



It was the winter of 1951 and a young Tom Filicia was doing what he loved to do, participate in sports. Whatever the sport, football, basketball or baseball, and probably any other activity he chose to work at, Tom excelled. Therefore it wasn't a surprise that he caught the eye of then CBA basketball coach Ray Flynn and Brother during his practices for Grant at North High School. And the thought of traveling to Willow Street and wearing the Purple and gold of the Golden Tornadoes was certainly an intriguing concept. At the time, Walt Ludovico and his well drilled football squads were beginning to make a name for themselves on the gridiron. The team had just completed their second consecutive undefeated season

Tom was a gifted athlete and enjoyed the spirit of competition that he got from the athletic arena. So it was natural that he participated in a sport in all three seasons. In fact, Tom played on varsity teams in 11 of the twelve athletic seasons that he attended CBA. On the baseball field he was a very talented pitcher. During his sophomore, junior and senior years he helped lead the varsity and was chosen captain during his senior year. Although the team was competitive they were unable to win a league championship during his tenure. This was through no fault of Tom. It was not uncommon for Tom to throw a three or four hitter and oft times would strike out more than ten batters during a game. When he wasn't pitching he was playing center field.

During the winter, Tom headed for the hardwoods. During his junior year he and 6'10" Pete Corbett helped lead the Brothers to the City league championship. Filicia a solid double figures scorer during the season, averaged over twenty points per game in the playoffs. In his senior year he and Dick Mulpagano were chosen co- captains of the Brothers. Even a change of coaches couldn't stop the Brothers juggernaut as they rolled to their second consecutive 13 – 1 season and earned back to back City League championships. Tom finished the season in the top ten in scoring again consistently scoring in double figures.

But where Tom was most comfortable was on the gridiron. When he was a freshman, although not allowed to compete on the varsity he watched in awe and Poriky Cappelletti and Chuck Zimmerman were leading the Brothers to a string of undefeated seasons. As a sophomore Tom was a role player on the undefeated, unscored upon (outscored their opponents 196 – 0) one of the best teams in CBA History. The following year, Tom began to make his impact on the program. With Tom the only new starter in the Brothers backfield it was no surprise that CBA would continue its dominance of Central New York Football. The Brothers continued to win, and Tom continued to improve. Another league championship and a win over FM in the City County



Championship game reinforced CBA's hold on that dominance. Tom was selected as a Honorable mention all city pick

So now onto his senior year. He was chosen captain of the 1955 Brothers, a team decimated by the graduation of 18 seniors. The teams win streak had reached 35 games and the pressure to win a sixth straight championship must certainly have been great. But it was obvious that Tom thrived on pressure and he wasted no time in showing the league that he had arrived. In the win over Valley, he scored 4 touchdowns, the longest a 52 yard run. And that set the tone for the year. Against Eastwood not only did he score two touchdowns of runs of 63 and 66 yards, he threw two touchdown passes to Jim Robinson that covered 79 and 59 yards. But in his most amazing performance, Tom set a modern day (at the time) record by scoring five touchdowns against Nottingham. Runs of 57, 61 and two yards... ran a kickoff back 80 yards and ran an interception back 64.

Most importantly, he led his team to a sixth consecutive championship, but because of his performance the individual honors rolled in. First, Tom scored 86 points breaking the single season scoring record of 84 set by Chuck Zimmerman in 1953. He was selected to the first team all city team and was cited by the Post Standard as being one of the most outstanding players to ever perform in the league. He and Jim Robinson were also chosen to the all upstate team (the predecessor of the All State teams of today). In fact, it seemed that any organization or group that was choosing a top high school athlete had the Filicia's in their speed dial (did they have speed dial then?... oh well....). WHEN-TV named Tom the top athlete in Central New York. Then it was the Jewish War Veterans turn. Finally, The Italian American athletic club, on a night where Walt Ludovico and Bob Felasco were being honored as coaches of the year, proclaimed tom as the top high school athlete in the area, the most prestigious award given at that time.

For his hard work Tom was pursued by several colleges including Syracuse and Hobart but he chose Colgate to continue his career. He played for a year for the Red Raiders before hanging up the cleats and ending his very full athletic career.

Tom, you brought great pride to your family, friends and to the CBA Community. It is now fitting that on a night where CBA's finest are being honored that you take your rightful place in our athletic hall of fame.

