

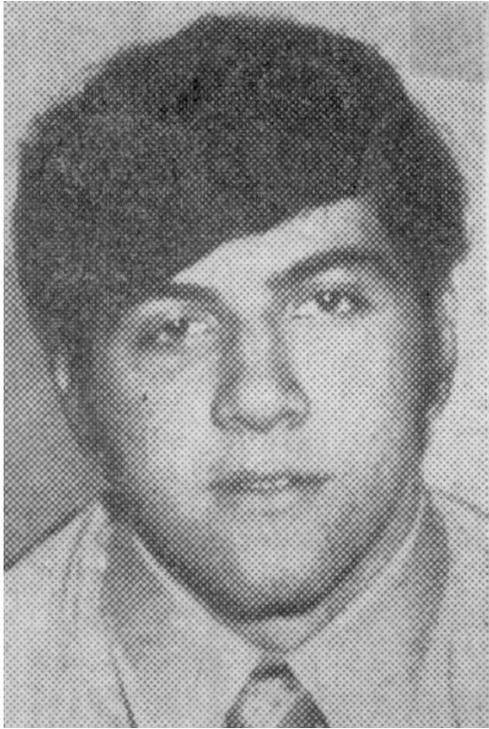


When Ron Pelligra entered CBA in the fall of 1968, he was entering a state of the art, virtually brand new facility. Although his father was not an alum, he did have several uncles that attended the school when it was at its modest Willow Street location. At the time the school was growing at a tremendous rate with the enrollment approaching nearly 800 young men all wearing suitcoats, and whose families gladly were willing to spend the 300 dollars for tuition.

The times were changing (although I guess that we could say that for any time during the course of the evening). With the new building came new opportunities, especially in the area of sports. Although football, basketball, baseball, and track were still the mainstays of the schools programs, other sports such as soccer, lacrosse hockey and wrestling were being offered to meet the diversified needs of the growing student body. Now enter Ron Pelligra. As was the case with most freshmen at the time, Ron came face to face with the most infamous track recruiter of the time, Jerry Riordan. Although the young Ron wasn't necessarily thrilled about participating in track, he, as anyone who took Earth Science in those days can attest to, was corralled to join the track team....especially since he wanted to pass the regents. Jerry took this young man and got him to think of himself as an athlete. Fast forward, beginning in his sophomore year, Gary Barnaba the new athletic director and wrestling coach was hired and he immediately recognized another quality in Ron that maybe no one else had seen and introduced him to the demanding sport of wrestling, and Finally enter Pete Vercillo, a fiery young coach full of stories, football knowledge, and a way of motivating young men to achieve more than they felt was even possible. So that was Ron's CBA world. And boy did he make the most of it.

On the football field things started taking shape for him in his senior year. Although an injury caused him to be not much of a contributor the year before, he was now ready to make his mark on the gridiron.. Coming out for the team weighing a svelte 195, Ron teamed along side of Tom Harris to strike fear into the hearts of opposing linemen and running backs. As an aside, I happened to enter 9th grade at CBA during Ron's senior year and the sight of him and Harris coming down the hall certainly struck fear in the hearts of young freshman also! The Brothers finished the season at 5 - 3 a big improvement over the 2 -4 - 1 team of the year before. Included were two big wins over perennial powers Auburn and the then #2 state ranked Corcoran Cougars. In each of those game the Harris - Pelligra duo opened huge holes in the

line for star running back Lee Rogers to get through and spear headed a defense that was the best the team had had in years. For his efforts Ron was named to first team all city on both offense and defense, a feat that few players at that time were ever able to attain. He was also named to the first team all upstate team. Not too bad for his second sport.



Where Ron really made a name for himself was in wrestling. A three year member of the varsity he compiled an amazing record of 80 and 8 during his career. His junior year seemed to be the turning point of his CBA career. During that season Ron compiled an overall record of 28 - 2.

He was the City Champion at 177 pounds and helped lead his team to a second place finish in the City league with their only loss a one point decision to perennial power Fulton. Ron continued the domination of his weight class by winning the Catholic State Championship at the end of that season.

