

J O Y F U L
Echoes

Welcome!

Joyful Echoes is an Alumni Newsletter published by the Onondaga Central School Education Foundation for the purpose of keeping alumni and friends of OCS engaged with the Onondaga community and informed of current activities happening at OCS.

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ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:
MORT LUCHSINGER

C L A S S O F 1 9 6 6

by Dylan Price, Class of 2021



Many in the OCS community know the Luchsinger family. I interviewed Don Luchsinger, a graduate of the Class of 1966.

Don Luchsinger goes by the nickname “Mort”, which came from his uncle who was also nicknamed “Mort.” Mort has six sisters and one brother who all attended OCS. He is the third oldest in his family.

Mort grew up on the family dairy farm, staying very busy with a mix of chores, school work, and sports. His family milked cows morning and night, every day. Mort remembers a busy life, sometimes providing a challenge to get everything done. In high school, Mort earned 15 varsity letters by running track four years, playing football and baseball four years each, and playing varsity basketball for three years. Back in the years when schools had lower enrollments, students could compete in both baseball and track in the spring.

Mort recalls that track meets were on Saturday, and it would not be unusual for him to be playing catcher on the varsity baseball team on a Friday and competing on the OCS relay team the following day. Looking back, Mort reflected that if OCS had lacrosse in the 1960s, he would have enjoyed that game, but Lafayette was the only small school that fielded a lacrosse team.

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About the OCSEF The Onondaga Central School Education Foundation, Inc. is a non-profit, all-volunteer 501(c) charitable corporation whose purpose is to provide support to students, staff and academic programs at Onondaga Central through charitable donations. The OCSEF was founded in 1984 with a vision of growing an endowment over the years. Please visit our web page: <https://www.ocseducationfoundation.com/>



SAMANTHA GEIS

2020 VALEDICTORIAN

The valedictorian for the Class of 2020 was Samantha Geis, who graduated with a cumulative grade-point-average of 100.34. Samantha completed a rigorous program of study comprising honors, college, and Advanced Placement courses. She earned the highest score of 5 on the AP History, AP United States History, and AP Government exams, and earned a qualifying score on the AP Psychology exam. She was also awarded the Seal of Biliteracy credential in Spanish and was the recipient of the Bausch and Lomb Science Award from the University of Rochester. She graduated with 12 credits from Tompkins Cortland Community College and 22 credits from Onondaga Community College.

At OCS Samantha was a two-sport varsity athlete and was captain of both the Varsity Soccer team and the Varsity Volleyball team, finishing her volleyball career with a school record in assists. Samantha was an active member of the Peer Mentor Program and Model U. N., and she also served as president of both the Spanish Club and the Character Education Club as well as vice-president of both the Key Club and the National Honor Society.

Samantha is the daughter of Linda and Joseph Geis. She is currently studying biology at Cornell University.

2020 SALUTATORIAN

The salutatorian for the class of 2020 was Raymond Anderson. Raymond graduated with a cumulative grade-point-average of 98.96 and earned qualifying scores on the AP World History, AP United States History, U. S. Government and Politics, and AP Psychology exams. He left OCS with 12 credits from Tompkins Cortland Community College and 22 credits from OCC.

Raymond was a member of the Varsity Track team and served as captain of the Varsity Cross Country and Varsity Basketball teams. He has

been president of his class since his sophomore year, vice-president of the Robotics Club, and secretary of the Student Council. He was also a member of Key Club, the Principal's Cabinet, and the Peer Mentoring Program.

The son of Lisa and Robert Anderson, Raymond was accepted into the 2+4 Pre-Pharmacy program at Wilkes University, where he is currently enrolled. This program leads to a seat in the Doctor of Pharmacy Program. Raymond also competes on the cross-country team at Wilkes.



RAYMOND ANDERSON



OCSEF UPDATE

GOLF TOURNAMENT

The 2020 OCSEF Charles A. Molloy Annual Golf Tournament was held on August 1 at Orchard Vali Golf Club. It was another beautiful day shared on the course by

alumni and friends. The tournament was won by the foursome of Nick Staffiero (also the long-drive winner), class of '62; Tom Britten, OCS '57; Bill Beaudin, OCS '63; and Jim Partridge.

