



From the Stands

by Diane Burkhardt

SWR inducted four more of its sons and daughters into the Athletic Hall of Fame on Wednesday, June 12, making a total of 58 inductees since the first induction in 1986, eleven years after the high school opened. Inductees are selected on the basis of their outstanding athletic achievements while at SWR, the impact they had on their teams, the recognition they received at the county or state level, and for being fine citizens.

The 2002 inductees are Kevin Williams '95, inducted posthumously, Cheryl Carey '96, Jerry Grable and Kelly Williams, both members of the class of '97. The induction ceremony was part of the Senior Athletic Awards Dinner on Wednesday, June 12.

Cross country and track coach Paul Koretzki introduced Cheryl Carey who is now teaching physical education at Eastport and coaching her own young athletes.

Carey began varsity competition as an 8th grader, helping the team to a county championship that season, and competing her cross country career as captain of a county championship team in 1995 as a senior. As one of SWR's most versatile winter and spring track athletes, she competed the 100 and 400 hurdles, the 400, 800, 1500, and 3000, in short whatever was needed.

"Cheryl went to the line for me over 180 times," said Koretzki, "and each time she went all out."

In her last meet representing SWR, she won the silver medal in the 400 hurdles at the state championship meet.

Cheryl thanked her coaches and dad for introducing her to running, and for supporting her through her high school and college career, and extended thanks to her Coach Koretzki and Roger Sullivan, "the most caring and fair people I know."

"If not for all their dedication, time and extra effort on and off the track, I would not be where I am today," said Carey. "I hope that one day I will have the same impact on my student athletes."

Volleyball coach Toby Hargreave and baseball coach Sal Mignano presented Jerry Grable. During Grable's three years as a varsity starter at swing hitter SWR was Small School County Champions.

"There was never a time when Jerry did not perform at game speed during practice, and in doing so he made his teammates better," said Hargreave.

Mignano said that Grable, who was known for his quickness, developed into one of the premier catchers on Long Island, and captained the 1997 team which won a league championship and advanced to county B final. Grable continued his baseball career at St. Mary's College in Maryland. Today he works as project manager for a housing construction firm.

"Remember your times in high school," Grable told the senior athletes of 2002. "Take with you all the lessons you learned from your coaches on and off the field."

Kelly Williams played both varsity field hockey and softball at an All County level through all her high school years, but field hockey was her first love. Coach Lea Calligeros listed the honors and achievements that Williams earned playing field hockey both at SWR and Northeastern University which included All County, All State, and All American honors on the field and in the classroom.

"Even more impressive than Kelly's talent and skill was her every day effort, her positive attitude, good sportsmanship and real appreciation of her teammates and



Left to right: SWR graduates Kelly Williams, Jerry Grable, and Cheryl Carey are three of the four 2002 inductees into SWR's Athletic Hall of Fame on Wednesday, June 12. Kelly's older brother Kevin Williams, who died at the World Trade Center on September 11, was inducted posthumously.

coach," Calligeros said.

She told the story of SWR's first Class B county championship in 1995 when Williams was a junior, when the Wildcats played a strong East Hampton team in the final. At the end of regulation and two overtimes the game was tied. The teams traded penalty strokes as the sun set, and the officials suspended the game until the next day just as it was Williams' turn to take a stroke.

"Kelly stepped to the stroke line that afternoon and scored on their All County goalie," said Calligeros. "She ran over and handed me the ball. 'Keep it,' I told her, but she said, 'No. It's your first county championship. You've worked 10 years for it, you deserve it.' That's Kelly, talented, unselfish and caring. That signed ball is in my office where I see it everyday."

Williams thanked her coaches for teaching lifelong lessons of teamwork, leadership, and sacrifice and referred to four of the passengers on Flight 93 on the morning of September 11, who came up with the plan to foil the hijackers who would turn their plane into a guided missile with a deadly target in Washington D.C.

"All four had been student athletes in high school and college," said Williams. "They used teamwork, leadership, sacrifice plus commitment to their country's freedom, and saved thousands of lives."

Williams graduated from Northeastern on Sunday, June 16 as a physical therapy major and began graduate classes in her field the next morning.

Kevin Williams was presented for induction by his basketball coach Bob Wolfe and his baseball coach Sal Mignano. Williams also played golf, and excelled in all three sports.

"Statistics alone would earn Hall of Fame status for Kevin," said Wolfe. "As a senior Williams was one of his team's two leading scorers, and the leader in rebounding, blocked shots, charges taken, and was third in assists as well as being the best defensive player on the team."

"You cannot measure Kevin by statistics alone," Wolfe continued, and told the story of Kevin's senior season when the team's high scorer transferred from SWR right before the league season.

"This was seen by many as a disaster for us, the end of any playoff hopes," said Wolfe. "Kevin didn't see it that way, however, and seized this opportunity to raise the level of his game as well as the level of the players around him."

Williams increased his scoring average from six points

per game to 15 and then to 22 for the last five games of the season when SWR needed three wins just to make the playoffs. They won four.

"Kevin's quiet but dynamic leadership was responsible for much, if not all, of our success that season. He was wise and mature beyond his years. His leadership qualities and work ethic made that young and inexperienced team into a winning one. I have coached a few players who were better basketball players than Kevin, but if I had to choose one player to start a winning team it would be Kevin. He was a winner in all he did," Wolfe concluded.

Mignano described Williams as an outstanding athlete, a shortstop who played with a smooth flair and a fine glove, a captain of the 1995 league championship team, an outstanding right-handed hitter and a natural leader not only on the baseball field, but in anything he was involved in. Mignano announced that Williams #16 was being permanently retired, and that the Kevin Williams Award had been established "to be given

annually to the varsity player who exemplifies the kind of leadership Kevin showed both on and off the field. The first recipient of that award is Matt Disig."

Williams' younger brother Jamie spoke on behalf of his brother, a task he said he was honored to do.

"Considering that my sister and brother blew me out of the water in high school sports, I think this is the only way I'll ever be standing up here for a Hall of Fame induction," he quipped. His words were perfect for lightening a mood which had grown somber.

"If Kevin were here he'd be the humble and kind person he was. He'd thank Coach Mignano, Coach Maccagli, Coach Wolfe, and Golf Coach Windsor for giving him the chance to prove his skills and for inspiring him to achieve success. He'd thank his mom and dad for showing up at every game no matter what. He'd thank Kelly for being able to throw a wiffle ball so that he could smash it over our neighbor's fence, and me for every time I outran the neighbor's dog to retrieve the ball. That was my job.

"Kevin aimed for perfection and that didn't stop at high school. It continued at Boston College and when he became an investment banker with Sandler O'Neill. On September 11, Kevin gave his life for our country. In honor of my brother, I want you to breathe the same three L's that Kevin breathed every morning of his life: to laugh, to love and to live. Sports have already given you all something that can never be taken from you. They've shown you that life goes on even if you don't win the big game or get the big hit; that you can laugh off the small stuff. It was never a requirement for any of you to play sports. You all achieved a certain success just by walking on the field. You picked something you enjoyed and went with it, and that's what life is all about. Long after you're gone from here people will not say you are a great person because you went 4 for 4 in a game, or that you won every race or hit every shot. They'll remember you for every time you laughed, for every person that you loved, for not regretting a moment that you lived."

Jamie said his own athletic accomplishments at SWR would not qualify him for Hall of Fame induction. Maybe he's right about that, but when it comes to delivering a message worth listening to, he'll be a first ballot Hall of Famer.

And that's the view this week from the stands.