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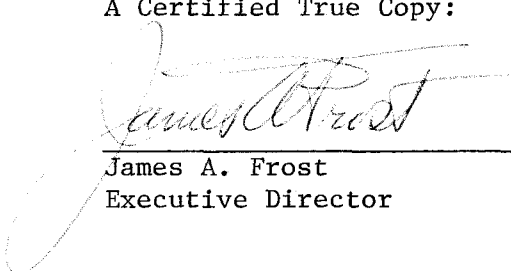
IN RECOGNITION OF

PROFESSOR ABIE GROSSFELD
 of
 SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE

March 5, 1982

- WHEREAS, Abie Grossfeld, Professor of Physical Education and Coach of Gymnastics at Southern Connecticut State College, has achieved great personal distinction as an athlete on United States Olympic Teams and other United States Teams engaged in international competition winning eight gold medals, and
- WHEREAS, Mr. Grossfeld has received numerous awards as a Coach of Gymnastics at Southern Connecticut State College, including the Eastern Coach of the Year and National Coach of the Year Awards, and
- WHEREAS, Athletes whom Mr. Grossfeld has coached have attained great successes including Olympic medals, and
- WHEREAS, Mr. Grossfeld on January 17, 1982, was presented with the Gold Key Award of the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance, therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That the Trustees of the Connecticut State Colleges extend their congratulations to Mr. Grossfeld on the receipt of the Gold Key Award and express their esteem and appreciation for the continuing excellence of his work as professor and coach.

A Certified True Copy:



 James A. Frost
 Executive Director

8221



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE

501 CRESCENT STREET

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06515



TEL. (203) 397-4000

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JAN 29 1982

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THE STATE COLLEGE

January 27, 1982

Mr. Michael Adanti
Board of Trustees
P.O. Box 2008
New Britain, Connecticut 06050

Dear Mike,

Enclosed is a gymnastics brochure and the program for the Gold Key Dinner at which Abie Grossfeld received the 1982 Gold Award from the Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance. Both publications contain information on Abie's career at the College.

Please call me if you need additional information.

Sincerely,

John P. Mattia

cc: Ray DeFrancesco
Rick Leddy

Handwritten notes:
Thanksgiving: we wish to do a
congratulatory piece for
Abie. If you feel that it will
go above the board committee.
I can have it proofed
and I will send it over.
Thank you.
JPM
3 Feb 82

Handwritten note:
John,
attached is
the material on
Abie

1/27/82
Jim -
Frank Harrison says Jim -
I'm getting a list of his
credentials from SSC
Mike

RECEIVED

JAN 22 1982

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
FOR THE STATE COLLEGES

Journal-Courier

SPORTS

MONDAY, JANUARY 18, 1982



Gold Key recipients, from left, show off their spoils: Abie Grossfeld, Bertha Tickey and Tony Apisso.

UPI Telephoto

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Three get Key to the state

By GEORGE WADLEY
Staff Reporter

HARTFORD — The Connecticut Sports Writers Alliance held its 41st annual Gold Key dinner Sunday night at Valle's Restaurant.

The Alliance honored Abie Grossfeld, Bertha Ragan Tickey and Tony Apisso with the prestigious Gold Keys and presented a special award to the Yale University football program in recognition of its unique contribution to the sports lore of the state.

In addition, Yale running back Rich Diana was honored as the state's athlete of the year, Old Saybrook High basketball coach Bill Reagan was hailed as the high school coach of the year and retired Hartford Times sportswriter Joe Cassano was presented the Arthur B. McGinley Award for long and meritorious service to the profession.

The Alliance also saluted the University of Connecticut's national championship soccer and field hockey teams.

The guest speaker was Providence College athletic director Dave Gavitt,

who is also the Commissioner of the Big East Conference.

Gavitt acknowledged that former Gold Key winner and current University of Connecticut associate athletic director Dee Rowe had given him his start in coaching at Worcester Academy. "Something," Gavitt said, "that my wife has never forgiven me for."

Gavitt said he and Rowe will be one of the great trivia questions of the 1990s. "Unlike Abie Grosfeld," he said, "we never got to coach the Olympic team we were supposed to. We probably had a great 1980 Olympic team but we never left the country."

Praising the Big East, Gavitt said, "There is a common thread of goals, athletically and academically. A high point of my association with the Big East has been the daily cooperation of the presidents, athletic directors and especially the players."

Grossfeld has been the gymnastics coach at Southern Connecticut State College for 18 years and in his long and successful career has produced more individual NCAA champions than any coach

in history. Three of his pupils, John Crosby, Peter Kormann and Mario McCutcheon, have won the Nissen Award, gymnastics' equivalent of the Heisman Trophy.