VISIT THE OCSEF WEBSITE: WWW.OCS EDUCATION FOUNDATION.COM

Forever IN OUR MEMORIES

Anne Barry

Wheeler School Nurse
August 9, 2020



Sally Luchsinger

Class of 1954
March 3, 2020



Roseland Molloy

Wheeler School Secretary
August 17 2020

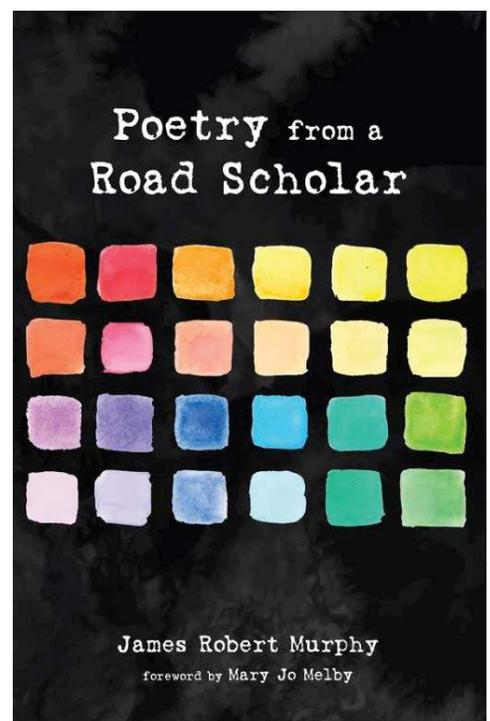
TIGERS ON THE BOOKSHELVES

JIM MURPHY

CLASS OF 1972

Jim, a previously featured author in Joyful Echoes, has released a new book, *Poetry from a Road Scholar*. This is his sixth book, and his first book of poems. It is currently available through his website, www.jamesrobertmurphy.com, as well as Amazon and Barnes & Noble.

These poems were written during a period of time when he was hitchhiking and traveling back and forth across the United States in the 70s and 80s. Beautifully put together and easy to comprehend, this collection would be perfect for those who enjoy reading poetry.





Onondaga Football, 1963

Stevenson Studios
RD 1 MARCELLUS, N. Y.

Continued from page 1

Mort observed that when he was in high school, Onondaga was in the Southern Division of the OCHSL, which comprised Lafayette, Tully, Fabius, J-E, Westhill, Solvay, Marcellus, and Skaneateles. Five of those schools were a lot larger than OCS, but Mort's teams were frequently competitive with the teams from the bigger schools. Marcellus was the only school with stadium lights, and one of Mort's best memories was playing a game under the lights. Westhill, Mort mentioned, was a new school in 1964, and it quickly became the Tigers' fiercest rival.

Of all the sports Mort played, basketball was his favorite and football was a close second. Mort remembers playing at least two-three basketball games per week. Back then, the gym

was always "jam-packed." Unless students arrived at the high school gym for the J.V. game, "... they would not be able to get a seat at the varsity game," Mort said. He observed there was not as many activities available outside of school, so more students attended games. Mort recalled that the league tried a new concept of scheduling basketball games immediately after school at 3:30. This change, however, did not go over well with athletes, who might not be at the top of their game in the afternoon. There were also fewer fans because many students had to work or do farm chores, and in those years, people could not get out of work an hour early, as many can today.

Mort was only the second Onondaga player to score 1,000 points in his career. (Bernie Finlay, a legendary alum from the 50's and a member

of the OCS Wall of Fame, was the first.) Mort tallied 1,003 points in three varsity seasons. At that time there was no three-point shot, and Mort estimated if there were a three-point line when he played, he would have scored another 300 points or so. Reminiscing about the good old days and friends, he added there are many more OCS basketball players who could have reached the 1,000-point milestone in a different era. One such player and friend, he noted, is teammate Jerry Hourigan, who scored 998 points. In addition, today's basketball teams play many more games than those of the 1960s, as there were no holiday basketball tournaments in our area during that time.

Mort recalled that there were "many great coaches" while he was in high school, and one coached basketball and track, Earl

AS A LINEBACKER, HE LOVED PURSUING RUNNERS AND TACKLING HARD, TRYING TO “DAMPEN THE SPIRIT” OF OTHER TEAM’S OFFENSE.

Fletcher. Just as teachers and coaches today, Fletcher served in multiple roles as the athletic director and gym teacher too. Coach Fletcher’s philosophy was to keep shooting—but “no garbage shots”—and run fast-paced game, “pass-and-shoot and run-and-gun” style. Under Coach Fletcher’s leadership and conditioning, the team excelled at lay-ups and fast breaks. Players would drive hard to the basket, drawing fouls and creating the opportunity to shoot a free-throw, the old way to earn three points. Mort did not shy away from getting fouled while driving to the basket, as he had a high-free throw percentage, helping him add up to his 1,003-point career.

