



**WEST HARTFORD BASEBALL
HALL OF FAME**

CLASS OF 2024

GARY LAROCQUE

MATT SINATRO

JOSEPH MANCINI

GREG SINATRO

1973 WEST HARTFORD LEGION POST 96
STATE AND NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP
TEAM

GARY LAROCQUE



Gary LaRocque's baseball journey started in high school, where he was a standout at Conard High School. He was elected captain in 1971 and received All CCIL honors twice. In his junior year, he had an impressive batting average of .384. He continued his career at the University of Hartford, where he excelled as an All-American shortstop. His talent and skills caught the attention of the Milwaukee Brewers, who drafted him in the 14th round of the 1975 MLB Draft. LaRocque spent

three years in the Minor League, showcasing his shortstop abilities.

After his time in the Minor League, LaRocque transitioned into teaching mathematics at East Windsor High School. However, his love for baseball drew him back into the game, and he began his coaching career in the Los Angeles Dodgers' minor league system in 1981. He managed various teams within the Dodgers' system and was recognized as the Manager of the Year in the Pioneer Baseball League in 1981. LaRocque's expertise and knowledge led him to take on different roles within the Dodgers' organization, including scouting and player development. In 1998, he joined the New York Mets as the scouting director and later became the Director of Player Development and Assistant General Manager/Vice President in 2004. During his time with the Mets, LaRocque played a crucial role in signing talented prospects like David Wright.

In 2008, LaRocque was hired by the St. Louis Cardinals as a Senior Special Assistant to the General Manager. He later shifted his focus to player development and became a top advisor to the farm director. LaRocque worked closely with the minor league staff and major league coaches to strengthen the connection between the two, emphasizing "The Cardinal Way" in the organization's operations. Under his guidance, the Cardinals drafted / developed numerous talented players.

LaRocque's innovative approach to player development and his ability to challenge prospects beyond their skill have earned him recognition. In 2013, Baseball America ranked the Cardinals' minor league system as the best in the league, a testament to the organization's commitment to developing young talent. Many of the players on the Cardinals' postseason roster during their 2013 World Series run were acquired and groomed through the team's player development system. He was named Director of Player Development in 2014.

As Gary starts his 49th year in Major League Baseball, his contributions to the world of baseball, particularly in player development, are highly respected. His passion, expertise, and dedication have played a significant role in shaping the success of the St. Louis Cardinals and the development of talented players within the organization.

MATT SINATRO



Matthew Sinatro, Conard High School class of 1978, is a former professional baseball player, coach, and scout. Primarily a catcher during his playing days, Sinatro had a ten-season career in Major League Baseball (MLB) with four different clubs: the Atlanta Braves (1981–1984), Oakland Athletics (1987–1988), Detroit Tigers (1989), and Seattle Mariners (1990–1992). Following his playing career, Sinatro had an impressive 15-year tenure as an MLB coach.

Standing at 5 feet 9 inches tall and weighing 174 pounds, Sinatro was known for his right-handed throwing and batting. He was drafted by the Atlanta Braves in the second round of the 1978 MLB Draft, being selected as the 27th overall player, 21 spots ahead of future Hall of Famer Cal Ripken Jr.

His career highlights include 48 hits, including six doubles, one triple, and one home run. The home run, a two-run shot off Pete Falcone of the New York Mets on August 27, 1982, contributed to the Atlanta Braves' victory in a season where they won the National League West Division championship by a single game over the Los Angeles Dodgers.

After his release from the Seattle Mariners in October 1992, Sinatro transitioned to become Seattle's MLB advance scout from 1993 to 1994. He then joined the coaching staff of manager Lou Piniella, with whom he would spend his entire coaching career. Sinatro served as a bullpen coach, first-base coach, or special assistant for Piniella with the Mariners, Tampa Bay Devil Rays, and Chicago Cubs. In 2012, he worked as the catching coordinator and advance scout for the Houston Astros.

Matthew Sinatro's career in baseball spans from his playing days to his successful coaching and scouting roles. His contributions to the sport have left a lasting impact, and his dedication to the game has earned him respect within the baseball community.



JOSEPH MANCINI



Joseph Mancini is an accomplished physical education teacher and coach with a passion for sports. He holds a Master's degree in Physical Education from Central Connecticut State University, which he obtained in 1975. Joseph's career as an elementary school and high school physical education teacher spanned from 1975 to 2011 in the West Hartford Public Schools.

Throughout his career, Joseph has coached various sports teams, including baseball and soccer. He served as the Varsity Baseball Coach at Conard High School from 1979 to 2005, where he achieved remarkable success, winning a school record of 260 games and securing four league titles. Two of his players, Ron Morander and David Crossley, went on to play Major League baseball.

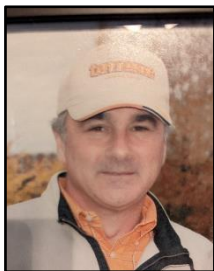
In addition to coaching at Conard High School, Joseph has also coached in other baseball leagues, such as the Connecticut Collegiate Baseball League, where he coached the Tobacco Valley Renegades in 2012. He has also been involved in coaching youth leagues as well, including Avon Jr. and Sr. League Babe Ruth Baseball, Avon Town Leagues, and Avon Little League Baseball.

Joseph's athletic achievements extend beyond coaching. He was recognized as an Outstanding College Athlete of America in 1973. As a member of the Varsity Soccer Team at Central CT State University from 1969 to 1972, he was part of the All-New England Soccer Team in 1971 and 1972. He also captained the Central CT State University Soccer Team in 1970 and 1972. Joseph was also selected to be a member of the American European Soccer Cultural Seminar Team in 1971.

