

Good morning everyone and welcome to the Massachusetts State Track Coaches Association's induction ceremony of former cross country and track and field greats from Massachusetts. These athletes, when competing in high school, in college or beyond, established themselves amongst the best that this state, this country and even this world has ever seen. My name is Bob L'Homme and I coach both the Cross Country and Track and Field teams at Bishop Feehan High School in Attleboro, Ma. And on behalf of the Hall of Fame Committee, Chuck Martin, Jayson Sylvain, Tim Cimeno and Mike Glennon I'd like to thank you all for attending. I am the chairman of the Hall of Fame Committee and I will be your MC for this morning's induction ceremony.

The state of Massachusetts currently has approximately 100 athletes that have been inducted into the Hall of Fame. Names like Johnny Kelley, Billy Squires, John Thomas, Alberto Salazar, Lynn Jennings, Mark Coogan, Calvin Davis, and Shalane Flanagan to name a few are sprinkled within those 100 athletes. Last year we inducted Abby D'Agostino from Masconomet High School, Fred Lewis from Springfield Tech, Karim Ben Saunders from Cambridge R&L, Anne Jennings of Falmouth, Arantxa King of Medford, Ron Wayne of Brockton and Heather Oldham of Woburn H.S. All of these past inductees were your high school league champions, divisional champions, state champions, New England champions, Division 1, 2 and 3 collegiate champions and High School and collegiate All Americans. There are United States Champions, Pan Am Champions, World Champions and Olympic Champions. Moreover, after today there will be 7 more names added to this list. To be part of this illustrious group is certainly an honor and a privilege that you, here gathered today, will now become a part of. Specifically with the inductees this year, we have a very multi-talented group of inductees. You have set yourselves

up for this award through hard work, dedication to your sport and determination and along with God given talents have achieved at the highest level. You have become in reality what you all were potentially as young men, women and athletes. You have completed the circle and you are all now proud members of the race of life.

Our first inductee is Alison Culley now Ellsworth a 1998 graduate of Foxboro H.S. Hall of Fame Coach Kevin Murphy said that what stands out the most about Alison is her “Character”. She is kind, caring and friendly to all. Her honesty and maturity have always been her strong points. She has a great personality and is very loyal. She always ranked #1 in Sportsmanship.” These are powerful words which when combined with her athletic accomplishments make Alison more than deserving of induction into the Hall of Fame.

Alison’s career is long and storied. It starts with the 8<sup>th</sup> grade which was in the high school so Alison was able to compete for the high school team. As an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, in the very competitive Hockomock league, she went the spring season undefeated in the 100, 200 and 400. She would accomplish this feat for five years in a row. Never losing a dual meet race in 5 years, I’d say her future looked bright. She would go on to qualify for the outdoor nationals as an 8<sup>th</sup> grader and would accomplish this feat 4 more times.

For the sake of time, I’m not going to give too many details but in short her freshman year she was 2<sup>nd</sup> at the class and All State Meet in the 300 yards and in the spring she won the class 400 and was 2<sup>nd</sup> in the All State meet. Her sophomore year she won the class 300 and 2<sup>nd</sup> in All State and outdoors she won the class and All State meet 200.

In her junior indoor year she finished 1<sup>st</sup> in the 300 at the State Coaches meet, the class meet and the All-State meet. She won the 400 in 59.23 at the Boston Indoor Games. These first place finishes continued in the spring. Finishing 1<sup>st</sup> in the 200m at the State Coaches, Class meet, All-State meet again. At her class meet she ran 24.4 to set a Class D record.

Her senior year was one that only others dream of. In her indoor season at the State Coaches meet she finished 1<sup>st</sup> in the 300m with a time of 40.64, the class meet in 39.90 and then the All-State meet in 39.71 (meet record) and to put icing on the cake she won the New England Championship setting another meet record in 39.45. To put the candle on the cake she would get a 1st place finish in the Boston Indoor games 400 with a meet record of 56.53.

In the spring, wanting to shake it up a little she decided to run the 100m at the State coaches meet and you guessed, a 1<sup>st</sup> place finish 11.8. At the Class Meet it was another 1<sup>st</sup> in the 200 in 24.7 and a first at the All-State meet running 25.43

Alison ended her high school career as a 5x Boston Globe and Herald All Star and her senior year was the Globe runner of the year. She qualified for the National High School meet 5 years in a row and was chosen the New England Runner Magazine Runner of the Year.

