

# SAM BOONE

## LIFETIME SERVICE AWARD THE NATIONAL WRESTLING HALL OF FAME

From the pioneering 1953 Freeport High School wrestling team (in his senior year Sam won the Eastern District Olympic Trials in Freestyle Wrestling) to the elite Kodokan Institute of Tokyo, Japan (compliments of the U.S. military- where he earned several black belts in some of the more lethal martial arts ) and on to the 1964 Greco Roman National Championships (which he won at 136.5 pounds) Sam Boone pursued his love for competition and the sport of wrestling.

In those days, everyone who saw Sam Boone on the mat quickly knew they were watching premium athletic talent in the hands of a tough, smart and determined competitor. When Sam backed up his 1964 Greco Roman National Title with a win at The Greco Roman Olympic Team Trials he had secured a berth on The United States Olympic Team and had a childhood dream turned into reality. The consensus among the Long Island wrestling community was that Sam was a lock for the Gold. He was on a roll, with each match a more impressive performance than the one before. All he had to do was get on that plane and bring back the medal. But it was not to be. Sam sustained an injury at the Olympic training camp too close to the event for rehabilitation and he was forced to withdraw.

With Sam's competitive career ended he returned to Long Island to raise a wonderful family with his beloved wife Bernice. What lay behind was a record of hundreds of dual match victories, a national championship, and some spectacular athletic performances. (During his military career, while on the way to winning the Inter-Service Judo Championships, Sam defeated the heavyweight defending Grand Champion in the final bout.)

What lay ahead were coaching assignments at Freeport High School, the Long Island Grapplers and Calhoun High School. With a record of coaching achievement, Sam went on to head coaching posts with the Nassau Police Olympic Team and Roosevelt High School. In all these positions, Sam brought his special contribution to wrestling. That contribution was a fusion of traditional wrestling with techniques from the martial arts. A slight change of position, a little difference in grip, an eye trained in the East to detect the telltales of balance and momentum and suddenly Sam Boone's wrestlers were a force to be reckoned with.

As impressive as this record is, Sam's greatest achievement lies in his countless hours of volunteer work that continued over decades. Energy, time and creativity, at parks, school basement wrestling rooms, recreation centers, and church facilities throughout Long Island. Through associations with Rockville Centre Recreation, Centennial Park, The Nassau County Department of Recreation, The Police Athletic League, The Freeport Block Association, and organizations too numerous to mention, Sam Boone gave back to his community with wrestling tournaments, clinics, and programs. Especially at those times and places where young people were most at risk, Sam Boone always stepped forward. And just as anyone who saw him on the mat recognized his athletic talents; anyone who saw Sam Boone reaching out to young people instantly recognized the indefinable talent of a great teacher. That special gift for getting and holding attention and imparting value and meaning along with information. The great values of the sport of wrestling: courage, hard work, the love of competition, the desire to excel and refusal to quit were what Sam Boone coached and imparted. Thousands of young men and women not only profited from his teaching ability, but also benefitted from his integrity, friendship and dedication.

The Friends of Long Island Wrestling are proud to recommend Sam Boone for the "Lifetime Service Award" and to induct him into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame.