A controversy Mort vividly remembers is a 66-66 “loss” to Skaneateles in his junior year. At the end of the game, the scoreboard showed Skaneateles winning 66-65. Per usual protocol, the referees went to the scorers’ table at the end of the game to confirm the result, but later the scorers discovered that both teams’ scorebooks showed a 66-66 tie. As a result, Coach Fletcher ordered his team to stand by and to be ready for overtime, but the Lakers proceeded to exit the gym quickly. The referees declared Skaneateles the winner. Following the game, Coach Fletcher, upset for his team, filed an official complaint with the Onondaga County Southern League, but the referee’s ruling stood, and Skaneateles’s win was reaffirmed.

With only about 60 students in his class, Mort remembered that OCS, one of the smallest schools in the division, had a low turnout of athletes. In one season the varsity football team had only 15 players, and JV’s had to suit up for the varsity games. Despite those low numbers, his senior-year football team had great success, with eight of the eleven all-county players being from OCS. The low enrollment was also the reason why Mort and other boys played both ways, in Mort’s case

linebacker on defense and fullback on offense. As a linebacker, he loved pursuing runners and tackling hard, trying to “dampen the spirit” of the other team’s offense. Mort gives credit to his coach, Dick Perry, who helped Mort utilize his farm-grown strengths and talents and develop as an athlete. Perry, whom Mort still sees on occasion, has transitioned from coach to friend. Mort also mentioned Wally Habel, who played minor league baseball before coming to OCS to teach social studies and coach baseball, another of the coaches to whom Mort remains grateful.

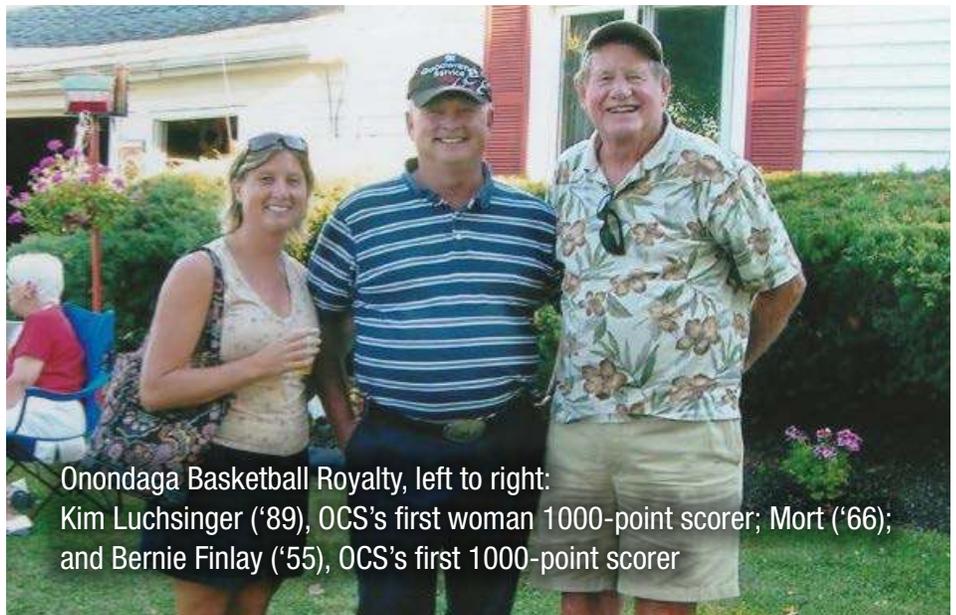
How have sports changed since he was in school? For one thing, Mort believes things have improved for girls. Back then, the only sports opportunity for girls at OCS was cheerleading. Now girls have a wide array of sports from which to choose, and cheerleading has been reclassified as a competitive sport. Mort, though, is disappointed by how high school sports are now covered in the press. In the 1960s and the following couple of decades, sportswriters were very diligent

in following high school sports. Newspaper articles were written about almost every game with great detail and description. “If your team won, it would get a write-up in the paper, and if a player had a stand-out game, it would be mentioned. Coverage today is not nearly as comprehensive,” he added.

For a brief time after high school, Mort worked in construction and played basketball in a town league, but competitive sports gradually gave way to his greatest passion, his family, anchored by his former high school sweetheart and spouse Jody (Tracy) Luchsinger, an OCS alumna, and his four children: Missy, Heather, Tracy, and Mike.

Mort’s advice to student-athletes is to work hard and do your best in everything you do. He offered one specific piece of advice for basketball players: “You can’t shoot enough!”

