



Charlie Gadson Courage Exemplified!

By Lou Grant & John M. Kokolakis



Charlie Gadson

The Friends of Long Island Wrestling are pleased to induct Charlie Gadson into the National Hall of Fame and Museum as a Medal of Courage winner.

Charlie's long list of myriad wrestling achievements have their origin at Huntington H.S. where he won two Suffolk County

crowns, including MOW in 1972 and a NYS championship in 1973.

Following high school he won the junior college national championship for Farmingdale and went on to win NCAA Division I All-American honors competing at Iowa State for Dr. Harold Nichols. He also competed for the United States in the 1979 Tbilisi Tournament that some characterize as a tougher event than the Olympics, and in addition, he frequently placed in the rugged Midlands Tournament, often referred to as the "Super Bowl of Wrestling." Charlie even was a United States Olympic team alternate.

Mr. Gadson won USA "Wrestling's Grand Champion Belt" in 1984, signifying the highest accumulation of points earned in national and international level competition, in effect winning the nation's Most Outstanding Wrestler Award."

Following the end of his competitive career, Charlie served for 10 years as an assistant and head coach back at Farmingdale State University. As a wrestling coach, Charlie had the unique ability to take a below average level high school wrestler and mold him into an athlete who could hold his own at any wrestling tournament in the country. Coach Gadson was also available to his boys as a mentor or a caring older brother who advised us on topics such as life, school, and girls.

Eventually employed in the private sector, Charlie remained active as a clinician in area wrestling camps and at volunteering to work in and out of season with young wrestlers.

Unfortunately cancer is no respecter of persons, not even wrestlers. When Charlie was stricken with brain cancer several years ago, he had to undergo surgery to remove a tumor and then submitted to chemotherapy and radiation. He fought through his affliction, recovered, and resumed his work. Not even the strain of recovering from cancer could diminish Charlie's deep seated love for wrestling and those who participate in the sport.

To this day he volunteers his time to work with youth wrestlers near his home in Huntington Station.

The Friends of Long Island Wrestling join all those whose lives have been touched by Charley Gadson in saluting this remarkable coach and human being. Congratulations!

