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2011 WEST CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS HALL OF FAME

Raymond J. "Ray" Brown '57



Ray Brown, '57 was one of many West Catholic athletes that began their Catholic education at the Transfiguration Catholic parish grade school in West Philadelphia. His parents Mary and Patrick Brown immigrated to the United States from Ireland. His sister Ann Marie, '52 (West Girls') and his brother James, '54 also were proud graduates and members of the West Catholic family. Ray married Joan Stewart in 1970 and they were happily married for 35 years until Joan passed away in 2005.

A hard-nosed talented basketball player who played defense, could handle the ball, shoot and pass, Ray played varsity basketball for three very competitive varsity teams during his years at West Catholic (1955, '56 and '57). As a member of the 1955 Catholic League Championship team, he recalls starting a pre-season game against West Philly High in place of injured Captain, Joe Spratt and scoring 7 points; also participating in the City Championship Game against Overbrook High led by Wilt Chamberlain. Ray fine-tuned his Basketball game at the he SHERWOOD Recreation Center, a few blocks from his parish school, where the competition was always fierce on the court.

During his junior year, Ray Brown became a starter for Coach Jimmy Usilton, who directed the BURRS to a 12-1 record in Catholic League play. Highlights of this season include a 22 point game in pre-season against Overbrook High, which helped end their 18 game winning streak and a defensive assignment that had him guarding North Catholic's All-Catholic guard, Bob McNeill, who was averaging 20 points per game and holding him to 4 points, in a regular season game in which West Catholic defeated the Falcons from North Catholic by 10 points. In his senior year, Ray averaged 15 points per game and was the 4th leading scorer in the Catholic League. In six of the games that season, He scored 20 or more points, including 30 points against Monsignor Bonner and 20 points in the Semi-Final League Championship game at Penn's Palestra. The 1957 West Catholic Basketball team was led by Ray and his teammates that in-



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cluded, Bob Dickey, Charlie Berry; Dan Bugey, (All from the Transfiguration parish and Ed McCafferty who was from St. Barnabas. While missing a chance to win the League Championship by one point, Ray was selected to the All-Catholic team an honor that he cherished.

Following his years at West, Ray attended Canisius College in Buffalo, N.Y. before he began his 25 year career as member of the Philadelphia Police Department. He retired with the rank of Lieutenant in 1986. After his retirement, he accepted a position with PNC Bank as a field Auditor. He completed 12 years of service with PNC and then accepted early retirement in 1998. Ray was also a proud recipient of the Golden Burr Award at the 2004 West Catholic Alumni Association Communion Breakfast and is a true BURR that loves to spread Her Fame.