Mort still enjoys following sports with his grandchildren and watching S.U. basketball, the World Series, and a little NASCAR. Every once in a while, Mort will run into former high school competitors and enjoy reminiscing about the good old days. He is a proud OCS alumnus and just as proud of our athletics and the success of notable alumni such as Mike Hart and Latavius Murray, two professional athletes, and all of the contributions they and other student-athletes have to made to OCS.



Onondaga Basketball Royalty, left to right: Kim Luchsinger ('89), OCS's first woman 1000-point scorer; Mort ('66); and Bernie Finlay ('55), OCS's first 1000-point scorer

WO IST HERR?

HERR HANEY!

OUR CREATOR OF THE OCS GERMAN FEST AND TOUR DIRECTOR FOR STUDENT TRIPS TO GERMANY

by Marilyn J. Dominick



So how does a young man from Mifflinburg, PA build a German foreign language program in a small high school in CNY? This question was on my mind as I recently visited with my good friend and colleague, Harry Haney. Harry

and I had crossed paths for several years when we both held teaching positions at Onondaga Central High School in the 1970's and 80's. I jumped at the chance to interview him for this article, as I know many of us have fond memories of the elaborate German Fests. In addition, many former students experienced the most wonderful travel opportunities of their lives when they traveled with Herr to Germany while in High School.

So, here's the scoop on Herr! Harry Haney grew up in central Pennsylvania, graduating from Mifflinburg High School in 1955. After graduation, he didn't travel very far from home and attended Susquehanna University, majoring in history and German. The college was only about 30 minutes from his home. It is interesting that Herr really didn't set out to teach German, which is such a surprise because it came so naturally to him, but he really liked the language in college, so as he put it, "I just went with it!"

Upon graduation in 1959, he took his first teaching job, also close to home. He began his teaching career at West Snyder High School, but was hired to teach history, not German. He taught there until 1964, working during the summers at Buckhill Falls, a summer resort. It was during this time that Harry met Joy, the love of his life, who was a student at SU and was working at Buckhill during the summer.

They married after Joy completed her junior year of college. Harry stayed in PA, but changed to Montrose High School. He drove to Syracuse on weekends while Joy completed her senior year at SU. The next year, Joy joined Harry at Montrose teaching elementary school while Harry taught German. Montrose was a pretty small community and school, and the Haney's were surrounded by nice people. While there, Harry directed such drama classics as *Our Town* and *Arsenic and Old Lace*.

In 1966, the Haney's made the decision to move to Syracuse. Harry saw an ad in the Syracuse newspaper for an opening at Onondaga Central School. Bill Gilbert was the principal, and he hired Harry on the spot. Bill was very helpful and had a profound impact on Harry as a young teacher.

As was true of many small schools in the late 60's, the school district was having a hard time finding bus drivers. Harry took the opportunity to earn a little extra money, and along with his colleagues Howie Meader and Norris Fay, became a bus driver for the school in addition to teaching! On top of his busy schedule, Harry also directed a couple of plays at OCS, and even had OCS students perform "An Overpraised Season" at the SUNY Oswego drama festival in 1967, but then got deeply involved in the German program.

In 1969, the same year the United States landed on the moon, and the same year as the Chappaquiddick and Woodstock events, Harry won a National Defense Education Act Scholarship! That meant he could take German courses in Scranton, PA, or Montana State University in Bozeman. Harry and Joy decided to go to Montana. Harry recalls Joy worked as a desk clerk at the Baxter Hotel in downtown Bozeman and he lived on campus for the summer – seven weeks. “I felt very honored because there had been about 300 applicants and only 30 were chosen.” Harry benefitted greatly from his interaction with the German faculty. After the stay in Bozeman, they took the opportunity to travel to San Francisco, the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park and Mount Rushmore. In fact, they were just coming out of Yellowstone when the astronauts landed on the moon.

It was while he was in Montana that Harry learned how to do a German fest! When he returned to OCS, he initiated the first OCS German Fest and it lasted from 1970 - 1983! The Fest was hugely popular with its cake walk, carnival games, an oom-pah-pah band with music teacher Ben Hoke, the Schuhplattler Dance, lederhosen and dirndls. Judges gave prizes for the best entries!