He is the current coach of the U.S. National Team and has coached both the National Team and the Olympic Team in the past.

"This award is another example of a man becoming an instant success after 20 year," said Grossfeld. "Let me assure you this will be an inspiration for me to continue to strive for excellence at Southern Connecticut State College."

Tickey is a member of the Softball Hall of Fame and she is generally rated with Joan Joyce, a former Gold Key recipient herself, as the two greatest women softball players in the history of the game. She is currently the chairman of the Barnum Festival in Bridgeport.

Apisso retired two years ago after a long and successful career as the football coach at New Britain High. His teams were always regarded as among the best in the state and he was active in the Connecticut Coaches Association.

Gold Key — honor for best, brightest

It is gold, 14 karats, a tiny key fronted by a form of a scroll, the words Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance engraved on it, with the words "Sports" and "Writers" separated by a quill pen in an old-fashioned ink-well. On the back it bears the legend "For Distinguished Service to Sports," the year and the name of the person it was presented to. In a jewelers' measurement, it weighs three pennyweights (20 constitute an ounce). The Gold Key is what sports awards are all about in this state, a singular honor that comes to but a handful of the best and the brightest we produce.

Tonight the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance will gather for the

Sunday Special

By
Tom
McCormack



41st Gold Key dinner, this time at Valle's Restaurant in Hartford, to present three Gold Keys.

The recipients this year will be Southern Connecticut State College's world-famous gymnastics coach Abie Grossfeld; Bertha Ragan Tickey, one of the best women's softball players who ever lived; and Tony Apisso, revered in New Britain for his years as a high school football coach.

The honor roll of past Gold Key recipients is as diverse and controversial and colorful as sports itself. It includes men and women from every field of the games people play, amateur and pro. It has ranged from coaches to officials, to the district attorney of Manhattan, an Olympic trainer and an Olympic equestrian, two commissioners of the National Basketball Association, the owner of a major league baseball team and a 40-game winner, a priest and a doctor and a man who knew how to raise funds better than anyone in his day.

Serve the cause of sports well in Connecticut and the chances are that sooner or later the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance will recognize you.

The sports dinner has become big business in Connecticut. The success or failure of fund drives for churches, clubs, civic organizations, even entire communities depend on how many tickets can be sold for a sports dinner. Restaurants and hotels have reputations that rise or fall on their abilities to serve a couple of hundred people at the same time in such a manner as to assure that the folks at table no. 36 aren't waiting for their salads while the folks at table no. 4 are dabbing their mouths with napkins prior to sipping the after-dinner coffee.

But sports dinners weren't always big business around here.

Lou Black of New Haven has almost a half-century in the newspaper business behind him. He began with the New York Times and then came to Connecticut. In 1940, he became the closest thing we have to a founding father of what has become the Gold Key dinner.

"We were known as the Connecticut Sports Writers' Association then, not the Alliance," Black remembers. "We used to meet at the Hotel Taft in New Haven regularly. Now when I worked down in New York, you understand, I went to big sports dinners all the time. The baseball writers, football writers, you name it. I suggested something like it here, put on by an organization of writers. We could use it to honor our own or people who brought fame to themselves and had some connection to the state.

"The idea of making the award a 'key' evolved quite naturally. Bill Savitt (a jeweler in Hartford and a well-known sports buff) designed the first one. It would be worn like a Phi Beta Kappa key, across the vest. (Some recipients have converted their Gold Keys into tie tacks, by the

way.) So we made plans for our first dinner in 1940 at the Taft."

The first of the line honored Hubert Sedgewick, dean of state sports-writers at the time; Ed Reilly, a Bridgeport Central High coach; and for the *piece de resistance*, baseball's famed "Grand Old Man," Connie Mack, owner-manager of the Philadelphia Athletics for 50 years.

The writers' by-laws stressed then, as now, that a recipient had to have some connection with Connecticut to rate a key. Mr. Mack's (as everyone called him, including his players) was somewhat tenuous.

"In 1884, Mack was a catcher for a minor league team in Meriden," said another retired sportswriter, Sam Cohen. "That was his connection."

Since every dinner has a speaking program, one of the stars that night was a renowned Yale English professor, William Lyon Phelps. What better speaker could you ask for an audience that consisted of men who made their living writing?

But Cohen, a charter member of the writers' group, recalls the big problem getting the first dinner off the ground. It turned out to be a marathon. "We weren't too good on planning then," Cohen explains. "You see, we had no experience at it. The first Gold Key dinner started at 6 at night and ended after 1 a.m."

"The main speaker," says Black, "was Judge Patrick B.L. Sullivan, a well-known personality in the state. I guess he gave the shortest speech in my memory. The toastmaster introduced him, the judge got up, looked at his watch and gave everybody his home address and told them to contact him if they wanted to hear the speech he'd prepared. Then we all went home."

The writers, their friends, and just plain fans have been coming back to a succession of Gold Key dinners since that long, long night in 1940. Except for the World War II years of 1943-44, the Gold Key dinner has been an annual event held at various spots in the state.

Geographical favoritism has noth-

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N. H. Register

ing to do with it. When the state's writers sit down to plan their big event, they have to take everything into consideration — price, menu, ability to handle big gatherings, etc.

The dinner has long been the most prestigious of its kind in the state. An invitation to speak at one is coveted; simply to be introduced from the head table is a sign of success. Invited out-of-state guests all render the same opinion of the Gold Key dinner: "It's a class affair."

Lou Black says one of the highlights of Gold Key dinners happened at one of the early ones he attended. "A friend of the Alliance's from New York brought Babe Ruth to the dinner. He didn't speak; he just sat at the head table. Everyone in the room was awed because you knew there was a legend right in front of you."

Still, there have been speakers at some Gold Key dinners that have, to say the least, stopped their audiences cold — for a time.

Bob Granger, News Editor of the Journal-Courier, was once a sports-writer and remembers the 1959 Gold Key dinner at the Waverly Inn in Cheshire. There was a speaker listed on that year's program as "Ivan Ivanovitch Demetri Mikhal Peterpanzoff, former member of the United Soviet of Socialist Republics

Olympic basketball team, now an American citizen."

Such a lengthy introduction should have been the tipoff that the crowd was about to have its legs pulled, but it wasn't. Granger remembers what happened after the speaker started talking: "It was embarrassing. He began right away by insulting the United States. He got progressively worse as he went along. At first people started to look at each other, then mumble, pretty soon there were hisses coming from all over the room, then boos. Finally, some man stood up in the back and yelled, 'If you don't like it here, go back where you came from.' Then we all found out we'd been put on. He was a plant. Everyone broke up and gave him a big hand."

The same "speaker" has turned up at other dinners. At times, he's been a member of the "Russian Olympic Committee" or the "Czech Sports Federation."

Fred Post, the veteran sports editor of the Middletown Press, has been toastmaster at Gold Key dinners for the last 12 years. He will be toastmaster tonight, as well. He will long remember the night in 1967 when boxing's famous "Raging Bull," Jake LaMotta, was on the speaking program.

"He got up and started talking,"

says Post. "A half-hour later he was still talking. I was sitting right alongside the dais and I sort've tugged on his sleeve. He had this nightclub act, you see, and he was doing it. He gave me one of those looks as if to say, 'Don't try to stop me when I'm hot.' When Jake LaMotta looks at you like that, you don't stop him. So I let him go on."

"He talked for better than an hour and a half."

Post remembers another "plant," too. "We had a guy named Al Kelly and I was told to introduce him as sports editor of the Phoenix Sun. He started speaking and nobody could understand a word he said."

"I looked at people in the audience and they looked at me. Some people in the room thought there was something wrong with the sound system. It was a little embarrassing, but nobody wanted to laugh; that would have been impolite. About a minute before he sat down, we found out he was a professional doubletalker, a man named Al Kelly who'd appeared on TV several times."

There have been, to be sure, many touching moments at Gold Key dinners.

Last year the Alliance gave a Gold Key to Coast Guard Athletic Director and former Cleveland Browns star Otto Graham, a man who fought cancer and won.

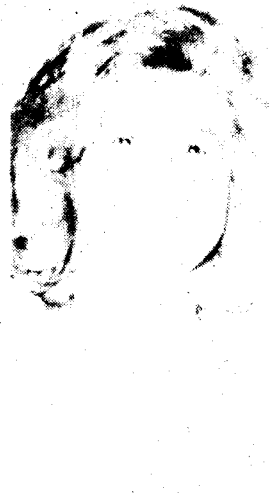
"He gave a touching speech," recalls Post. "It especially affected me because my own mother had four cancer operations in her life."

In 1973, former Denver Broncos and Syracuse University running back Floyd Little, who was a scholastic standout at Hillhouse High, told a Hartford audience what "coming home again" meant to him and left everyone knowing why he thought he might go into politics when he left pro football.

