

**YS**

page 36

ing a school-record nine 3-pointers in 's 89-62 win over Seymour. Lott surpassed career points in a 71-55 win over y-Waterbury.

**ue Marshall, Capital Prep, Jr.:** Grabbed 25 inds in the Trailblazers' 62-58 win over Sci.

**McMahon, St. Paul-Bristol, Soph.:** Scored eer-high 20 points in St. Paul's 83-81 win Kennedy-Waterbury.

**Newsom, Masuk-Monroe, Soph.:** Scored 27 5, including the game-winning basket, to Masuk prevail over Pomperaug 56-54.

**Parker, Holy Cross-Waterbury, Jr.:** Scored ints in the Crusaders' 74-65 win over Wilby.

**Paraj, Seymour, Sr.:** Scored 41 points, ing six 3-point shots, in the Wildcats' win over Oxford.

**resley, Stamford, Jr.:** Had 18 points, six s and six steals in Stamford's 64-47 win cMahon-Norwalk.

**on Reilly, East Catholic-Manchester, Sr.:** d 27 points in the Eagles' 81-52 loss to The King (N.Y.) in the Spalding Hoopball c.

**aplona, Darien, Soph.:** Had 23 points in the Vave's 59-51 win over Westhill-Stamford..

**m Sidik, Innovation, Jr.:** Hit the go-ahead t with 3 seconds left off a pass from Warlin ) for Innovation in its 61-60 win over SMSA.

**on Stlland, Northwestern, Sr.:** Scored 25 in Northwestern's 50-39 win over go.

**ght, St. Joseph, Jr.:** Finished with 33 , including 14 in the fourth quarter and all ints in overtime, to lead St Joseph to the win against Greenwich. Wright also scored e-high 31 points in a 75-72 loss to Fairfield

**GAMES TO WATCH**

**t Holy Cross at WCA, Tuesday, Jan. 16, 7** Weather permitting, another tough game A, the reigning NVL champion. WCA was handle Crosby last Friday and jump back e top 10 poll.

**s at Stamford, Friday, Jan. 19, 7 p.m.:** The a difficult three-game stretch for rd. Staples reached both the FCIC and lvision II state final last season.

**ost Catholic at Windsor, Saturday, Jan. m.:** One of the great CCC games in recent y came a little over two years ago at r when Badare Diakite made a winning s the buzzer sounded for Northwest c.

— Joe Morelli

# Ex-Enfield wrestling coach Aleks dies

By Susan Danseyar  
STAFF WRITER

SOMERS — Friends and family are saying farewell to beloved coach Benjamin F. Aleks, who was known for his passion for the sport of wrestling as well as his compassion for others.

Aleks, 76, of Somers, died Wednesday at Johnson Memorial Hospital in Stafford.

Involved in the sport for nearly 60 years, Aleks was known by countless student athletes and their families in Enfield, where he was named head wrestling coach at Fermi High School in 1983. After his retirement in 1994, he stayed on as a volunteer assistant, first with the Falcons and then at Enfield High School.

"Ben was a kind, gentle human being who was very passionate about getting to know what people were all about," said former Enfield mayor and current Town Council member Bob Cressotti, a longtime baseball coach and clinician in town. "He was a kind, giving person who never expected anything in return."

Cressotti and his wife, Marilyn, learned first-hand about Aleks' kindness when he coached their son, Bryan, who has autism. "Bryan was the first student with a disability to compete in the town's wrestling program," Cressotti said. "He helped my son every day at practice, showing him how to compete on a high-school level and helped him with life skills."

Cressotti said Aleks was the most "giving" person he ever met. "He knew the deep inner feelings of anyone he had a relationship with and was always helping others."

Cressotti said Aleks donated his own money to set up equipment in the wrestling room inside the Annex at the former Fermi High School. So it was a privilege, Cressotti said, to be at the dedication of the wrestling practice facility that was named the Ben Aleks Wrestling Center in December 2019.

