsletter*, summer 2008, volume 10, issue 2, which is sent to all members of the OHS Alumni Association.