



Connecticut Phenoms-Part II

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“The quality of a person’s life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence, regardless of their chosen field of endeavor.”

Vince Lombardi, Coach Green Bay Packers

Hartford Public High School is the second oldest high school in America founded as Thomas Hooker’s Latin School in 1638. The name was changed to HPHS in 1847. The oldest high school in America is *Boston Latin* founded in 1635 in Boston, Massachusetts. HPHS is located near the Harriet Beecher Stowe House and the Mark Twain House. For those of you who are not familiar with the above, Farmington Ave is the nearest main street.

Today the school population consists of approximately 1,300 students and has produced a plethora of outstanding academic and athletic phenoms. The following is a short list:

1. **Edward M. Gallaudet** – 1851-President of Gallaudet Univ. in Washington, D.C. from 1864-1910.
2. **Harold Rome** – 1923-Tin Pan Alley & Broadway songwriter.
3. **Dr. Howard L. Warring**-1921-Track Team-Howard Univ. Medical School 1928.
4. **Paul “Dutch” Eschholz**-1922-Football, Basketball, Baseball & Tennis-Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute-11 Varsity Letters & RPI Hall of Fame.
5. **George Kirgo**-1943-author, screenwriter & founder of Nat. Film Preservation Board of Library of Congress.

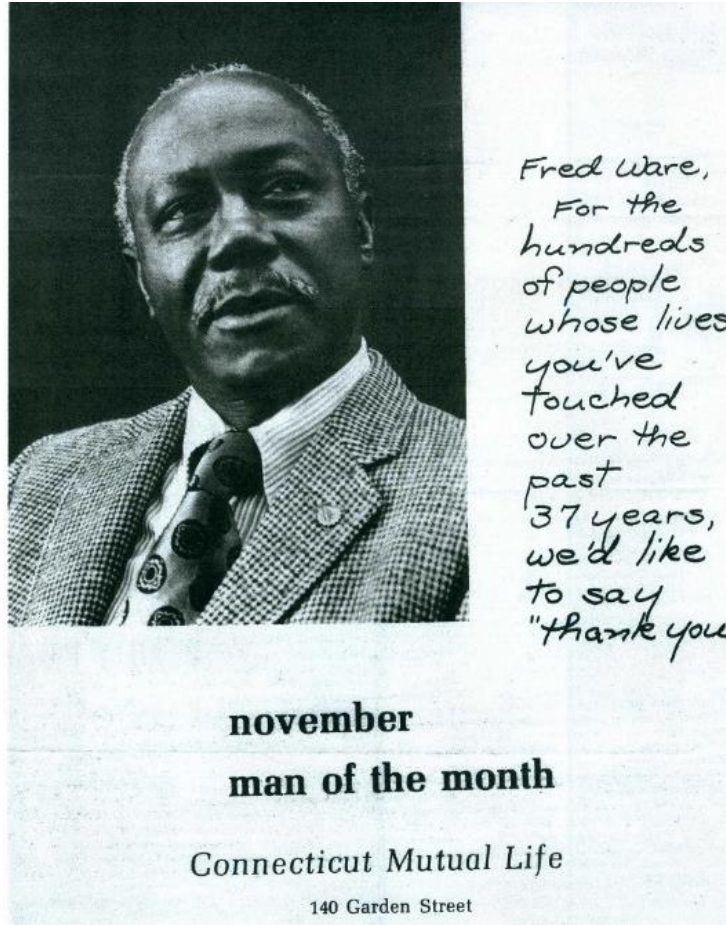
6. **Lindy Remigino** – 1949-Gold Medalist in Track-1952 Olympics.
7. **Carrie Saxon Perry**-1949-Mayor of Hartford-1989-1994.
8. **Nick Koback** -1953 former Major League Baseball player with Pittsburg Pirates.
9. **Don Langenauer** – 1953 Basketball, a deadly jump shooter against this writer in summer games.
10. **Clarence “Sonny” Thomas**-1954 & 1955 All-State - Basketball.
11. **Stanley “Sonny” Egnat**- 1958 All-State - Basketball.
12. **Eugene Jenkins**- 1958-59 All-State - Football & Track.
13. **Ron Copes**-1958-59 Football & Basketball-Lincoln Univ. (Mo) – Officer- Colonel U. S. Army.
14. **Fred Koury** 1959- Football – (All-State 1958)
15. **Don Bolk** 1959 – Football, Basketball & Track
16. **Jimmy Benedict**-1960-Co-Captain & Providence College Basketball 1964-66.
17. **Stanley Poole**- 1961 All-State & All New England Basketball (MVP) – Wilberforce Univ. B. A. 1968.
18. **Pat Burke** -1961-Basketball-New England Championship Team, Fairfield Univ. 1962-1965- Basketball.
19. **Brian Smith** 1961- Football & Basketball.
20. **Ed Griffin**- 1961 & 1962 All-State, All New England, All-American Basketball Team & Coach of State Champion Bulkeley H. S.
21. **Bruce Maddox** - 1962 Basketball, All CIAC Tournament Team.
22. **Cliff Thornton**- 1963 All-State-Basketball.
23. **Dwight Tolliver**-1967-All State, All New England, All-American (Basketball); Univ. Rhode Island & Coach (Weaver H. S.)
24. **Bob Nash** 1968-All-State Basketball, All New England, U. of Hawaii, NBA Detroit Pistons, Head Coach U. of Hawaii & Toyama Grouses in Japan.
25. **Denise L. Nappier**-1969-VA. State Univ. 1973- Treasurer, State of Conn.
26. **Eddie Perez** -1976 - Mayor of Hartford.
27. **Gerald Lewis**-1976- Football & Basketball-Captain; Florida A & M alum.
28. **Marlon Starling**- 1976-WBC & WBA Welterweight World Boxing Champion.
29. **Pamela Floyd Cranford**-Track, Volleyball & Basketball; Prairie View A & M alum, UConn Masters in Social Work; Bd. of Directors Town of Manchester.

