



This story begins at Prescott School, the public school right across the street from CBA on Willow Street. Most students that finished eighth grade from there would continue on to Eastwood or one of the other city high schools. But that was not the path that Benny Alibrandi wanted to take. He would often look out his seventh grade classroom window and see the young men going to school across the street, inside the wall that surrounded the old school, dressed in shirt and tie. Benny envied them, wishing that someday he could join them. Well as fate would have it, one day his sister Virginia told him he was changing schools for eighth grade and was going to go to Our Lady of Pompei... Benny knew what that meant... the chance to go to CBA for high school. It wasn't an easy road, in fact it took a lot of extra effort on his part and the patience of Sister Mary Pierre to get him there but finally, Benny's dream of getting over that wall, in a shirt and tie, and attending CBA became a reality.

Now, in that first year, to think that Benny would be being honored on this night where we recognize CBA top athletes would have been comical .... You see in his freshman year, he didn't play any sports. He loved sports and actually was pretty good at them, but his paper route trumped his participation in them. According to Benny, it actually took a plea to his mother from Tony Donati that got him the ok to play..... you see Benny had 5 sisters and Tony convinced his mother that he needed to spend more time with the boys... boy Tony even had a angle back then..... Anyway, that was the beginning of a glorious career.

In his sophomore year he played Football, Basketball and Baseball, a gifted three sport athlete that showed tremendous potential. In his junior year he became a pretty fair end. That year the team, led by Tom Felicia and Jim Robinson, performed well and finished with only one loss. Benny was beginning to make a name for himself because of his speed. By his senior year Benny was one of the top ends in the city. It didn't take long for him to take his place among the best in the league. Although they didn't keep accurate yardages statistics for receivers it was not unusual for him to have several long gains for touchdowns. Against Vocational for example, he returned scored three times, a 58 yard jaunt in the first quarter and then connected with Alteri for 53 and 25 yard touchdown pass plays. Against Johnson City, he scored all four of his teams' touchdown, two on long fumble returns and another two on his patented end run. By the end of the season, Benny had amassed 54 points, good for second in the city league scoring standings and tied the record for touchdowns scored by an end. And the individual honors poured in: first team all city, all upstate and he was chosen as a finalist for the prestigious Italian American Award. Not too bad for his second sport.



You see, although Benny excelled in football, his outstanding speed on the gridiron did not go unnoticed... especially by the track coach. At the time, Brother James was trying to revive the track program after a 17 year absence. Now I try to put this in terms that I know and the 70's people in here would understand from what I can gather, Brother James was like Jerry Riordan with a collar. He had a way of persuading young men to take up the sport of track and to Alibrandi, he offered a challenge to run track and take up a man's sport! The final straw though, was when Brother James sat at the kitchen table and convinced Mr. Alibrandi that if his son took up track, he could go to college for free. Now Mr. Alibrandi did not understand much English at the time, but the term free translates the same in any language..so track it was! And Brother James was right. Benny became one of the top milers in the area. In his first season on the cinders, he broke the City Record for the mile with a best time of 4:47. He became a key member of the team not only in individual events but also on the relay teams. His senior year he took off. Giving up basketball, he ran indoor track... at least for meets, you see Brother James had made a deal with Syracuse University to use their wooden outdoor track during the winter.. all they had to do was shovel it! But the extra work paid off as Benny was invited to run the mile at the Indoor National High School Championships at Madison Square Garden. His success continued to into the spring when he shattered his own record for the mile by shaving nearly 14 seconds off his time from the year before. He also led his team to the City Championship, the first in several years for the Brothers.

Benny did get that scholarship that Brother James promised but after his freshman year this time his professional dreams trumped his athletic career. Because of his desire to become a dentist The school work load did not allow him to continue to participate in track so he transferred back to home to LeMoyne College where . He never lost his love for running and continued running competitively for many years even after college, running in the Boston Marathon and other events local and national.

Benny, you had outstanding athletic career and even after graduation you have continued to show your gratitude for the education you received at CBA. Now It is time for us to show our gratitude to you as you take your place in the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame

