

Banquet of Champions to honor OVAC titlists

•Pokas, Finnegan, Dailer among special honorees

Athletes on 54 championship teams involving 18 sports will be among the honored guests at the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference's 10th annual Banquet of Champions to be held Monday night, May 22, at the Wheeling Civic Center.

Sponsored by the OVAC's "Partners in Academics and Athletics" — Kroger Food & Drug, Cameron Coca-Cola, Wendy's Restaurants and Whiteside's of St. Clairsville, Barnesville and Cambridge — the dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. Doors at the Civic Center open at 5:30.

Tribute also will be paid to student-athletes for their academic achievements, as approximately \$18,000 in scholarships are to be presented. Other highlights of the evening include the announcement of the Wheeling News Register-sponsored OVAC Coach of the Year Award recipient, along with special recognition to be given to Wheeling's national women's college basketball three-point shooting champion Suzie Dailer of St. Bonaventure University and longtime Ohio Valley media members Cal Pokas, Sports Editor of The Times Leader, and Bob Finnegan, who recently retired from WTRFTV7.

"I believe we have a dynamic dinner program that will touch everyone," said Samuel A. Mumley, Sr., executive secretary of the OVAC.

"We're very proud to be able to honor Suzie Dailer, a former Wheeling Central standout athlete who earned national honors for herself, her school and for the entire Ohio Valley," Mumley continued.

"We're also pleased to pay tribute to Cal Pokas, who will be retiring later this summer, and to Bob Finnegan. Both of these men have made contributions to the Ohio Valley that go well beyond their distinguished media careers."

Pokas, a 1951 graduate of Bellaire High School, began his newspaper career on the day after Labor Day in 1955. He served as a spotswriter, news reporter and city editor before his appointment as sports editor in May of 1966.

He is a past president of the Ohio Prep Sports Writers Association and was recognized as "Ohio Prep Sports Writer of the Year" by that organization in 1976.

Additional honors include induction into the UPI Sports Writers Hall of Fame and the Ohio Prep Sports Writers Association Hall of Fame.

Pokas also has been recognized by the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches, the Eastern Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association and the District 12 Basketball Coaches Association.

The veteran journalist is married to the former Betty J. Gatchel

of The Times Leader.

They have three children — John, an optometrist who resides in St. Clairsville; Judy Mayles, a radiology technologist who resides near Warwood; and James, a part-time faculty member at Columbus State Community College. Four grandchildren complete the family circle.

Finnegan, whose career in broadcasting spans five decades, has been co-anchor of WTRF-TV7's Easter Seal Telethon for the past 11 years.

He began his career in 1958 at WMMN in Fairmont. During his 10 years at that station, he also worked as a color man on broadcasts of Fairmont State athletic events with the legendary Frank Lee.

Finnegan came to Wheeling in 1963, joining WWVA Radio. He joined the staff of WTRF-TV in 1975 and later succeeded the late Jennings Martin as sports anchor and sports director.

He retired from the television station last month, but has returned part-time to WWVA where he does a couple of morning

sports reports for the radio station.

Bob and his wife, Jean, reside in Wheeling. Their daughter Kathy still resides in Wheeling while their son Kevin is now living in Newcastle, Wyoming.

Dailer was a three-sport star — basketball, softball and tennis — at Wheeling Central before embarking on her successful collegiate hoop career at St. Bonaventure University.

She re-wrote the Atlantic 10 Conference record books by hitting 291 career three-pointers. During her sophomore season, she won the AT&T Long Distance Award when she led the NCAA in three-point field goals with 99. At the end of that season, she set an Atlantic 10 tournament record with three-pointers during an 88-72 loss to Rutgers.

Dailer, the seventh player in Bonnie women's basketball history to score more than 1,000 points, thrilled her university and the entire Ohio Valley watching on ESPN last month when she won the women's collegiate three-point shooting contest held at the site of the men's Final Four in Seattle.

Scholarship presenters at the OVAC dinner include: Kroger's; Whiteside's; Anthony Bodkin Soccer Scholarship; Pepsi-Cola; Wheeling National Bank; OVAC Baseball Coaches; OVAC Football Officials; OVAC Cheerleader Scholarship; Daniel M. Burke Wrestling Scholarship; George Kovalick Wrestling Scholarship; Henry Lasasz Basketball Scholarship; Richard L. Potts Basketball Scholarship; Samuel A. Mumley Scholarship; and Douglas Pitney Memorial Golf Scholarship.

In addition to the Coach of the Year Award, to be presented by News Register Sports Editor Bill Van Home, will be presentations of the Dave Bierkorte Wrestling Award and the Cal Giffin Memorial Track Service Award.

Dinner tickets may be purchased individually or by blocks of eight. The tickets are priced at \$12 each or \$96 for a table of eight. Reservations can be made in advance by calling the Wheeling Civic Center Box Office at 233-4470 or by contacting dinner chairman Ron White at 2773599 in the evenings or during the day at Buckeye Local High School at 859-2196. Also accepting dinner reservations are Rudy Mumley (277-2683) and Sam Mumley (6955168).

Friday, May 19 is the deadline for reservations. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Toastmaster for the dinner will be Patrick Clutter. Steve Kish, superintendent of Martins Ferry City Schools, will offer the invocation and benediction. Summer Graham of St. Clairsville will sing the national anthem. Dinner music will be provided by the Union Local High School jazz band, directed by Kevin Reed and Larry Comp-

OVAC team champions

Golf: Class 1A-2A — Linsly, Mark Zavorsky; Class 3A — St. Clairsville, Richard "Letty" Hall; Class 4A — Cambridge, Jeff Carroll.

Boys Cross Country: Class 1A-2A — Caldwell, Dugan Hill; Class 3A — St. Marys, Larry Butcher; Class 4A — Wheeling Park, Christine Croft.

Girls Cross Country: Class 1A-2A — Caldwell, Dugan Hill; Class 3A — Meadowbrook, Herb Fitzer; Class 4A — Weir, Jim Bogdon.

Ohio Volleyball: Class 1A — Frontier, Pat Galbraith; Class 2A — Buckeye Trail, Jeff Beros; Class 3A — East Liverpool, Bob Sharsky.

W. Va. Volleyball: Class 1A-2A — Weirton Madonna, Julie DeLuca; Class 3A-4A — Weir, Ken Lehr.

Soccer: Overall — Linsly, Kevin Demers.

Football: Class 1A — Beallsville, Dave Caldwell; Class 2A — Wellsville, Bob Thayer; Class 3A — Bellaire, John Magistro; Class 4A — Buckeye Local, Ron Poblish.

Cheering: Class 1A — Weirton Madonna, Carle Gutwalo; Class 2A — Wheeling Central, Sara Spangler; Class 3A — Martins Ferry, Mary Beth Fitch; Class 4A — Wheeling Park, Libby Shepard.

Boys Basketball: Class 1A — Weirton Madonna, George Vargo; Class 2A — Buckeye Trail, Kim Cunningham; Class 3A — Bellaire, Gene Ammirante; Class 4A — East Liverpool, Nick Alol.

Ohio Girls Basketball: Class 1A — St. John Central, Bob Kaprai; Class 2A — Wellsville, Bill Cunningham; Class 3A — Steubenville, Joe Biasi.

W. Va. Girls Basketball: Class 1A-2A — Wheeling Central, Penn Kurtz; Class 3A-4A — John Marshall, Stan Blankenship.

Wrestling — Class 1A — Cameron, Jim Potts; Class 2A — Barnesville, Jeff Crosier; Class 3A — St. Clairsville, John Vrotsos; Class 4A — Wheeling Park, Ed "Buzzy" Evans.

Boys Tennis: Overall — Wheeling Park, Larry Lamb.

Girls Tennis: Overall — Wheeling Park, Larry Lamb.

Boys Track: Class 1A — Linsly, Dave Plumb; Class 2A — Barnesville, Dennis McCrate; Class 3A — Magnolia, Craig Schmidt; Class 4A — Cambridge, Pete Nordstrom.

Girls Track: Class 1A — Cameron, Dave Evans; Class 2A — Wellsville, Bruce Feicht; Class 3A — Bellaire, Monte Miller; Class 4A — Wheeling Park, Bernie Dolan.

OVAC honors Pokas

• Student-athletes are recognized by conference

By JEFF HARRISON
T-L Associate Sports Editor

He's spent much of his distinguished 40-year career in the newspaper business in the shadows, but Times Leader Sports Editor Cal Pokas had a brief moment in the spotlight Monday night.