"It was very touching," Cressotti said. "Ben was speechless to see the room named after him."

Since 2023, an annual multi-team meet at Enfield High School is named the Ben Aleks Duals.

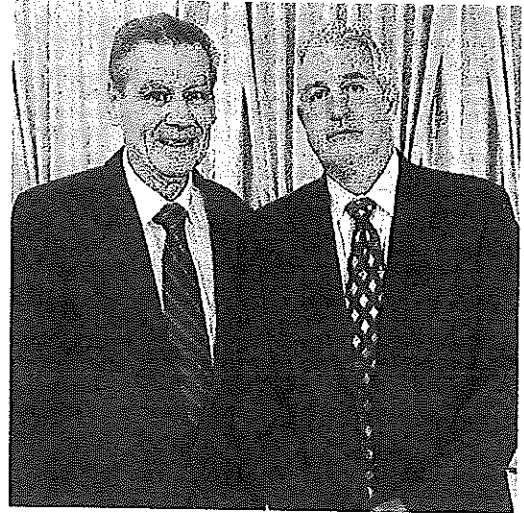
Aleks was inducted into the Connecticut chapter of the National Wrestling Hall of Fame in 2022. Ted Oczkowski, president of the Connecticut chapter, described Aleks as "a true gentleman who was a very caring and compassionate person."

One must have evidence of having had a positive influence on wrestling to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, Oczkowski said. Aleks certainly did, he said, and showed his dedication to the sport at an early age. "Ben went to Curry College, which didn't have a wrestling team," he said. "So he would hitchhike 25 miles daily to go to the Attleboro YMCA and wrestle for its team."

In 1967, he said, Aleks won the New England YMCA wrestling championship and finished second at the national YMCA championships.

Aleks was extremely generous, Oczkowski said. "During COVID, when we couldn't have fundraisers, Ben made up in cash what we lost."

Aleks was born in Dorchester, Massachusetts, and grew up in Longmeadow, where he developed into an outstanding athlete at an early age, according to his obituary.



Gery deSilmas Jr./Contributed photo

Ben Aleks, left, is honored by the Connecticut Sports Media Alliance in 2021 at its Gold Key Dinner. At right is former Danbury High wrestling coach Ricky Shook.

He lived in Somers with his wife, Candace, for many years.

Aleks attended Cathedral High in Springfield, where he was the school's first wrestler to compete in 1961 at 103 pounds and won his match with a pin, Oczkowski said.

After graduating from Curry College in 1969, Aleks took his first coaching job at Milton Academy in Massachusetts. A year later at age 23, he began coaching at Cathedral. In eight seasons, his teams compiled a 18-27-4 record, winning 94 straight matches and capturing three western Massachusetts championships.

Aleks ran a youth wrestling program at the Springfield YMCA in the early 1970s and was a New England AAU official from 1968-73.

In his first year as coach at Fermi, the Falcons were second in Class LL. In 1987, Fermi won a CCC East championship and were sixth in Class L. Aleks coached José Navarro, who was named an All-American by Amateur Wrestling News.

In 2019, Aleks was one of the recipients of the John Wentworth Good Sport Award by the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance for unselfishly giving hundreds of hours of his time to the betterment of athletics in the community. He was inducted into the Enfield Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016.

Visiting hours will be Sunday from 2 to 5 p.m. at Browne Funeral Home at 43 Shaker Road in Enfield. The funeral is Monday at 9 a.m. at Browne Memorial Funeral Chapels, followed by a Liturgy of Christian Burial at 10:30 a.m. at Holy Family Church, 23 Simon Road, Enfield. Rites of Committal and Military Honors will follow at Somers Center Cemetery, 81 Battle St., Somers. In lieu of flowers, donations in Ben Aleks' memory may be made to the ALS Association, 1300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 600, Arlington, VA 22209 or ALS UNITED Connecticut, 4 Oxford Road, Suite E4, Milford, CT 06460.