After high school, Alison attended Syracuse University on a full scholarship. While competing for the Orange her success continued. She was a 3x track and field MVP, the ECAC 60m champion, a 2x ECAC 100m champ and a Big East 100m Champion. At the end of her collegiate career and as captain of the track team she would have 6 Syracuse records in the 60m, 100m, 200m, 4x100, 4xs400 and DMR. When asked about her high school days she says, "I could not have accomplished what I did without my parents, they did not miss a Track meet (no matter how far away it was) from my first meet in 8th grade to my last meet as a senior in high school. They dedicated every weekend for track! I could also not have done it without Coach Tom Ryan and Coach Kevin Murphy, I am honored to have had the privilege to run

under these 2 dedicated coaches. Could Alison please come forward and accept her induction into the MSTCA Athlete Hall of Fame.

Our next inductee is Sheela Agrawal a 1999 graduate of Joseph Case High School in Swansea Ma. A two-time Boston Globe Female Athlete of the Year in cross country, Agrawal finished second in the state in her junior and senior cross country seasons. One might say, “oh she finished 2<sup>nd</sup> but when you find out she finished 2<sup>nd</sup> to Olympic silver medalist and recent winner of the New York marathon, that’s not so bad finishing 2<sup>nd</sup>. Agrawal twice qualified for the prestigious Footlocker National Championships, finishing 22<sup>nd</sup> her first time and 11<sup>th</sup> in her senior year, earning All-American honors. As a Junior Agrawal won the New England Championships in the 2 Mile run clocking in at 10:39. As a senior, she won the prestigious Dartmouth Relays in the Mile. Her time of 4:59.4 was the fastest female indoor time in the country. Her time also qualified her for the Millrose Games in Madison Square Garden. Her accomplishments also include a second place finish in the Indoor National Championships in the mile. She also competed in the Outdoor national Championships and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> place in both the 1Mile and 2 Mile. By the time Sheela graduated she would hold the state record in the 1 mile with a time of 4:46.0 and the 2 mile with a time of 10:19.0

At the end of her stellar high school career, she earned a scholarship to Duke University where she would continue to perform at the highest level. At Duke, Sheela became the quintessential Student Athlete. A Duke publication stated the following in 2002:

Duke junior Sheela Agrawal was named to the 2002 Verizon Academic All-District III first team, as announced by Verizon and the College Sports Information Directors of America.

Agrawal, one of the Blue Devils' most decorated female runners ever, is a three-time All-American selection, earning cross country honors as a freshman and sophomore and indoor accolades as a sophomore. This season, she finished 16<sup>th</sup> in the 5,000-meters at the NCAA Indoor

Championships. Her top finishes came at the 2000 NCAA Cross Country Championships, where she was seventh, and at the 2001 NCAA Indoors, where she was ninth in the 3,000-meters.

The Swansea, Mass., native has a 3.710 grade point average as a biology major. Agrawal is a two-time All-East, three-time All-ACC and two-time ACC Academic Honor Roll selection.

As a freshman in 1999-2000, Agrawal was named the ACC's Rookie of the Year for Cross Country and Indoor Track and Field. Her 1 mile PR at Duke was 4:40.0 and she held Duke Records in the indoor 3,000 at 9:23 and 5,000-meters at 16:29 and distance medley relay.

Also at Duke University, Sheela made the USA National Junior Cross-Country team that competed in the IAAF World Cross-Country Championships in Portugal. The team included two other former Massachusetts superstars in Shalane Flanagan and Julie Spolidoro.

Sheela said about those championships *“that was a really humbling experience; the level of competition was unreal. I remember we started out of actual gates. The Kenyan junior national team was right next to Team USA and looked so calm and collected compared to us. Even more intimidating was that most of them were running barefoot. I think they outran all of us except for Shalane.*

When asked about her high school days she says,

*“My closest friends to this day are all the gals I ran with in HS- All have been incredibly successful outside of running which is amazing to me. We encouraged and pushed each other to do our best in all aspects of our lives.*

*I am profoundly indebted to my coach and best friend Judi St. Hilaire who took me under her wing my junior and senior years. If it had not been for her, I probably would have exited the HS running scene altogether and never made it into my dream college.*

After graduating from Duke University, Sheela earned a PHD from Ohio State University. She currently works as an environmental scientist who specializes in water and waste management treatment. She currently resides in University Heights, Ohio. Would Sheela please come forward to accept her induction into the MSTCA Athlete Hall of Fame.



Our next inductee is Brian Crossman of Saint Dominic Savio in East Boston Class of 1984. My first year of coaching was in the spring of 1984. I remember being at the Class C meet and watching this tall lanky kid running the 400. I had heard about him, only by other coaches, no internet at the time. I vividly remember him going out and thought, no way he can hold this, but hold it he did. Winning the 400 in 48.6 setting a new class C record that would stand for 10 years.

Brian would go on to have a much storied career and in three phases. His first stage was obviously his high school career. Brian's memories were of his high school coach Paul Dakin. Coach Dakin was a motivator and it worked on Brian. Coach would say, "You know Crossman, you SHOULD be running this time." Maybe with a little doubt in his voice. This just motivated Brian to prove his coach 'correct'. At the 1984 state coaches meet at the Gordon Track at Harvard University, Coach Dakin said, "You should be able to run about 1:15 in the 600 yard run. His PR up until that point was 1:17. Brian's motivation kicked in and ran a 1:13.0. Brian would win the Class C 600 yard run in 1:13.3, the New England Catholic 200m championship with a time of 22.3, the outdoor Class C 400 meter championship in 48.6 and went on to become the New England 400 meter Championship in 48.9.

Phase two of Brian's journey would take him to Fitchburg State University. There he ran for two coaches. Dave Farnsworth and Jim Sheehan. These two coaches had two different approaches. Dave would get as nervous as Brian before races. According to Brian, the best thing Coach Farnsworth did for him was to assign a teammate to assist Brian after races because he would vomit so violently Brian would need help. Coach Sheehan was just the opposite. He was calm cool and collective. At the Dartmouth relays, just before the 500m run, Coach Sheehan asked Brian what his thoughts were on the upcoming Mike Tyson fight. Brian's response was, "Jim,

I'm a wreck here" but Coach Sheehan's misdirection helped Brian set the meet record and of course the win. Brian's accomplishments in college were monumental, he was a 13 time NCAA Div. III All-American, 3 time National Champion in the 400m and 4x400m relay, he won 4 All-New England titles 400m in 47.44, the 600yard in 1:10.12, 200m in 21.30 and another 400m in 47.13. He also won 7 Div. III New England titles in the 200, 400 and 500m runs. Brian also became the first Div. III athlete to break 48 seconds on the indoor boards.

Brian's third phase was his post collegiate years where he gives Coach Bill Clark most of the credit for his great performances. Brian also gives Coach Clark for teaching him HOW to coach and WHEN to coach. Some of Brian's accomplishments are as follows: he set the current Dartmouth Relay Records in the 400m with a time of 47.40 and the 500m in a time of 1:02.34. In 1990 while running for the USA indoor track and field team vs Russia vs Great Britain anchored the USA 4x400 relay to a come from behind victory with a split of 46.7. In 1991 and 1993 he finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 400m at the USA Mobil Indoor Championships at the famed Madison Square Garden. In 1991 at the USA Olympic Festival he anchored the East Team to a Bronze Medal with a split of 45.7 and in 1995 won the Irish Indoor 400m National Title and on to represent Ireland in the winning 4x400m relay at the Europa-Cup in Estonia. His outdoor PR's are 10.65, 21.38 and 46.60 while indoors they are 21.91, 47.18, 1:02.15 and 1:10.19 And just for the heck of it Brian was the Bobsled BRAKEMAN for Ireland in the 2001 World Cup on Park City Utah. I would like to call Brian Crossman up to accept his induction into the MSTCA Athlete Hall of Fame.

Our next inductee is Pam Hall Grady a 1980 graduate of Weston High School. We were talking to Coach John Monz the other day, who was one of Pam's coaches, and he said, "Why couldn't Pam have been around today, we would have won a couple of state Championships." He said that because back when Pam was in high school, athletes were only allowed to do one running, one field and one relay. Based on Pam's PR's she would have won 3 events today as athletes are allowed to do ANY three events. Que sera, sera.

When the late great throwing guru Joe Donaghue saw 15 year old Pam Hall toss the Shot Put at the 1978 indoor State Meet, he said she has the talent to be a GREAT ONE. Coach Donaghue was certainly correct with that assessment; as Pam Hall went on to dominate the Shot Put in Massachusetts for the next several years. She is a 5 time Boston Globe All Scholastic, as well as the Outdoor Track Boston Globe Athlete of the Year in the 1980.

