



ARNO **NIEMAND** Outstanding American 2017

Ask any who know him to describe Arno Niemand and they will say quite simply that "he loves wrestling". Men's wrestling, women's wrestling, folkstyle wrestling, freestyle wrestling, it doesn't matter. Niemand, the winner of the Order of Merit, is so passionate about the sport that he devoted significant portions of his time creativity and financial resources to wrestling for most of his adult life.

Niemand's love affair with wrestling began in the early 1950's as a prepster competing for Mercenbun Academy and as team captain for Philips Academy. He earned a varsity spot at Cornell University and helped his team to a second-place finish in the EIWA and a third-place finish in the 1953 NCAA championships. His experiences earned him the nickname "Grappler" shortened by his friends into "Graps", and instilled in him a lifelong devotion to the sport.

After earning his bachelor's from Cornell in 1956 and his master's from the University of Virginia, Niemand went to work for Niemand Industries, a \$20 million sales specialty packaging company. He became president and chief executive officer; serving in that position for 20 years before becoming a chairman for five more.

In 1990, he founded Body Bar systems, a producer of fitness products sold around the world; which has been lead sponsor of USA Wrestling's Women's National Team, helping to pioneer the sport through its first two Olympiads. The company also sponsors collegiate wrestling tournaments.

Niemand was a driving force in Cornell's recent resurgence and was instrumental in helping the school to build a new wrestling facility and women's softball field. He has been a financial supporter of the National Wrestling Coaches Association "Building Leaders for Life" program.

In addition, he has supported the College Sports Council in its battle for true gender fairness in sports, the New York Athletic Club, the Mercenbun Academy

wrestling program and has been a long-time board member of Excel Wrestling Club in Colorado.

At a time when the sport of wrestling has needed more energy and support than ever before, Niemand has been there to provide it. For his efforts on behalf of wrestling, he was awarded the FILA Gold Star for 2008, the highest award granted by the international governing body.

In recognition of his lifelong devotion and support of wrestling, Arno has received many awards including the FILA Gold Star in 2008, the National Wrestling Hall of Fame Order of Merit in 2009, and Cornell University Hall of Distinguished Wrestling Alumni Award in 2010.

Arno has written several books including "Miracle on the Mat" detailing Cornell College IOWA road to the 1947 NCAA championship. Currently he is working on a biography of the great Henry Wittenberg; segments of which have been published in the Friends of Long Island Wrestling annual journal.

We are proud to welcome Arno Niemand into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame as an Outstanding American.

