

Ross Hall of Fame inductee, 2005

George Branco

George Branco was a football and wrestling star at Fremont Ross High School from 1963 through 1966.

He won three letters in both sports.

George earned All-Buckeye Conference honors in football to go along with All-Northwest Ohio District and All-Ohio honors as a linebacker. He was a first-team selection on both teams. He served as one of the four Little Giant captains as a senior.

In wrestling, George was co-captain as a junior and won the Buckeye Conference 154-pound championship. He followed that up as a senior by winning the 167-pound title. The same year, George qualified for the state tournament. A rib injury in the first round at the State meet ended Branco's tournament prematurely.

George attended Heidelberg College on a scholarship, continued to play football and wrestle, and excelled in the classroom. He was a proud member of the Excelsior Men's Club and admitted later in life to a slew of "Animal House– like" activities he and his brothers were involved in. They sure had a blast and remained brothers for life. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Heidelberg, he attended Toledo University, where he received his MBA in Business and Purchasing.

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Leslie Hasselbach

Leslie Hasselbach earned six letters at Ross, competing in diving, track, and cross-country. She also won four letters in cheerleading

Four of the athletic letters were in diving, where she set numerous team, sectional, and district records.

As a freshman, Leslie set school records in the 6- and 11-dive events and improved on them each of the next three years.

She won four league or conference diving titles along with sectional titles as a junior and a senior. She also won the district title as a senior.

She qualified for the state meet in her sophomore year, finishing 19th, and was seventh as a senior, two days after her father tragically died in an automobile accident.

Leslie also won several invitational diving titles in her four years, including the Cleveland State Viking Invitational in her senior year.

Leslie won numerous other honors, including the State Board of Education Merit Award, Academic All-Ohio, Presidential Fitness Award, and the Ross Senior Female Athlete of the Year.

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Jessie Heidelberg

Jessie Heidelberg compiled a 47-3 record in his junior and senior years while a lightweight wrestler for the Ross High School Little Giants wrestling team from 1974 to 1977.

He won two Buckeye Conference wrestling titles and was the sectional and district champion during his junior and senior seasons. He served as the Little Giants captain as a senior.

Jessie was a state tournament qualifier in his junior and senior years.

Competing mainly in the 105-pound weight division, Jessie was named the Mal Mackey Invitational Tournament's most valuable wrestler while winning the division championship.

That same year, Ross entered the prestigious Medina Invitational Tournament, which was considered a "mini" state meet. Undaunted by the field of talent, Jessie won the 105-pound title.

While winning the Mal Mackey and Medina titles, Jessie added championship performances in the Toledo Rogers Invitational in his last two seasons at Ross.

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Mindy Ickes

Mindy Ickes qualified for the Ohio High School State Swimming Meet in her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons, earning four letters at Ross from 1993-1997.

She was the second Ross female swimmer to qualify for the state meet, and in all three years at the state meet, Mindy competed in the three events. She was the first female Ross swimmer to score points at the state meet.

Mindy was a member of the Ross record-setting 200 medley, 200 freestyle, and 400 freestyle relay teams. She once held the school records in the 200 individual medley (2:11.92) and the 100 breaststroke (1:07.78). She held the school record in the 500 freestyle until 1999.

She was a four-year district qualifier and had runner-up finishes in district events her junior and senior years.

Mindy earned All-Ohio, All-District, Academic All-American, and all-Great Lakes League honors. She was a first-team All-GLL honoree in the 200 individual medley and 100 breaststroke. She was also selected as the most valuable swimmer for the Ross girls in 1994-95, won the Coach's Award in 1995-96 and 1996-97, and served as the team captain as a senior.

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Bill Sherlow

Bill Sherlow won four high school letters, all in swimming, while competing for the Fremont Ross teams from 1933-36.

In 1936, Bill was the national and state champion in the 100 breaststroke, setting records at both levels. The year before, Bill was fifth in the nation in the event.

Along with teammates Cameron Merrifield and Bob “Red” Booth, Bill helped set state records twice in the 150-medley relay and missed the national record by three-tenths of a second. The trio won the state title.

Bill led Ross to its first state title and third in the Penn Interscholastic National Championships.

As a senior, Bill set nine pool records. He won the 100 breaststroke as a freshman in the first official meet in the Fremont pool.

During his high school career, Bill was a member of several record-setting relay teams, including the Lake Erie Marathon – from Catawba Island to Put-In-Bay – which he completed in 3 hours 58 minutes.

Bill’s individual high school records include the 220 breaststroke and the 100 breaststroke – several times in various pools, one a national record of 1:08.8 at the Penn National Meet.

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Michele Smith

Michele Smith won nine letters at Fremont Ross High School from 1994 to 1997. She played on championship volleyball, basketball, and softball teams, winning three letters in each sport.

During her senior year, Michele helped lead the three teams to a combined 53-13 record, and all three teams won Great Lakes League championships.

In softball, she was a three-year starter at first base and had a fielding percentage of .966.

In volleyball, Michele was a three-year starter at middle hitter. She was named the team's top offensive player her junior and senior years and was All-Ohio as a senior. She was first-team All-GLL in 1995 and 1996, and was the GLL Player of the Year as a senior. Michele was first team All-District 6 while leading her team to the GLL title in 1996. The team finished 22-2 and reached the district finals in 1996. She was selected to play in the District 6 and Ohio State All-Star matches.

Michele was the basketball team's Most Valuable Player as a senior while serving as the team captain. She was first-team All-Great Lakes League and third-team All-Northwest District during her senior year. She was selected to play in the East-West All-Star game and the WLEC All-Star Game.

She was a co-captain in both Softball and basketball in 1997. Michele was named the top Ross Female Athlete as a senior.