During the Indoor Season, Pam was Class B State Champion her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons. Unfortunately they didn't have an Indoor All State Meet in those days, if they had she would have locked horns with Pia Iacova her archival from Brockton High School. Both throwers were 8 to 10 feet further than any other Shot Putters in Massachusetts. In Pam's senior season, she had the second furthest Indoor throw in the country and set both Massachusetts and New England Shot Put records.

In Outdoor track, Pam was Massachusetts All State and New England Champion in her Junior and Senior years. Her throw of 45' 1" is still the Massachusetts All-time best Outdoor for the 4K Shot Put. Searching for competition her senior season, Weston Coach John Monz sent her to

the US Junior Nationals in Knoxville, TN where she finished 3rd place. Unfortunately, it took Massachusetts quite some time to realize that throwers can actually throw in multiple events. Back when Pam was competing, throwers were only allowed to enter in one throwing event. She had personal best throws of 124'7" in the discus, 45ft 1" in the shot put, and she tossed the Javelin 123' 9". Those would be some incredible team points in 2018, as throwers can now compete in all three throwing events at the State Championships.

After High School she took her talent to Miami Ohio University where she became a force for the Red Hawks in both the Shot Put and Discus. In her four-year career at Miami she was one of only a few female throwers on her team and credits much of her continued success to men's weight coach Dan Stimpson. By the time she finished her career with Miami Ohio University, she was the All Time Women's point scorer for women's track and field with 319 points. She also earned All-Conference honors twice in the shot put, placing second at the 1982 and 1983 meets, and was a conference scorer for Miami all four years. In 2007, she was inducted into the Miami Ohio University Hall of Fame. She lists her sister Leslie Hall as a main influence as she introduced her to the throwing events. She currently resides with her family in Oxford, Massachusetts. I would now like to call Pam Hall Grady to the front and accept her induction into the MSTCA Athlete Hall of Fame.

Our next inductee is Roberto Cooper Rindge Technical High School Class of 1976. I'd like to read parts of the nomination letter his high school coach, Frank McCarthy sent me.

“Roberto Cooper is considered one of the finest All-Around Track and Field Athletes in Cambridge history. A native of Panama, Roberto left his mark on Cambridge track by competing for Rindge Tech from 1972 to 1976.

Roberto was the driving force that led Rindge to FOUR state championships. He was the true all around track and field athlete. While at Rindge, he ran cross-country and Indoor and Outdoor Track. His talents were exhibited not only on the track, but also in the less heralded field events. While at Rindge, he competed in the 880, 1000 yard, 1 and 2 mile, high jump, pole vault and the relays. He was also a standout in cross-country. Roberto ran, jumped and vaulted himself into the record books. His path of successes led him to breaking many long, established records, including five school records. He still holds the all-time Cambridge track records in the indoor and outdoor high jump.

Roberto's career started as a pure runner. Even though his best event by the end of high school was the high jump. Coach McCarthy, like many of us who have coached, saw only a talented runner and didn't want to take the chance and let a runner compete in a field event!!! After all, he might get hurt!!! But in his junior year, thank God, Roberto was able to convince Coach McCarthy to let him try and it's a darn good thing he did. Roberto set out on a record-breaking journey. He would go on to break two time Olympic medalist and fellow Hall of Famer John Thomas's high jump records in both indoor and outdoor track.

According to coach McCarthy Roberto Cooper's tenacity and strength was never more evident when in his junior year, in a tough dual meet with perennial power Weymouth North and fighting for the Suburban League title, ran a grueling two mile for the win and 10 minutes later and with only after 3 months of practicing the H.J., never clearing higher than 5'10", jumped 6'3" defeating the league champion and securing the Suburban Title for the first time.

Roberto saved his best for his senior year. In the spring of 1976 at the class meet, he ran second in the 880 and then jumped 6'9" to win the event and led Rindge to its first ever outdoor title. A week later at the All State meet, with what some local track aficionados consider the greatest track meet performance in Mass history, Roberto placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 880 with a time of 1:57.2 and a short time later won the high jumped 6'10.25. At the time it was the best high jump in Massachusetts history and 2<sup>nd</sup> best ever in New England.

Roberto was named to several All-Scholastic teams and was the Boston Globe track athlete of the year. He was also twice selected as the Rindge Warrior of the Year. An award that honors the student who contributed the most to his school both on and off the field.

