

# GARY MIMS

## Mr. Massapequa By Al Bevilacqua

We are pleased to nominate Gary Mims for induction into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame and Museum.

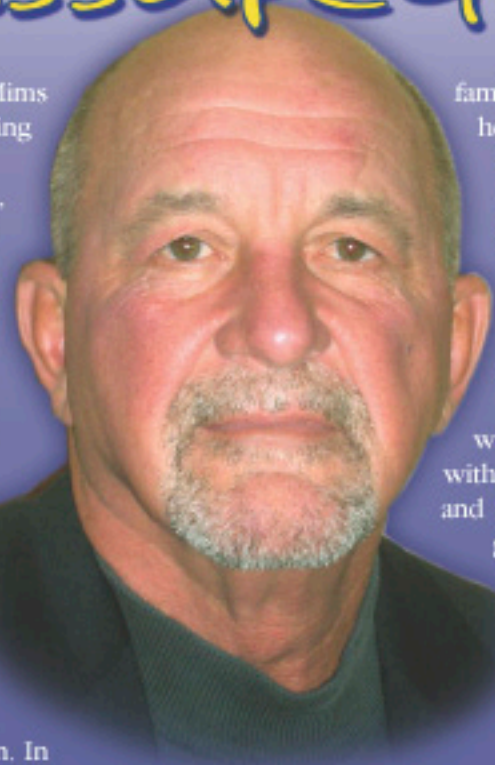
Although Gary grew up in Freeport, he moved to Massapequa in 1963 as an 11th grade student where he wrestled for Hall of Famer, Al Bevilacqua. Gary also participated in football, wrestling, and lacrosse. In his senior year he was elected captain of wrestling and lacrosse, becoming all league in both sports.

After graduation, he began his college career at CW Post College on a partial lacrosse scholarship. He participated in both sports for the "Pioneers". He transferred the following year to Yankton University in South Dakota graduating with a BA degree in education. In 1975 he earned a masters degree from CW Post.

While at Yankton he participated in wrestling, captaining the team his senior year while winning a conference and team championship with the "Greyhounds". After graduation he returned to Massapequa serving as a substitute teacher and part time wrestling coach. In 1969 he became a certified physical education teacher and coach in one of the elementary schools continuing his coaching duties with football and wrestling.

In 1977, Gary was elevated to the head coaching position of wrestling and assistant varsity football coach. His leadership in both sports produced spectacular results. Gary retired from teaching in 1997 but continued to coach the wrestling team until 2006.

But there is more to Gary's coaching than a long tenure and a successful record. Massapequa wrestling alumnus, James P. O'Rourke (class of '77) offers this eloquent testimony: "Every athlete who Gary coached will tell you that the lessons he taught went far beyond the sport itself. He taught 'life lessons' in attempt to prepare all of us for the world in which we would be competing. The consistent lessons included hard work, sacrifice, discipline, persistence, humility, respect, the right way and the wrong way to be competitive, the right and the wrong way to treat our



family members, friends, and teachers-and he always stressed the importance of academics. As Gary watched his student-athletes graduate and go on to succeed in a variety of endeavors through the application of these lessons, he stressed these lessons even more enthusiastically. And these lessons were reinforced by the example that he set."

Gary's other loves other than wrestling are golf and his long relationship with the Town of Oyster Bay as a lifeguard and captain, beginning with serving as lifeguard under Hall of Fame wrestling coach "Doppy Doherty" in 1963. In 1991, Gary was appointed South Shore Coordinator of Lifeguards, and he continues as captain of lifeguards at the beautiful Tobay Beach.

Massapequa High School recently celebrated its 50th Anniversary of high school wrestling in the 2005-2006 season. During the annual Massapequa H.S. Christmas Tournament, the wrestling alumni and Parents Club sponsored a beautiful Social inviting back hundreds of alumni of the wrestling program. Prior to the finals 102 wrestling alumni were introduced to the large audience honoring the retirement of Coach Gary Mims.

Massapequa HS Wrestling has been blessed by having only three coaches the past 50 years, providing the continuity and sustained competitiveness during that long period. Gary has been involved with Massapequa Wrestling for 43 of those years as a wrestler, assistant, and the past 28 years as the head coach. In addition to coaching, Gary served for many years as president of the Nassau County Wrestling Coaches Association.

His record that includes 291 dual meet victories, 161 qualifying champions, 66 team tournament Champions, 28 Section Eight Champions, 3 New York State Champions, 6 Section Eight team dual meet championships, 8 Section Eight Tournament team championships speaks for itself. Under his leadership Gary's teams have sustained a quality of excellence that spans four decades.