

## Whitey Rigsby Acceptance Speech – Stanner Hall of Fame 3/23/19

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Thank Committee, Marist Br, the many tremendous lay teachers and especially the late, great Jack Curran.

I am honored and humbled beyond words to be here tonight as an inductee into the AMHS Hall of Fame. This is made even more special to be recognized w/my fellow inductees:

**Br. Pat Hogan** very simply has been the face of Molloy for decades.

**Major Gen. Gallagher's** service to our country is remarkable and his many, many awards including the Distinguished Service Medal are too extensive to list here.

**Chief Hayden** spent what must have seemed like a lifetime at ground zero making certain every effort was made to find the missing and dead.

**Lt. Gremse** and his family gave the ultimate sacrifice while -in his words "just doing his job" helping our city heal.

Thank you for teaching us, for protecting our city and our nation.

In life I feel there are 2 kinds of people. Humble or those about to be.

Mr. Curran was very helpful in this area.

Freshman year I have 103 fever and I'm sick as a dog but I convince my parents that I should play vs St. Francis Prep. I play most of the game. During the game (that we win) I get a Technical Foul.

Next morning.....

"Not good enough" to get a T.

Crowd "We want Rigsby we want Rigsby....."

Coach - "Go up in the stands and see what they want."

In early August of 1970 I was readying myself for my freshman year in High School. Like my three siblings before me I was heading to the local public HS. In my case it would be the recently built Springfield Gardens High School.

In mid-August right b/4 HS was to begin I would spend a week at a basketball camp in Cold Spring NY run by some guy named Jack Curran. In the days after camp my parents and I met with and were advised by a former Stanner Mike Flatley (my CYO Coach) who talked about the possibility of me attending AMHS. He told us that if I was fortunate enough to play basketball for Coach Jack Curran at Molloy I would go to college for free. He convinced them to roll the dice and fork up the \$450 tuition.

My people were Non-Catholic/Publics! Who had their First Communion money. They were being asked to dole out \$450 for me to go to a Catholic HS? \$450 was huge! But they did.

In my mind I came to Molloy to play hoops. Period! If I stumbled into an education along the way so be it. Well I did. I never could have imagined the education I would receive on and off the court. While I was so very fortunate to play on great BB teams, with great players and friends like the late Jim Gooch and Billy Clarke, one City title on JV and back to back City titles on the Varsity. To get to play for truly the greatest coach ever - Jack Curran who stated that our 1974 team - in his own words, "was the best team I ever coached".

- But at the center of this success/joy was the best education, from dedicated Marist Bros and talented caring lay teachers you could get. It was truly four of the best years of my life.

I would be remiss if I didn't recognize some of my dear friends who joined me tonight -

- Denis O'Donoghue our team manager
- Mike Flatley w/o who I would not be here tonight.
- Gary Becker my dearest friend from my Villanova days.

And of course my family:

- My three siblings – brother Howard and sisters Nancy and Wendy who traveled great distances to be here tonight. Along with my brother-in-law Michael.

- My 7 Children and two in-laws (did I tell you I became Catholic at Villanova) and Adam the oldest of my 7 grandkids.

Especially I want to mention my son Matthew who was the driving force behind this nomination. I thank you so much.

- And to the love of my life and best person I've ever known my wife of 40 years Becky.

Thank you to Archbishop Molloy HS for this tremendous honor. No words can truly express my gratitude for this honor and express what Molloy did for me in my life.

I want to thank especially the late Br. Thomas Reithman, the Marist Br and Jack Curran for taking a chance on a skinny, Protestant, Public with a politically incorrect name and changing his life for the better - forever - Non Scholae sed vitae.