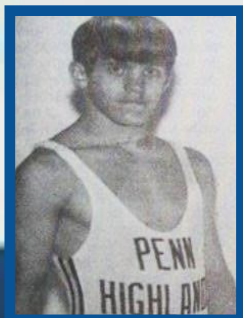


*Mifflin County Sports*  
**HALL OF FAME**

**PRESERVING HISTORY. HONORING EXCELLENCE. CONNECTING GENERATIONS.**



**RODNEY TATE, MIFFLIN COUNTY'S  
FIRST STATE WRESTLING CHAMPION**



**Annual  
Induction Ceremony**

**SATURDAY, MAY 4, 2024 | BIRCH HILL EVENTS CENTER, BURNHAM**



# The Board of Directors Welcome You ...

- President - Tim Searer
- Vice-President - Brian Heckert
- Treasurer - Tona Williams
- Secretary - Cher Harpster
- Joel Diamond
- Roger Herto
- Kevin Kodish
- Bret Treaster
- Jon Zimmerman

## Hall of Fame Inductees

### Class of 2021

- Ralph Baker
- Cindy Baxter
- Dave Bradley
- Fran Fisher
- Tim Thompson
- Alex Ufema

Lewistown Panthers Girls State  
Championship Basketball Teams  
1996-97 and 1997-98

### Class of 2022

- Wendee Booher
- Dick Gingrich
- Joe Heller
- "Junior" Powell
- Ron Sprecher

Rothrock Eagles Boys State  
Championship Basketball Team  
1963



# Tonight's Festivities

## EMCEE

Roger Herto

## WELCOME

Tim Searer, President of Mifflin County Sports Hall of Fame

## GUEST SPEAKER

John Fritz, Former NCAA champion and Penn State wrestling head coach

## CLASS OF 2024 HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

### Individuals (Presenting/Accepting)

- Brad Heckert (Brian Heckert)
- Justin Henry (Joe Stewart/Aaron Gingrich)
- Kevin Kodish (Cher Harpster)
- Laura Loht (Scott Gantz)
- Rodney Tate (John Sipe/Mike Tate)

## CLASS OF 2024 HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

### Team

Penn Highlands High School wrestling team  
Only undefeated season at 12-0 in county history in 1970-71  
and won Central Wrestling Conference.

## CLOSING REMARKS

Tim Searer

**ON THE COVER:** Rodney Tate, of Penn Highlands High School, was crowned as Mifflin County's first high school wrestling champion.



# Guest Speaker

## JOHN FRITZ: FORMER NCAA WRESTLING CHAMPION AND HEAD COACH AT PENN STATE

**J**ohn Fritz wrestled in high school for the Hurricanes of Bethlehem Liberty in the powerful Lehigh Valley.

He then took his talents to Penn State and attained an outstanding collegiate career, featuring two third-place finishes at the NCAA Championships at 126 pounds in 1973 and 1974, followed by winning the gold medal during his senior year in 1975. Fritz then became an assistant coach for Rich Lorenzo for a decade, becoming the head coach of the Nittany Lions in 1993.

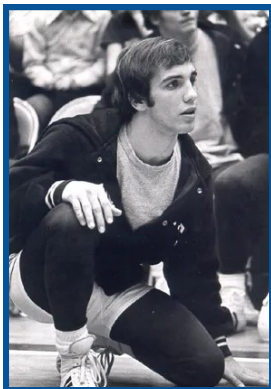
In six seasons, he posted five top five NCAA finishes including a second in 1993, Penn State's highest finish in 39 years. At Penn State, Fritz produced four national champions, nine NCAA finalists, 21 All-Americans and 12 Big



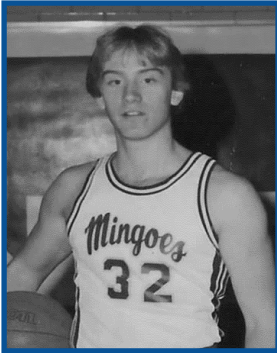
**JOHN FRITZ, WRESTLING COACH AT PENN STATE**

Ten champions. Fritz was named the 1993 National Wrestling Coaches Association (NWCA) National

Coach of the Year, after leading Penn State to a school record 22-0-1 dual meet record, a No. 1 national ranking and the national dual team title. He also earned 1998 Big Ten Coach of the Year honors. Fritz went on to work with the Commonwealth Campus athletic programs at Penn State.



