



Our next inductees' road to CBA is different than that of Grace... While we could measure her length in miles, Bob's would be measured in years; or even decades. In fact, Bob actually started his athletic career as an opponent of CBA. Although he lived on the north side of the city and many of his neighbors chose to wear CBA purple and gold, young Bob chose to attend North High and became a Windy Hiller instead of a Brother (I love that nickname.) In any case, Bob was a pretty fair athlete. He played baseball, football and his favorite, basketball. Bob was chosen All League at the end of the 1945 season and ended up third in the league in scoring just behind CBA Hall of Famer Denny Owen. He continued his playing career in the service and then went on to Syracuse University where he lettered in 1948 – 49.

The following year is when his famed coaching career began. Over the next 20 years, Bob became one of the top scholastic coaches in the area. Felasco's teams dominated the Parochial league. From 1950 to 1968 at St John the Evangelist, which happened to be located across the street for CBA on Willow Street, and then for the next two years at Cathedral, Bobs' teams won 72 percent of their games compiling a 232 - 84 record. His teams garnered 4 league championships, six playoff titles and two All City championships ... His teams took on the demeanor of their fiery coach and were known for their hard-nosed style of play.

After the 1969 – 70 season, one in which his Cathedral team won the Parochial Championship, Felasco got his first taste of the infamous CBA recruiting, when he was courted by then Athletic Director Frank Cappelletti to become the school's basketball coach. The Golden Tornadoes were coming off a 6 – 13 season and had only one winning season in the previous four years. Cappelletti was banking on Bob coming in and changing the culture of the program and reestablish a winning tradition. Felasco relished the challenge. And with a mix of a couple of seniors and a bunch of young sophomores, CBA Basketball became relevant again. That first year the team finished with a 10 – 4 league record good for third place in the CNYCL. Just when it seemed things were moving in the right direction, they went south; all the way to Virginia. Much to the dismay of the Brothers players and fans, Felasco was transferred by General Electric to Virginia, a move that was a devastating blow to the seemingly rejuvenated CBA program. The next season the Brothers fared well, finishing 11 – 5 in the league good for second place. But when Felasco took a job with Niagara Mohawk in Syracuse the following year he was immediately rehired and the Brothers were installed as the league favorite. The sophomore laden group of 1971, that were now seniors, thrived under Felasco's tutelage.



They won the CNYCL Championship for the first time since the Kevin Harrigan led 63 -64 team had accomplished that feat.

Following the championship game, after being thrown in and carried out of the showers by his players, he was in a retrospective mood when talking to the press. “I always wanted to coach at CBA “the veteran mentor said. ” when I was at Evangelist, CBA was next to us downtown on Willow Street. I said then I would like to take over here one day, win and quit. But now that I’ve won I don’t think I want to quit. I love coaching too much!” And he didn’t quit, but instead added to his coaching legacy. In 73-74, Tommy Fletcher, John Niland and Ed Leone helped lead the team to a tie for the league championship but lost in a winner take all playoff game at LeMoyne College. The next three years, the Felasco led Brothers dominated league and sectional play. The ‘75 and ‘76 teams were loaded with talent and featured tremendous depth. In ‘75, the Tom Fletcher and

Hiram Sapp led team won the league championship and the school’s first sectional championship. The ‘76 team including seniors Jerry Fulmer, Charlie Sapp, Wally McCrae and Mark Pitonzo, continued the new tradition by repeating both. In ‘77, the impression was that the team was going to be the Headd and Belcher show and not much else. But the other seniors stepped up, Bobby Romeo, Steve Barber, Joey Fletcher and Tim Giarusso stepped up to make that team another special group, not only finishing the season as league and sectional champs, but finishing the season with a 20 – 1 record, the best in Felasco’s tenure at CBA. One of those wins was especially sweet for Bob’s son Timmy. Tim went to Liverpool high school and as a junior was cut from the team, Now, not that the coach was a vindictive sort of guy, but Timmy was family and Bob really thought that an injustice was done... CBA happened to draw Liverpool in the playoffs the following year and after getting his trademark piece of peppermint gum out of his drawer at home, he told Tim, who was planning to go to the game with his friends, that he was coming to the game with him and going to sit on the CBA bench. While we’re not sure if he just didn’t want Tim cheering for the opposition or if he wanted to make a point to Coach Johnstone, either way when the Brothers won the Felasco family got a bit of revenge on the Warriors and Timmy won the bragging rights for the rest of the year.

After the ‘78 season, Bob called it quits at CBA. He had hinted at retiring for several years previously but finally made the break then. His record speaks for itself. His CBA teams won four league championship, three consecutive Class A sectional championships, a feat that had not been duplicated since. His record at CBA is a sparkling 117 – 26

Bob readily admitted that over the years his offense and defense didn’t change much. He felt that it was fundamentals and execution that won games. As a former player, I remember Coach Felasco, rushing in to practice and putting on his CBA warmup; doing our fundamentals each day for what seemed to be an eternity but was probably just a half hour or so and running our man to man offense, that we still use today. I bet that all of his former players in this room could go out on the court and run it right now. Although he is no longer with us, I hope he understood how much of an impression that he made on all of his former players. **Bob Snyder**, Post Standard Sports Writer in 1987: called “Bob Felasco...the best of the modern-day scholastic basketball coaches” and appropriately Coach Felasco received just about every honor that could be earned. Tonight, we can add one more to that list as we ask his son Tim to accept his fathers’ award for induction into the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame