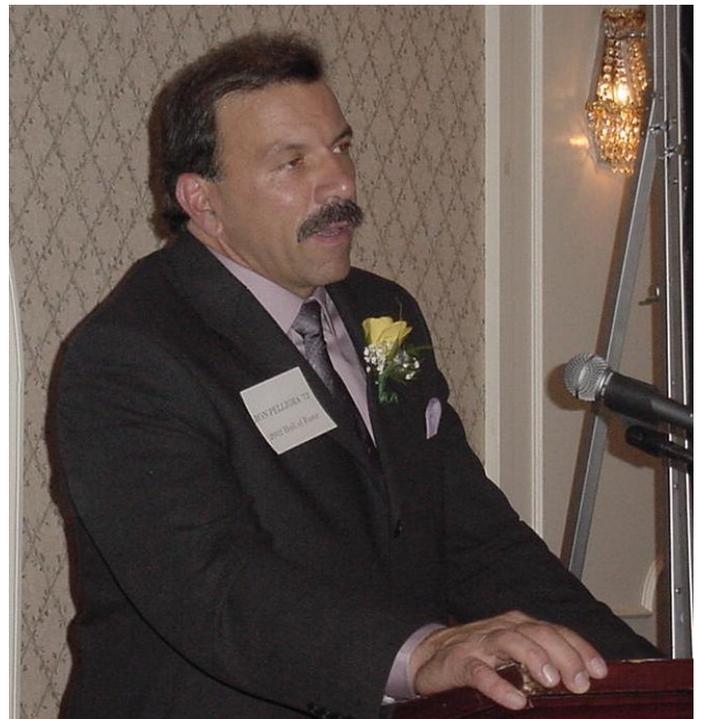
During his senior year, Ron became even more of a dominant force on the wrestling mats. Coupled with 167 pound Mike Bongiovanni and 215 pounder Tom Harris, the three were dubbed by the Syracuse

Newspapers, Murderers Row. That group dominated the end of each match that season. The group compiled a sparkling combined regular season record of 44 - 2.

The highlight of that season was a thrilling victory over Watertown. With a crowd of over 1000 looking on, the Cyclones took a 22 - 12 lead going into the three matches. Three straight wins by the "row" the most impressive of which was a 1:43 second drubbing by Pelligra over a boy who had pinned him in 16 seconds two years earlier enabled CBA to win it's first ever league championship. Although the team struggled in the post season, Pelligra continued his dominance by winning the CNYCL tournament. He then continued on to the Section III Championships, the first year that Catholic Schools were allowed to participate and became the first CBA wrestler to ever win a section III title.

Ron continued to excel as he continued his academic and athletic career at St Lawrence University. While there he was a four year standout in both football and wrestling and earned All American honors in both sports. A defensive tackle on the football team, he

earned All American honors as a junior and a senior and helped the Saints to their first ever NCAA tournament berth. But as at CBA, his biggest successes came on the wrestling mats. He dominated the heavyweight class setting the school's career record for pins and garnering four conference championships. His culmination of his career came in 1976 when he won the Division III national heavyweight championship, St Lawrence's first, by defeating a super heavyweight weighing over 375 lbs. For his athletic achievement at SLU, he was named captain and MVP of both the football and wrestling teams and awarded the Presidents senior student athlete award. Ron is also a member of the St Lawrence University Athletic Hall of Fame.



When Ron graduated from CBA in 1972, he received the schools highest athletic honor the Brooks award. The inscription on the trophy read to the CBA Senior who best exemplifies the Goals of a Christian Education, Reverence to God, Leadership and Spirit. Those words described Ron thirty years ago and do so even more today. Ron sets a tremendous example by the way he lives his life. He is a loving husband, devoted father and staunch supporter of CBA and its values. On behalf of the entire CBA community please accept this award as a token of our pride in you for all that you have accomplished and for all that you continue to do for your alma mater.