**JOHN FRITZ WON AN NCAA WRESTLING TITLE AT PENN STATE.**



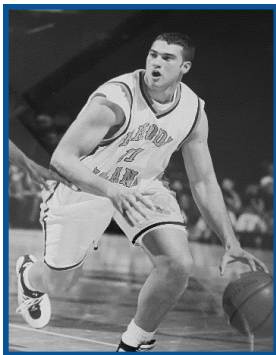
**BRAD HECKERT**

## Brad Heckert

Chief Logan High School – 1983  
University of Delaware

The all-time leading basketball scorer at Chief Logan, Brad Heckert garnered several boys basketball individual awards while leading the Mingoes to Mountain League and District 6 Championships, and Pennsylvania Elite Eight and Final Four appearances. Heckert was a three-time winner of the Harry Rothrock-Dick Webber Award as Mifflin County's outstanding basketball player. He also was a three-time All-Mountain League selection and the league's MVP as a senior. He played in the inaugural Keystone Games and was an All-State Honorable

Mention. Additionally, Heckert was a four-time baseball letterwinner and a two-time All-Central Penn League selection as a pitcher and centerfielder. His 1,743 career points and school record 47 points in one game all preceded the introduction of the three-point line to high school basketball. Heckert continued his basketball career at Division I University of Delaware, earning four letters and ending his career by making 45 percent of his field-goal attempts. He was team captain and MVP in 1987, and that same year facing Iowa, he hit the first three-point basket in Blue Hens' history. Heckert went on to knock down 43 percent of his shots from beyond the arc that season.



**JUSTIN HENRY**

## Justin Henry

Lewistown Area High School – 1995  
University of Rhode Island

A three-sport letterwinner in high school, Justin Henry set records in football and basketball and played baseball at Lewistown. As a quarterback, he completed 300 passes for more than 4,100 yards and 37 touchdowns. He was the all-time leading scorer in Lewistown basketball history at the time of his graduation with 1,387 points. His many high school honors included his selection as the 1995 runner-up for the Alex Ufema Award in football and the 1994 runner-up and 1995 winner of the Harry Rothrock/Dick Webber Award in

basketball. He took his talents to the University of Rhode Island where he switched to tight end and earned three varsity letters and Atlantic 10 academic honors. After seeing Henry playing in a pick-up game, the Rams' basketball coaches invited him to join the team for the 1999-2000 season where he earned a varsity letter and was named the team's Inspirational Player of the Year. As a result of his abilities and accomplishments, Henry was the 2000 recipient of the prestigious Albert LeBoeuf Award given annually to Rhode Island's best senior male athlete. After his tragic death in 2004, the Rhode Island football program established the Justin Henry Award, given annually in recognition of the recipient's achievements on the field and academically.



# Congratulations to this year's Hall of Fame inductees!



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## CHEERS TO THE HALL OF FAME CLASS OF 2024!



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**CONGRATULATIONS  
TO ALL OF THE  
NOMINEES AND  
INDUCTEES.**



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**KEVIN KODISH**

## Kevin Kodish

**Lewistown Area High School – 1978  
Bloomsburg University**

Kevin Kodish's basketball coaching career spanned 34 years with a .740 winning percentage. He spent 27 years at Lewistown Area High School, his alma mater, and was at the helm of the Panther girls program for PIAA Championships in 1997 and 1998, a PIAA runner-up finish in 2004, five PIAA Final Four appearances and eight PIAA Elite Eight games. He earned the National Federation of High Schools Mid-Atlantic Region Coach of the Year in 1998 and Western PA Coach of the Year in 1997-98. He counts eight District 6 championships, 11

league titles and 27 consecutive winning seasons among his other coaching achievements. Kodish coached the first two seasons at Mifflin County High School before ultimately finishing his career at Juniata High School. Kodish's overall coaching record was an impressive 693-224. As a high school athlete, Kodish lettered in cross country, basketball and track and field for the Panthers. He medaled at the 1978 PIAA Track and Field Championships as part of Lewistown's 3,200 relay team which finished fifth. He continued his track career for one season at Bloomsburg University earning a varsity letter.



**LAURA LOHT**

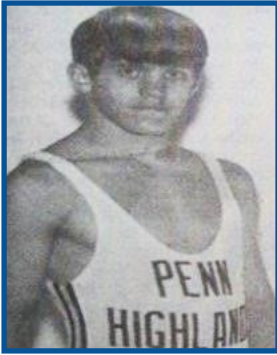
## Laura Loht

**Indian Valley High School – 2010  
Penn State University**

Loht's achievements in the javelin at Indian Valley High School included being a three-time District 6 and two-time PIAA champion. Additionally, she captured a prestigious Penn Relays title in 2010. As a team captain at Penn State, Laura helped the Nittany Lions capture one indoor and two outdoor Big Ten Conference crowns. Individually, she earned three first-team All-American honors by finishing within the top five at the NCAA Outdoor Championships in 2012, 2013 and 2014. Her final collegiate throw of 178-6 at the 2014 NCAA

Championships set a Penn State record that still stands. Loht was a four-time Big Ten medalist, including a first-place finish in 2012. As a collegian, Loht captured two-straight javelin titles in 2013 and 2014. For her performances, Loht was named the field MVP of the Penn State women's team all three years. While at Penn State, she also finished fourth at the 2011 USA Track and Field Junior Outdoor Championships, 16th at the 2012 United States Olympic Trials and fifth and 12th at the 2013 and 2014 USATF Senior Outdoor Championships. After graduation, she served as director of operations for Penn State cross country and track and field. Currently, she works with jumpers and throwers at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla.