Harry Jacunski, Yale's freshman football coach emeritus, remembers when he got his Gold Key in 1967. "What made it so profoundly touching to me," says Harry, "was that my son, Bobby, then a sportswriter with the Register, was chosen to present it to me. I couldn't, in all my



TONY APISSO
New Britain coach



BERTHA TICKEY
Softball star



ABIE GROSSFELD
Gymnastics coach

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life, think of anything more appropriate to what I'd managed to accomplish. It was beautiful."

Of course, to Frank Crisafi it was a memorable night in 1978 in more ways than one.

"It was the epitome of my career to get a Gold Key," says the man whose coaching of several sports at East Haven High over many years earned him a reputation as one of the state's all-time best. "To be honored that way, at the age I was, was a fine expression of how people, particularly the press, felt about me."

The '78 Gold Key dinner at which Crisafi got his award was held in the Exhibition Hall in the basement of the Hartford Civic Center. Two nights later the Civic Center roof collapsed. "You can't help but wonder what could've happened if the roof fell in while we were there," Crisafi says.

It's the Gold Key dinner, but the writers have taken the time and effort to recognize others. They take care of their own with the Art McGinley Award, which will go tonight to Joe Cassano, formerly of the Hartford Times. The Doc McInerney Award honors scholastic coaches, going tonight to Old Saybrook's Bill Reagan. And the Bill Lee Athlete of the Year award was started in 1973 when Yale's Dick Jauron won it. Tonight the Alliance will honor the Yale back who broke most of Jauron's records, Rich Diana of Hamden, although Diana will not be on hand to accept since he will be returning from playing in the Japan Bowl.

Oddly enough, despite the broad spectrum of the people honored by the Alliance, nobody from the world of gymnastics had ever won a Gold Key until Grossfeld was chosen to get his. Then again, there aren't too many practitioners of this arcane sport in the world, let alone Connecticut, with the credentials of the Wizard of Southern Connecticut State College.

Grossfeld, coach of the current U.S. National team and a former Olympic gymnast himself, is low-key about his Gold Key. "It's certainly a great honor," he will tell you. "But I think more than just honoring me, the writers are honoring Southern, and I appreciate that."

"We're not a major college over here, but the support I've gotten from the people I work with and the school administration has been more than major-college level in every way. That a Gold Key for me will confer stature on Southern is something that pleases me very much."

By the very nature of his achievements and the recognition he's gotten for his gymnasts (three have won the Nissen Award, the gymnastic equivalent of the Heisman Trophy), Grossfeld has been to many award banquets. He's been to several Gold Key dinners, too, and he says this: "The people who run this thing do a marvelous job. I've been to many affairs like this all over. But I can tell you Connecticut's Gold Key dinner has a great reputation."

You will have to forgive a few members of the Connecticut Sports Writers' Alliance if they're walking about with their chests puffed out tonight. Some, like the organization's president, Hal Levy of the Shore Line Newspapers, will be at the head table, glad-handing their way from one end of Valle's to the other. And some, like Jerry DiPietro of the Jackson Newspapers, have worked hard behind the scenes to put it all together — good selections for the awards, the seating and an informative dinner program, which, through the generosity of Stewart Jackson, president and assistant publisher of the Jackson Newspapers, was printed at no cost to the Alliance.

"I remember when I started to read sports pages when I was a kid," Levy says with some wistfulness. "I used to see pictures of this dinner in the papers that showed me the people who went to it. I always wished I could get to one someday. Now here I am, in charge of running one. How about that?"

The award-winners tonight won't be the only ones taking pride in the

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N. H. Register

22nd Annual
Connecticut Sportswriters' Alliance
DINNER

GOLD KEY AWARD

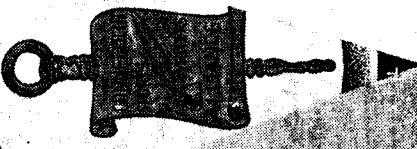


January 28, 1963

Ambassador Restaurant
Hamden, Conn.

8th ANNUAL
CONNECTICUT SPORTS
WRITERS' ALLIANCE DINNER

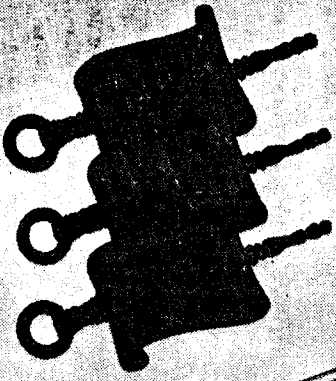
GOLD KEY AWARD



7th Annual
1962

CONNECTICUT
SPORTS WRITERS
ALLIANCE

GOLD KEY AWARD



Monday, January 28, 1963
HOTEL TALENT
New Haven, Connecticut

1-17-82

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