

2003/04 Co Alumnus of Year

Francis J. Orlando (1918 – 2003) was a pillar of the Haddon Heights community ever since he was a student at 3HS. While many of our Alumnus of the Year honorees have gone on to further their careers outside of the immediate Haddon Heights area, Francis Orlando chose to stay right in his own back yard.



While at 3HS Francis was a stand out pupil earning the honor of being his class salutatorian and editor of the school newspaper. He went on to further his education by earning a Bachelors Degree from Temple University in 1940. Francis then served his country during WWII in the infantry seeing action throughout the European theatre including Germany.

Upon completion of his military service, Francis returned home to run one of the primary businesses on Station Avenue, Suburban Hardware. Francis ran this business from 1944 until his retirement in 1989, a total of 45 years.

Besides helping to insure that Station Avenue maintained its vitality, Francis was also busy establishing other pillars that would make this community what it is today. He was president of the Haddon Heights Rotary Club and was the recipient of its Paul Harris Fellowship, a statewide honor. He was also a founding member of the Haddon Heights Youth Athletic Association and a member of the Haddon Heights VFW and Interfaith Care Givers. Even in retirement, he did not slow down, volunteering as the liaison between Haddon Heights and the Camden County Office of the Aging. He also was one of the first members of the HHHS Alumni. Up until just a few weeks before his passing Francis could be seen once a week picking up all the members of another club he helped organize, the Retired Executives Group.

Francis's children and grandchildren are also achieving great success after graduating from 3HS. Francis Jr. (Spike) graduated in 1968 and went on to attend Rutgers Law School and served as Mayor of Haddon Heights in the early 1980's. He is currently a Superior Court Judge. Spike's children attended 3HS as well. Jason '93, went on to graduate from John Hopkins and then Harvard Law and Chris '96, attended Boston University and will be graduating from Rutgers Law in 2005.

Currently, Francis has another group of grandchildren lined up to make Garnet history. Mason graduated in 2001 and is attending West Chester University, Tyler is in the class of 2004 and Casey and Joelle will be in the class of '07 and '11, respectfully.

When you consider all of the pillars that make Haddon Heights a great place to live, consider how many of them were put in place by men like Francis J. Orlando.