



Sometimes the road of life takes twists and turns and leads us into directions that we could never have envisioned taking. And as it is often said when one door closes another one usually opens. That is the case in CBA's relationship with Edward J. Kearney. A twist of fate that became a huge loss to the Syracuse University basketball team ended up giving CBA its: first in a long line of gifted basketball coaches.

When Ed Kearney was born at the turn of the century, his hometown of Gloversville was a thriving manufacturing community along the Erie Canal. Ed was a natural athlete, excelling in all sports but he had a particular fondness for the new sport of basketball. As he came near the end of his high school career, however, Uncle Sam called. As the war heated up in Europe, Kearney chose to fight for his country and enrolled in a new submarine school. When the war ended and Ed came home a hero, he went back to his love of sports. He joined a barnstorming basketball team that traveled throughout the state earning a few dollars to help make ends meet. He was recruited to play at several schools including Colgate and Syracuse University and finally chose to become an Orangeman where he could earn his degree and play the game he loved. Just when it seemed that life was going well for Ed, the roof caved in. Now we are familiar with the NCAA and its crazy rules and seemingly ridiculous reasons for declaring players ineligible. Well that is nothing new. when it was determined that because of his barnstorming Kearney was declared a professional and was forced to give up his scholarship.



Although that was a difficult time for Eddie, it was a stroke of luck for CBA. Ed wanted to stay in school and remain involved in athletics and it just so happened that CBA was looking for a coach. Put those facts together and the next eight years became a match made in heaven. Back in those days high school basketball was very popular. There were really no professional teams to follow and remember, no sports on TV.....excuse me, no TV at all. So when people were trying to find ways to spend their leisure dollar, high school sports were a very viable option. People looked forward to watching CBA play Central and Nottingham and the CBA stars of the day like Mesmer and Allen had celebrity status in Syracuse. And their agent was Ed Kearney. A hard nosed player in his own right, he expected and got nothing less than the best out of his players. In his eight years as coach his team won championships of some sort in each of those seasons. Their greatest glory, however, took place at Glens Falls. There the personable Kearneys' classy cagers became the first team in years to defeat the famous "Wonder Five" from Passaic, New Jersey. And there too they earned everlasting fame by performing the matchless feat of winning this renowned Invitational tourney two years in a row.

In 1928, sadly Eddie left the CBA bench. His business commitments caused him to devote more time to his full time employment and he was unable to spend the time necessary to coach a high school team. CBA's loss became the Syracuse Athletic Community's gain. Eddie wasn't quite ready to retire his whistle, he just used it in a different way. For the next several decades he patrolled the courts and the fields of the Northeast as one of the most well respected football and basketball officials to ever don stripes. During his career he worked thousands of games in countless cities. He worked Tommy Niland Jr.'s first game as Lemoyne head coach... and had the dubious distinction of awarding Niland his first technical foul *actually the first two technical fouls of his career. That was uncharacteristic of Eddie because it was said that much of his success as an official rested on his ability to control a game with a minimum of whistle blowing. Whether he blew the whistle or not, he was very dedicated to his officiating and there was not much that could keep him off the field. In fact, it was good thing that his daughter Ann was born early on October 5th, because within a half hour of his daughters birth, he was on a train traveling to officiate the Cornell Colgate football game!...how about that for dedication. One of his greatest accomplishments, however, came off the court and fields. Being involved on both sides of the spectrum as a coach and official, he wanted to find a way to bring the two groups together. And with that in mind he was instrumental in forming the Blindmen and Criers Society an organization that brings officials and coaches together. And to show their respect for Ed Kearney the major award given by the group carries his name, as does the much coveted sportsmanship award given by the basketball officials' organization to the school that exhibits the highest level of sportsmanship in the area, an award won by the CBA program in 1989.

Although he left us in 1928, we were never out of his heart. His late son, Ed Jr. graduated from CBA in 1948 and his grandson Jim played for the Brothers and graduated in 1972. CBA too has an award named to honor this fine man. It is given to the senior basketball player who exhibits the qualities of loyalty and dedication to their team. An award that fellow inductee Kevin Harrigan received in 1965. This was one way that CBA could immortalize this fine gentleman who meant so much to his players. It was said best by the late Arnie Burdick when describing the tremendously talented Eastern States Championship teams. He wrote: "True the CBA kids were something, but they got a lot of it from their coach, who knew as much basketball as any man who ever attempted to teach the sport. Eddie had been a pro in the old state league and he even barnstormed with Basloe's Globetrotters. But even more important, Eddie Kearney had been one of the most lovable guys to ever coach any group of kids. No doubt their winning performances, especially at Glens Falls were directly inspired by his sunny "Golden" personality. Edward Kearney occupies a place in the heart of Christian Brothers Academy. Tonight, by being inducted into the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame we can be assured that he will never be forgotten.