30. **Michael Adams**- 1981 – Boston College –NBA Player & All-Star.
31. **Marcus Camby** -1993-U. of Massachusetts, College Player of the Year, NBA Player & All-Star.
32. **Michael Thompson**- 1994- Basketball - All-Conference.
33. **Elisha Joseph**-2006- Football, Basketball & Track-All-State, All-Conference & Temple Univ.

BASKETBALL

This article is not about any of the above. Missing from this listing is the central figure in this story. *Enter Fred Ware, Class of 1934.* Fred Ware was an outstanding basketball and baseball player at HPHS making the varsity basketball team as freshman in 1930. This story is about Fred and Willie Ware (Weaver) who were not only outstanding athletes but made a valuable contribution to the Greater Hartford Area in general and the Hartford Recreational Department, in particular. Hundreds of boys and girls were the direct and vicarious beneficiary of their excellent work, high moral character and commitment to excellence.

Fred and Willie Ware collectively gave almost a century of active service to the Hartford Parks and Recreation Department. Beginning in 1937, they coached youth teams and maintained community playgrounds all over the City of Hartford. In Hartford's North End a playground on Windsor Street is named for Willie Ware. In 1996, the Urban League named an annual program for community athletic competition after Fred Ware.



Fred Ware played 4 years of basketball at HPHS from 1930-34. ***He was selected All-City every year and Connecticut All-State as a junior and senior.*** Also, Fred has the distinction of being the first African-American elected captain of the basketball team. He lettered in baseball 4 years and played both second base and outfield. With all due respect to the athlete's listed above only a few can match Fred Ware's achievements as a high school athlete. After high school Fred played semi-pro basketball as a forward for the Chicago Colored Clowns, the precursor to the Harlem Globetrotters. Fred Ware was the bellwether of every team he played on. ***He also played for the "jewel" of the City of Hartford, Bill Savitt's Gems.*** For you hip-hop readers Bill Savitt owned a jewelry store in Hartford and gave banquets, watches and other gifts to athletes and teams for their outstanding achievements. Bill Savitt was extraordinary man and known as ***"Mr. Community."***

WIREMOLD

Wiremold is a privately held company formerly owned by D. H. Murphy and family located at 60 Woodlawn St., in West Hartford, Connecticut. Insiders referred to it as “Waremold” because Richard “Buster” Ware is the first member of his family to join the company in 1922. Buster’s brother, Walter joined the company in 1924. Walter’s sons Fred & Willie joined the company in 1936 and 1941 respectively. Fred and Willie were highly regarded and well respected employees by co-workers and by the Murphy family. Fred retired as Safety Director after 41 years in 1978 and Willie retired after 40 years of service in 1981.

The Wiremold Company’s basketball team was associated with the Hartford Industrial League. In 1946-1947, they were the Division B Champions. The team consisted of **Fred Ware**, Willie Ware, James Griffin, Armand DesRoberts, Thomas Begley, Thomas Connors, Albert Nelson and Arthur Hill.

1946-47 Wiremold Basketball Team Champions



Captain Fred Ware

Fred's children Ferne, Gary and Bradley all attended college. Ferne and Bradley graduated from Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts. Tufts is rated by Forbes at number 32 out of 650 colleges and universities in America. Ferne is retired from International Business Machines (IBM) and was employed in the Hartford and Washington, D.C. offices. Bradley a UConn Law School graduate is retired from the U. S. Department of Justice. Gary recently passed away and has joined his father, mother and uncle in a better place.



1946-47 H.I.A.L Division B Championship Trophy

The Wiremold Company's basketball team was associated with the Hartford Industrial League. They were frequent league champions.

In 1984, three years after Willie's retirement and six years after Fred's, the company paid special tribute to the Wares in a *Wiremeold World* article. ***In 2003 Fred Ware was inducted into the Hartford High School Athletic Hall of Fame.*** The 2003 inductees included such illustrious members as Hank Giardi (Football), Joe Kubachka (Coach), Joella Marshall (Coach), Stan Poole (Basketball), Dwight Tolliver (Basketball) and many others.

CONCLUSION

Fred and Willie Ware remind me of a professional boxer who is shadowboxing. Shadowboxing is a term used to describe a boxer sparring with his shadow. However, the difference is that Fred and Willie's shadows are slightly larger than their image. When this happens you can rest assure they are not contenders. ***They are CHAMPIONS.*** This is how I see Fred and Willie Ware.

About the Author

James A. Johnson is an accomplished Trial Lawyer and concentrates on Sports and Entertainment Law, serious Personal Injury and Insurance coverage. Jim grew up in West Hartford and was captain of the Conard H. S. basketball team. He played with and against a few members on the above listing. Johnson is an active member of the Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas and Federal Court Bars. He can be reached at www.JamesAJohnsonEsq.com

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