Outside of his professional life, Joseph cherishes his family. He has been married to Maureen for 45 years and is the proud father of six children and grandfather to six grandchildren. Joseph enjoys making homemade wine and limoncello and he continues to stay active by participating in sports, particularly golf and biking.



GREG SINATRO



Greg Sinatro, a former professional baseball player, made a name for himself as a skilled third baseman and outfielder. Standing at 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighing 190 pounds, Sinatro had the physical attributes to excel in the game.

His baseball journey began in high school at LaSalle Academy High School in Oakdale, New York. From there, he went on to attend the University of Connecticut, where he played freshman basketball under the late Jim Valvano and baseball under coach Andy Blaylock. Sinatro's talent on the baseball field earned him freshman All-American honors.

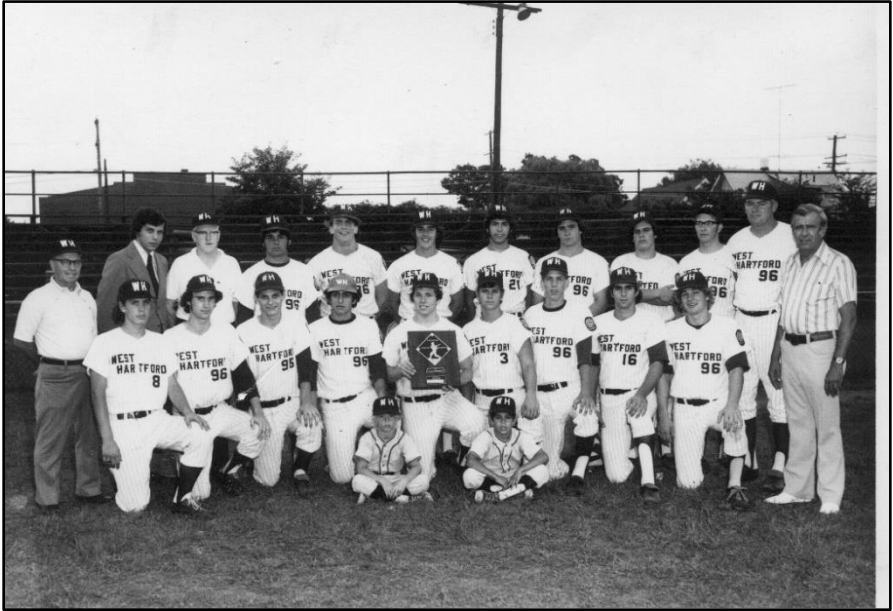
In 1970, Sinatro was drafted by the Cincinnati Reds in the 9th round of the MLB June Amateur Draft. He furthered his education and baseball skills at Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus in Miami, Florida, and was once again selected by the Cincinnati Reds in the first round of the 1972 MLB January Draft. This marked the beginning of his professional career.

Throughout his career, Sinatro played for various teams including the Tampa Tarpons, Trois Rivieres Aigles, Indianapolis Indians, Chattanooga Lookouts, and San Jose Missions. From 1972 to 1977, he played a total of 502 games, achieving a career batting average of .238 with 19 home runs and 150 RBI.

Sinatro's contributions to the sport and his versatility as a player should not be overlooked. He made a lasting impact on the teams he played for, showcasing his talent at third base, catcher, and in the outfield.



1973 POST 96 AMERICAN LEGION TEAM



The 1973 Post 96 Legion Team had an exceptional season, emerging as one of the top American Legion baseball teams in the country. Led by Head Coach Bob O'Brien and Manager Joe Cote, the team showcased their talent and determination throughout the season.

The team's record of 39-10-2 overall, including an impressive 18-3-2 record in Zone 1, set the tone for their successful campaign.

The team's pitching staff was outstanding, with standout performances from Len Burke, Stuart Conn, David Cunningham, and David Francis. With their strong arms and strategic pitching, they consistently shut down opponents and led the team to victory. Francis had a standout season, finishing with an impressive 14-1 record.

Offensively, the team had a well-rounded lineup that consistently produced. Tim Bourret, Steve Chotiner, and Mark Fisher were among the key contributors, providing consistent hitting and solid defense. Bobby Quinn and Tom Redden also played crucial roles, providing leadership and stability in the infield.

The team's success in the postseason was a testament to their talent and hard work. They clinched the Zone 1 championship and went on to win the Connecticut State championship. Their journey continued as they emerged as the New England Regional champions, securing their spot in the American Legion World Series.

At the World Series, the team battled against some of the best teams in the country. Although they tied for 5th place. They left a lasting impression with their strong performances and competitive spirit.

The 1973 Post 96 Legion Team will be remembered as one of the most successful teams in West Hartford American Legion Baseball history. Their achievements on the field and their camaraderie off the field set a strong foundation for future generations of players.

Northwest Catholic:

Len Burke - Pitcher

Tim Bourret - Outfielder

Brian Hickey - Outfielder/Shortstop

Kingswood:

David Francis - Pitcher

Mark Fisher - Second Baseman

Tom Redden - Catcher/Outfielder

Hall:

Steve Chotiner - First Baseman

Stu Conn - Pitcher

Bob Clafin - Outfielder

Dave Ross - Catcher

Deerfield Academy:

Tom Prior – Pitcher

Bob O’Brien – Head Coach

Lew Naughton - Assistant Coach

Joe Cote – Team Manager

Lenny Markese - Bat Boy

Danny Moylan - Bat Boy

Conard:

David Cunningham - Pitcher

Jimmy George - Outfielder

Bob O'Brien - Third Baseman

Bobby Quinn - Shortstop

Bob Szymanski - Outfielder