**RODNEY TATE**

## Rodney Tate

**Penn Highlands High School – 1971**

Fifty-three years ago in March, Rodney Tate stepped on the mat at Penn State’s Rec Hall and into history, becoming the first PIAA wrestling champion from Mifflin County in 1971. In those days, only the champion advanced through sectional, district and regional competitions, and there was only one wrestling classification encompassing all Pennsylvania high schools. Tate’s opponent in the 127-pound final was undefeated John Fritz, of Bethlehem Liberty. Fritz, the nation’s top high school recruit, became an NCAA champion at Penn State and later coached the Nittany

Lions. However, on that March night, despite being the heavy favorite, Fritz was no match for Tate. Wearing a white singlet with blue letters of first-year Penn Highlands High School, Tate led 7-3 entering the final period. Then in dramatic fashion, Tate took Fritz to his back and pinned him 56 seconds into the third period, ending his senior year with a 20-0-1 record. Tate was recognized by his coaches and teammates as the leader of an undefeated 1970-71 Penn Highlands team that won the Central Wrestling Conference en route to a 12-0 record. Long-time coach Charlie Roselle said of Tate, “He was the rock. He was one of the most unselfish, tough kids in the world. He never made excuses. The other guys got better trying to keep up.” Sadly, Tate died in a 1977 fire at age 23. Today, the award given annually recognizing the best wrestler in Mifflin County bears his name.

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## Well Wishes To This Year’s Inductees ...

**To Brad Heckert:**

“We are bursting with pride for your accomplishments, and so proud to call you our son.”

- Mom and Mr. Bill

“Proud to be your sister

Brad. Congratulations!”

- Nicole

“Congratulations on this special recognition.

This is a well-deserved honor acknowledging your Chief Logan playing accomplishments and contributions you’ve made to Mifflin County basketball history.”

- Mike Palm, Chief Logan basketball teammate

**To Laura Loht:**

“Congratulations, Laura. Thanks for the memories.”

- The Loht family

**To All the Inductees**

“Congratulations the 2024 Mifflin County Sports Hall of Fame inductees.”

- Joel and Rachael Diamond

“Congratulations to all of this year’s inductees from the Searer family!”

- Tim, Sue, Erin, Emily and Elliot

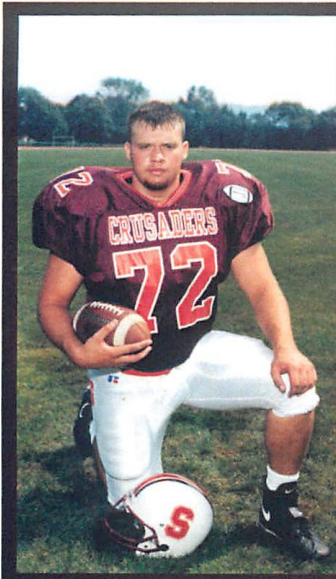


## 1970-71 Penn Highlands High School Wrestling Team

Behind eventual state champion Rodney Tate, the unquestioned leader of the team, the 1970-71 Penn Highlands Cougars went a perfect 12-0 en route to the Central Wrestling Conference championship. It remains the only undefeated season in county history. Penn Highlands started with victories over Susquehanna Township (36-16), Clearfield (25-21), Penns Valley (36-9), Lock Haven (31-16) and Johnstown (39-3). The Cougars knocked off unbeaten DuBois, 29-19. State College was next on the schedule and fell, 30-7. Wins over Bald Eagle Area (27-17), Hollidaysburg (45-5), Altoona (31-12) and Bellefonte (27-14) set the stage for the season finale against unbeaten and untied Tri-Valley. The match proved to be a clunker as the Cougars rolled 49-5 to close out the perfect season.



## Congratulations to the Class of 2024!



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and Much More

# Check Us Out Online!

**MCSHOF Class of 2024 set to be inducted May 4th**  
*...below Laura Lohr two-time State Champ*

**Mifflin  
County**  
**Sports Hall of Fame**

- 2024 Class Announced
- Class of 2022
- Class of 2021
- Active Members

# At MCSportsHOF.com

# CONGRATS LAURA

FROM PENN STATE TRACK  
& FIELD AND VARSITY S!



**LAURA LOHT**

MIFFLIN COUNTY SPORTS HALL OF FAME