It only seemed fitting that Pokas would share his moment at the 10th OVAC Banquet of Champions with some of the high school athletes he's promoted over the years when the giant bi-state conference honored the veteran scribe for his tireless service to the athletes of the valley and Eastern Ohio in particular.

Monday's festivities provided Pokas an opportunity to acknowledge his many friends and associates throughout the years.

Among them were his two "mentors, Bill Van Horne (who was sports editor at The Times Leader when Pokas came aboard and who's been sports editor at the Wheeling News-Register for the last 29 years) and Bob Fordyce (who was managing editor at The T-L when Pokas began), "for their patience with and confidence in him."

"I've had the privilege to cover many fine athletes, many fine teams and many memorable events over the years," he related. "I've also had the opportunity to make many acquaintances and will treasure the friendships I've made for years to come."

He even worked his ol' buddy, the late Woody Hayes, in as well as several long-time associates such as Boyd Nelson, Bill Davies and the late Walter Jablonsky. "Woody Hayes once said, 'you win with people' and I've been blessed with many fine associates over the years."

Pokas also praised the OVAC for its work on behalf of the valley's student-athletes, calling it "unequivocally the best conference in the country."

Speaking to the many high school athletes in attendance, master of ceremonies Pat Clutter commented that Pokas, "knows how to write about you, the athlete. He makes you experience the event and he's given a great deal to the youth of the Ohio Valley."

Long-time friend Samuel A. Mumley, Sr. of St. Clairsville, the OVAC's executive secretary and driving force also heaped praise on Pokas for his contributions to the youth of the valley.

"In the 30-some years I've been associated with the OVAC, he has pulled us through so many trials and tribulations," recalled Mumley.

"First with the scoring system we have for football and basketball. At one time, we were in total confusion and Cal came through with good information which got us on track.

"Secondly," Mumley continued, "with our track program and his support of the Belmont County Relays which has filtered down through many of our other meets.

"And finally, and probably most importantly, the fact that he's always spotlighting individual people and giving them a tremendous boost," he said.

"How many sports editors are out there covering golf, cross country and the like - some of our lesserknown sports?" Mumley pondered. "He always gives everybody and equal shot, and isn't that what it's all about.

"I never heard him complain," he related. "He just went out and got the job done.

"He's an OVAC man and he's made my job a lot easier, and he's a great friend."



T-L Photo MIKE McNEILL

RECEIVING special recognition for his many years of service to the youth of the Ohio Valley through his coverage of local athletic events, The Times Leader Sports Editor Cal Pokas is congratulated by OVAC executive secretary Samuel A. Mumley Sr.



FROEHLICH
Barnesville



HORNYAK
St. John's



ROSKOVICH
Bridgeport



SIMOSKI
St. Clairsville



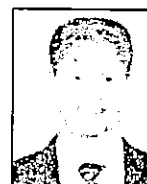
GOOLIE
Buckeye Local



EWING
St. Clairsville



ROBERTSON
Linsly



SMITH
Linsly



KURTZ
Linsly



T-L Photo MIKE McNEILL

WHEELING PARK head basketball coach Sam Andy, accompanied by his wife, Sandy, displays his award for his selection as OVAC Coach of the Year.

Mumley concluded.

A 1951 graduate of Bellaire High School, Pokas began his newspaper career in early September, 1955. He served as a sports-writer, news reporter and city editor before his appointment as sports editor in May of 1966 when he succeeded Van Horne. He's in his 29th year as Sports Editor at The Times Leader.

He is a past president of the Ohio Prep Sports Writers Association and was recognized as "Ohio Prep Sports Writer of the Year" by that organization in 1976.

Additional honors include induction into the UPI Sports Writers Hall of Fame and the Ohio Prep Sports Writers Association Hall of Fame.

Pokas also has been recognized by the Ohio Association of Track and Cross Country Coaches, the Eastern Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association and the District 12 Basketball Coaches Association.

The veteran journalist is married to the former Betty J. Gatchel of Barnesville, who is area editor of The Times Leader.

They have three children - John, an optometrist who resides in St. Clairsville; Judy Mayles, a radiology technologist who