After graduating, Roberto accepted a full scholarship to Adelphi University in New York. It was there that he set and still currently holds their indoor H.J. record at 6'10" and their outdoor school record of 7'2". Those performances earned Roberto All-American status. An interesting statistic I found that I'm not even sure he knows is that: he currently holds the #10 all-time Adelphi best 5 mile with a time of 27:29. At this time I'd like to ask Roberto Cooper to come forward and accept his induction into the MSTA Athlete Hall of Fame.

Our next inductee is Ed Norris a 1966 graduate of Brockton High School. Unfortunately, Ed passed away in 2013. But here to read his induction is Ron Wayne one of the most recent inductees to our Hall of Fame, which he was honored with last year. Ron has come all the way from his home in California to pay homage to Ed. Ron...

Our next inductee is Stephen or as he prefers to be called, “Spike” Paranya. Spike was a 1957 graduate of Lexington H.S. I think most of us in this room remember the TV show “Leave it to Beaver”. Beaver had a big brother named Wally Cleaver. Wally was the all-American high school student. He was the class president and a star athlete. Spike Paranya is a true life Wally Cleaver. If you ever want to google search the Quintessential 1950’s high school hero, you will find a picture of Steve “Spike” Paranya. Spike was a top-notch student and a top-notch athlete.

Spike’s accomplishments at Lexington H.S. are what legends are made of. In addition to being a star athlete he was the president of the National Honor Society and the Lexington H.S. student council.

In his junior year at Lexington, he was the indoor class D winner in the 1000 yard run with a time of 2:28.5. At this time, there was no indoor All State Championship. That spring he would go on to be a double Class D champion in both the 880 with a time of 2:00.7 and the long jump with a leap of 21’6” At the New England’s that year he was 4<sup>th</sup> place in both the 880 and long jumps.

It would be Spike’s senior year where he would put together performances for the ages. In cross country he would place 1<sup>st</sup> while setting a State Meet course record. With many more opportunities on the track, Spike’s indoor and outdoor seasons were filled with unbelievable performances. He was the Class D 1000-yard champion with a time of 2:19.2 which at the time was a State Record. In addition, in the spring he was the Class D 880 yard champion setting another State record of 1:55.5. At the National AAU Senior Championships, Spike placed 5<sup>th</sup> in the 880 running a spectacular time of 1:53.4, which became the Massachusetts best time for the next 12 years and was the 5<sup>th</sup> fastest time in high school history. One of Spikes fondest memories



of high school was running relays. The race that stands out the most was when Spike came from behind to edge out their rival Concord HS in the 880 relay to win the Class D State relay championships. All these performances in him being named a High School Track and Field All-American by Scholastic Coach Magazine.

Spike would matriculate to Wesleyan college where he would continue his outstanding athletic career. One of Spikes most dramatic victories came at the IC4A Championship at Randall's Island NY where he came from behind, again, to out lean Mark Mullin of Harvard. An excerpt from a local newspaper recalls the event like this, "Mullin of Harvard set the pace but could not shake off his rival Paranya. They battled virtually shoulder to shoulder around the whole last lap with Paranya going to the front on his last stride. The 4:15.9 was good for the win. At the Wesleyan Athletes Hall of Fame induction ceremony 2011 where Spike has been inducted, here is what was written about Spike, "Steve "Spike" Paranya was a New England and IC4A track champion in the mile who went on to compete in the NCAA Championships in Philadelphia in 1961, setting a Wesleyan record of 4:07 while placing 5<sup>th</sup> behind runners from Oregon, Kansas and USC. His New England winning time of 4:10.8 was a meet record as he also captured the 880 title in the meet. A tremendous track and cross-country talent at Wesleyan, Paranya was part of 5 Little Three champion varsity teams. He set numerous cross-country course and track facility records during his career and was undefeated in cross country during the 1960 dual meet season culmination in a 2<sup>nd</sup> place finish in the New England Championships, helping Wesleyan place 4 of 21 teams. He also was the New England mile titlist in 1960 and participated in the 1960 Olympic Trials. After college, Spike entered the United State Marine Corps where he was the administrative competitor and coach. A couple of the notable athletes that Spike would coach on

that Marine Team were Larry Rawson and Billy Mills, who would go on to win the 10,000 meter Gold Medal in the 1964 Olympics.

In addition to these Athlete Hall of Fames, Spike Paranya is also in the Sidney High School Sports Coaches Hall of Fame where as a volunteer, he coach successfully SIX New York State Public High School field event jumping champions. At this time, I would like to call Spike Paranya to the front to accept his induction into the MSTCA Athlete Hall of Fame