In 1975-76, Harry won a Fulbright Teacher's Exchange Scholarship to teach overseas. He traded places with a teacher from Germany – Wolfgang Mews. They also traded houses, cars and jobs! Wolfgang came to OCS and taught Harry's German classes. Harry traveled to Wilhelmshaven on the north coast and taught Wolfgang's English classes. While Harry and Joy were in Germany, they had a wonderful experience and during school vacations, they traveled all over Europe, including a visit to the world-famous Oktober Fest in Munich. In 1983, Herr Haney began taking students to Germany, giving them the most authentic experience of all! Those trips went on until 1993. Harry started with senior German students and their trip to Germany lasted ten days. Herr's students were very grateful to experience the German culture first hand, and Harry reports that even now, “When I run into them, they

THE FEST WAS HUGE! POPULAR WITH ITS CAKE WALK, CARNIVAL GAMES, AN OOM-PAH-PAH BAND WITH MUSIC TEACHER BEN HOKE, THE SCHUHPLATTLER DANCE, LEDERHOSEN AND DIRNDLS.

speak glowingly of the experience they had I run into them all the time!”

Finding all of Harry's story fascinating, and appreciating the way he was so reflective about his life, I took the opportunity to ask him a few questions: What was the funniest thing that happened to you during your time at OCS?

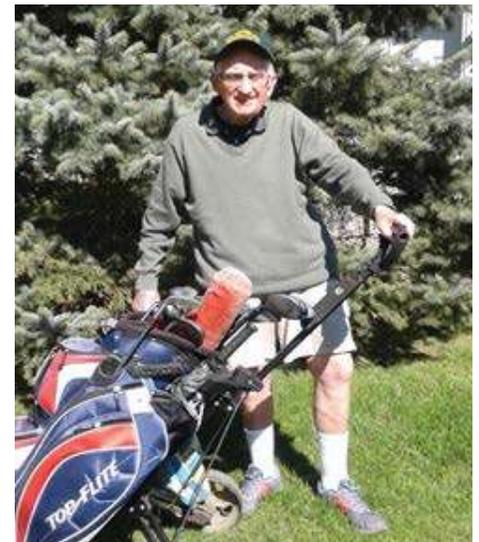
“One year, when we were about to leave on our trip to Germany, another teacher asked if I would bring her back a piece of the Berlin Wall. I didn't have the heart to tell her we weren't going to Berlin. When we returned from our trip, I parked next to the industrial arts building and saw small rocks and stones at the base of the building, so I carried one into her. I made her close her eyes and dropped the rock into her hand. She believed it was real until the end of the school year party, when my deception was revealed to her. I won't mention the teacher's name because I promised Suzette I wouldn't say a word.”

Harry also shared with me the most emotional time for him while teaching at OCS. He didn't even hesitate and said that it was the loss of a bright and wonderful young student, Jan Brissenden, to a tragic accident. I recalled that loss as well, and we both agreed it was a very sad and emotional time for our school.

As with any career, there are days that are positive and days that are not so much so. Thankfully, there were many more good days than bad.

After spending the majority of a wonderful career at OCS, the famous Herr Haney made the decision to retire in 1993. I asked him to reflect on this. “When I first started teaching,

I was 21 and the students were 16 - 19. In 1993, I was 55 but the students were still 16 - 19! Most of the time, they didn't know what I was talking about and I didn't know what they were talking about. I felt that I had a great career, but I knew it was time to retire.”



So, I was curious to know what happened next! Harry was such an icon at OCS and had left such a legacy! So, Harry told me that he really didn't “retire” retire. Not a surprise, I told him! While teaching, Harry owned a magazine subscription service, and continued that business until 2013. But now, he gives this account: “I just play golf, play golf and play more golf.” He also advises: “And just remember, retirement in older age is just like a victory lap. It's not how fast or slow you go, as long as you keep moving!” Wise words, Herr Haney, wise words!

And thank you, Herr Haney, for your positive impact on the lives of the students across the years at Onondaga Central School!

REQUEST FOR SUBMISSIONS & INFO

This newsletter is a product resulting from submissions made by our alumni. Please send us your stories and news! Do you have a favorite memory? An interesting story idea? Or an alumni announcement - wedding, birth, obituary - you would like to share?

For submissions of news, ideas and/or stories, please contact us at ocsalum34@gmail.com or send to:

OCSEF Alumni Coordinator
3479 Cherry Valley Turnpike
Syracuse, NY 13215

The OCSEF has established an Alumni Database. It contains contact information of OCS alumni, community members and current and former staff members. If you know of someone who would like to receive future issues of Joyful Echoes and other alumni-related

communications, please forward the Alumni Data Form to him or her. You can find it on the OCSEF Web Page: www.ocseducationfoundation.com

O N O N D A G A

J O Y F U L

Echoes