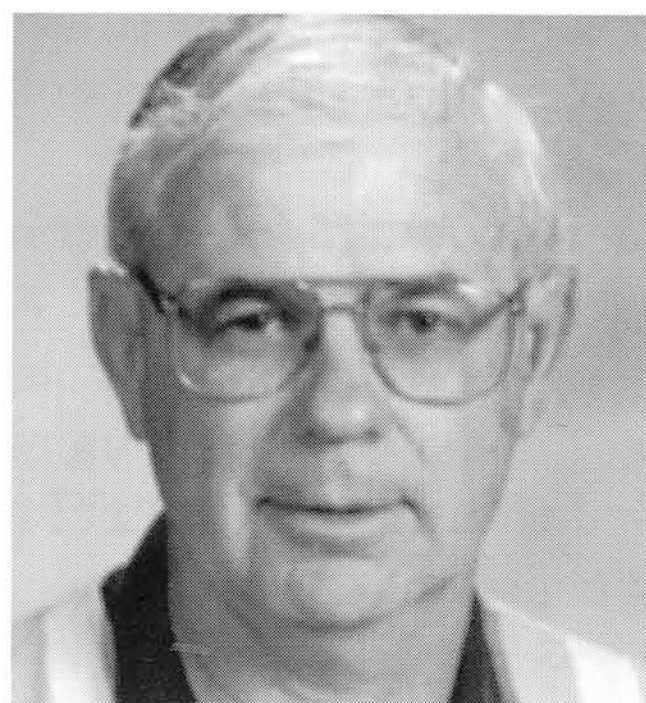


# John Walter

## Champion Wrestler—Coach of Champion Wrestlers



*John Walter*

John Walter would qualify to enter The Hall of Fame as either a coach or as a wrestler. He was equally successful as both.

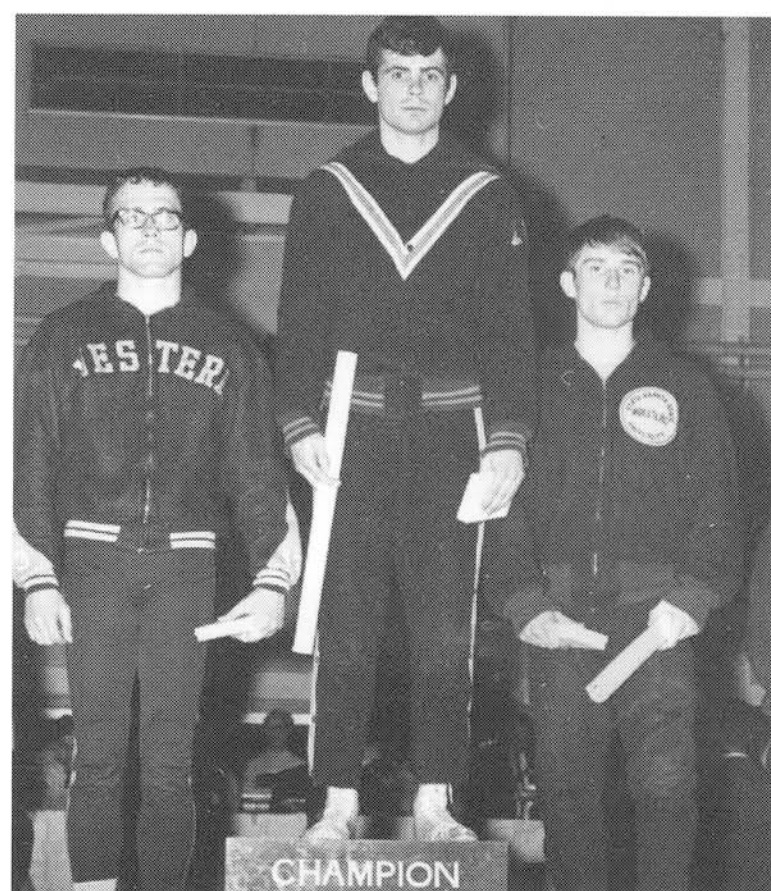
John wrestled for Bob Bury at Calhoun High School in the early 1960's. It was under Bury that John would learn the basic techniques and develop the unorthodox style that would make him a champion

wrestler and successful coach. This style of wrestling, with great emphasis on the use of legs would be a Mepham trademark for two decades

In 1965, his senior year at Calhoun, John won both the League and Nassau County 126lb. Championship. He followed that by winning the New York State Championship. In 1966 he was the Senior Metropolitan Champion.

He had a great college career at Oswego. He was the NCAA College Division runner-up in 1968 and in 1969 won the NCAA college division championship while competing at 123 lbs. In doing so, he became the first NCAA wrestling champion from a SUNY school. That year, he was selected as one of America's Outstanding College Athletes.

John returned to Nassau County and became an assistant coach at Calhoun H.S. and later coach of Brookside Junior H.S. When Kenny Hunte was ready to retire as coach of Mepham H.S. at the end of the 1975 season, he asked John to take over the program. He



*John was the NCAA College Division 123 lb. Champion in 1969 while wrestling for Oswego. He became the first SUNY wrestler to achieve this honor.*

began in 1976 as the third wrestling coach in Mepham history. "Sprig" Gardner and Ken Hunte, who preceded him were two of the most successful coaches in Nassau County history and a tough act to follow.

He more than "followed" in fine fashion. In his twenty year career at Mepham he coached the "Pirates" to twenty winning seasons and three Section 8 titles. (two outright: 1978 and 1980 and a tie with Locust valley in 1985). He finished with 220 dual meet victories. His wrestlers won 18 individual Nassau County Championships and three became New York State Champions. One of them was Mike Arena who was named "Most Outstanding Wrestler" at the 1984 New York State tournament.

John and his wife Lynda have three sons. All three boys wrestled for Plainedge High School, and two would follow in their fathers footsteps and win Nassau County Championships. Glen in 1990 and Craig in 1991 and again 1993 won Section Eight titles.

After retiring from the head coaching position at Mepham, John continued to be involved with coaching becoming the Junior High coach at Bethpage. This year as he enters his final year before retiring from teaching, John is once again "Home" at Mepham, assisting Coach Mike Muscara with the varsity program.

Since leaving the his head coaching position, John has been honored by the wrestling community. In the winter of 2001 he was inducted into the New York State Wrestling Hall of Fame, and in November of this year he was inducted as a charter member of the Oswego College Athletic Hall of Fame. And now, The Friends of Long Island Wrestling congratulate John on his induction into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame with a "Lifetime Service" award.



*John is pictured with assistant coach Mike Muscara and their 4 Nassau County Champions; Left to right; Alan Amella, Mike Arena, Dennis Mejias and Chris Amella, after the 1984 Section 8 Tournament*