

IHS 1942 Rocky Cramer

March 2023

By Aileen Carney Sweeney

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DAVID 'ROCKY' CRAMER
IHS 1942

School Musicals

For over 80 years, school musicals have been an integral part of the Ilion High experience. Typically, they are presented during the month of March. In March 1942, the school dealt with one of the saddest times to present a musical. One of their lead players had been tragically killed just a few days before the performance. That performer was David 'Rocky' Cramer, a 1942 senior.

1942 Yearbook Dedication

David Cramer

The Rocky Cramer Trophy has been presented, annually, to a graduating senior. The award is given in memory of IHS Class of 1942 member, David Rockefeller 'Rocky' Cramer who tragically died on March 16, 1942, in his senior year.

The 1942 Yearbook contained a full page memorial for 'Rocky' Cramer.



In Memoriam

DAVID CRAMER

Dave Cramer, tried and true
We'll always cherish our memory of you.

Varsity Football 1, 2, 3, 4; Intra. Basketball 1, 2, 3, 4; Track 1, 2, 3; Boys' Choir 1, 2; A Capella Choir 1, 2, 3, 4; Pinafore 3; Pirates of Penzance 4; Orpheons 3, 4.

David Cramer

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Varsity Football 1, 2, 3, 4; Intra Basketball 1, 2, 3, 4; Track 1, 2, 3;
Boys' Choir 2, 3; A Capella Choir 1, 2, 3, 4; Pinafore 3; Pirates of Penzance 4; Orpheons 3; 4.

David 'Rocky' Cramer - IHS 1942

David Nicolas Rockefeller Cramer was born in Utica, a son of Nicholas and Carlotta Rockefeller Cramer. They moved to Ilion in 1936. He had one brother, Raynord Cramer. Dave's grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. George Rockefeller, Mohawk, and Nicholas Cramer, Sr., Buffalo. While at Ilion High, Rocky participated in sports and musical productions. His football activity gained him the unanimous choice by coaches of the Mohawk Valley Interscholastic League as all-star fullback in the Fall of 1951. He also held track honors for district meets. He was a bass singer in the Varsity Choir and a member of the Orpheon Society, honorary musical society. He was a member of the cast for the 1941 and 1942 school musicals.

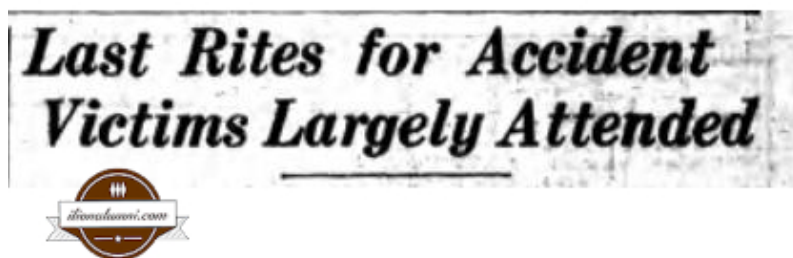
David Cramer - Lead Role in "Pirates of Penzance"

David was a member of the cast for the 1941 production of "H. M. S. Pinafore". In his senior year, he had been cast to sing the second lead in the senior operetta, "Pirates of Penzance" which was scheduled for March 20 and 21. The musical was performed that Friday and Saturday, in the same week as his funeral. David Chesebrough was named to take David Cramer's part. Perhaps it was too much for Dave Chesebrough because the role was filled by Professor Swarthout. They dedicated the musical in Rocky Cramer's memory. It had to have been one of the two saddest musicals presented at Ilion High.



Bob Baker, Prof. Swarthout and Frank Soules in the 1942 Musical "The Pirates of Penzance"
 Prof. Swarthout played the role that was to be performed by David 'Rocky' Cramer, who died in an automobile accident.

David Cramer Tragically Killed in Automobile Accident



David Cramer, age 18, of 45 Catherine Street, was fatally injured on March 16, 1942, in an accident near Little Falls. His friend, Ernest Martin Schwartz, age 18, 95 East Clark Street, was the driver of the car and was also killed. The automobile was owned by Schwartz's stepfather, William Griffith. The car went into a skid and hit a parked truck near Little Falls, on Route 5, one mile west of Little Falls.

The funeral for David Cramer was held on Wednesday, March 18, 1942. A crowd of more than 400 former schoolmates and friends, that included the entire student body, filled the Presbyterian Church beyond capacity. They paid final tribute to David N. R. Cramer. Funeral services were by the Rev. Paul Wagner, pastor.

The bearers were six former teammates of the Ilion High School football team, on which he starred last fall. They were, Captain Bernard Murray, Ray Bullis, Frank Marsden, Paul Momberger, Robert Davis and Theoron Cook. The rest of the football squad acted as honorary bearers. Other pupils wishing to attend were excused from school.

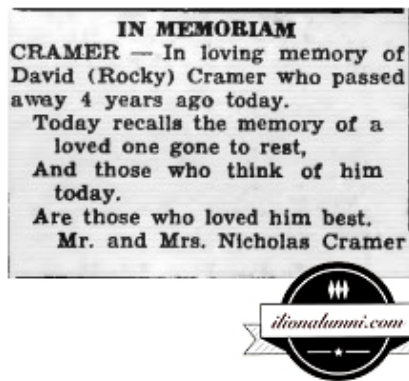
David Cramer was interred in the mausoleum of the Oak Hill Herkimer Cemetery.

The funeral of Ernest Martin Schwartz, 18, driver of the car, was held at 9 a.m. Thursday at the Whiter-Funeral Home and at 9:30 a.m. at the Church of the Annunciation.



Images courtesy of wienerin - [findagrave](https://www.findagrave.com/)

Memorial Poem



David's parents would publish a memorial to their son in The Herkimer Evening Telegram in 1946.

Cramer - In living memory of David (Rocky) Cramer who passed away 4 years ago today.

Today recalls the memory of a loved one gone to rest,
And those who think of him today,
Are those that loved him best.
Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Cramer

The Rocky Cramer Trophy



Photograph courtesy of Sally McCann Kramas



AWARD WINNERS — Letter and awards were presented to Ilion High athletes last night at the annual Block I Dinner in the School gym. Major award winners were, seated (l-r) — Steve Hyer (Richard Lewis Award for wrestling and Lever Cup for participation), Bob McCann (Rocky Cramer Award for leadership and the Leo Golicki Award for competitive spirit), Jim Gydesen (Kim Torbitt

Award for wrestling). Standing — Phil Anderson (Francis Murray Award for basketball and James Allston Award for attitude), Bill Hughes (Unsung Hero Award), Jim Thomas (Northside Athletic Award), Darwin Fox (co-winner of the Dale Johnson Award for baseball), Sam Patrei (Knights of Columbus Award), and Steve Smith (co-winner of Dale Johnson Award).

Photo Caption - **AWARD WINNERS 1974** - Letter and awards were presented to Ilion High athletes last night at the annual Block I Dinner in the School gym. Major award winners were, seated (l-r) - Steve Hyer (Richard Lewis Award for wrestling and Lever Cup for participation), **Bob McCann (Rocky Cramer Award for leadership and the Leo Golicki Award for competitive spirit)**, Jim Gydesen (Kim Torbitt Award for wrestling).

Standing - Phil Anderson (Francis Murray Award for basketball and James Allston Award for attitude), Bill Hughes (Unsung Hero Award), Jim Thomas (Northside Athletic Award), Darwin Fox (co-winner of the Dale Johnson Award for baseball), Sam Patrei (Knights of Columbus Award), and Steve Smith (co-winner of Dale Johnson Award).

Paul Momberger, IHS 1942, a fellow classmate of Rocky, was the first winner of the Cramer Memorial. The trophy donation, for school athletics tribute, was announced for the first time Friday, June 12, 1942, by Principal J. Guy Prindle. He said the donor desired to remain anonymous.

The award was to be made each year, in memory of David (Rocky) Cramer, Ilion High athlete, who was killed in an auto accident three months before graduation. It goes to a member of the graduating class who has won his varsity letter in a major sport and has shown natural qualifications for leadership, as well as excellent ability in all physical activities, participating in at least two intramural sports. - [Ilion NY Sentinel 1941-1943 - 0639.pdf](#)

The 1945 newspapers reported that the recipient must be a graduated senior; have won a varsity letter in a major sport; attained satisfactory marks in three subjects his last year; have aptitude in leadership as well as outstanding ability in physical education activities such as apparatus work, body building games; and must have participated in two intramural sports in addition to living up to training rules

In 1954, the following criteria were listed for the awarding of the trophy:

He must have won a varsity letter.

He must be way up in his school work.

He must show exceptional work in physical education, especially in apparatus work.

And he must have kept training and participated in two intramural activities.

Senior Awards - Honor Deceased Alumni

Many of the senior awards remind us of the extraordinary achievements of deceased alumni. The Rocky Cramer awards celebrated the short but remarkable life of David 'Rocky' Cramer. His legacy lives on in those that have had the honor of being named recipients of the award made in his memory. Sadly, three of the early recipients would also die at young ages; one from illness, one in a diving accident and one was murdered.

Rocky Cramer Award Recipients

Below is an incomplete roster of the recipients of this awards. If you know a recipient for the missing years, 1944, 1946, 1949 and 1955, please pass them along for inclusion. Most of the names have been provided by former Ilion Athletic Directory, Robert Turley.

Year - Rocky Cramer Trophy Recipient

1942 - Paul Momberger

1943 - Bernard Tracy

1944 -

1945 - Robert Day

1946 -

1947 - Herman Schaepe

1948 - Howard Harrig [would be murdered in 1959]

1949 -

- 1950** - Charles Squire
- 1951** - Lester Short and Robert Warren, co-winners
- 1952** - Jerry Angell and Robert Hand, co-winners
- 1953** - Robert Meade
- 1954** - Richard 'Dick' Lewis [would die in 1955, in a diving accident and then have an award, the Dick Lewis Wrestling Award, named in his memory]
- 1955** -
- 1956** - Richard Frosh
- 1957** - Robert Phillips
- 1958** - Wayne Murphy and Jack Noll, co-winners
- 1959** - Fred Paschke
- 1960** - Emanuele 'Manny' Laura [Manny Laura Memorial Baseball Award is in his memory]
- 1961** - Richard Crossett
- 1962** - Richard Adams [would die in 1964 following surgery, and then have an award, the Richard Adams award, named in his memory]
- 1963** - Thomas Deyle
- 1964** - Douglas Bernard
- 1965** - Robert Bluett
- 1966** - Nicholas Maneen
- 1967** - Donald Albin
- 1968** - David Murphy [The Murph Award, was in memory of David J. Murphy]
- 1969** - Clifford Lane
- 1970** - David Williams
- 1971** - Joseph Murray
- 1972** - Ronald Wilson
- 1973** - Robert Manion
- 1974** - Robert 'Bob' McCann

1975 - Richard Bohr

1976 - Paul Bachorik

1977 - Ned Lang

1978 - Patrick Tillinghast

1979 - John Coupe

1980 - Leo J. Sammon II

1981 - Michael Murphy

1982 - Timothy Morris

1983 - William Dack

1984 - Lawrence Hatch

1985 - Robert Powers

1986 - Greg Lang

1987 - Will Reichinger

1988 - Jerry Angelichio

1989 - Bruce Garlock

1990 - Dennis Basler

1991 - Jason Krenichyn

1992 - Chad Dickenson

1993 - John Bubb

1994 - Richard Hanford

1995 - Jeff Kraeger

1996 - John Mackin

1997 - Keith LaQuay

1998 - Matthew Mills

1999 - Christopher Holovitz

2000 - Christopher Miers

- 2001** - Anthony V. Bonvino
- 2002** - Travis R. Robinson
- 2003** - William J. Peterson
- 2004** - Matthew Chuff
- 2005** - Travis Richards
- 2006** - Justin M. Hunter
- 2007** - Timothy Blaise
- 2008** - Francis 'Frank' Drapalski
- 2009** - Joseph Patrei
- 2010** - Alexander Benoit
- 2011** - Jon Treen
- 2012** - Matthew Hall
- 2013** - Robert Paddock

BACK

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