



## MEET THE ATHLETIC COUNCIL

Don Scholla  
Section VI Treasurer



There is a small city in the foothills of the Allegheny Mountains that offers steady and sturdy support to its residents. The range offers consistent and dependable oversight. People arrive in Olean one of two ways; it is their place of birth or a spot on a map that maybe a job opportunity attracted them to. One thing is for sure, once you arrive and experience the splash of color in October, the smell of the woods, the beauty nature puts on display, there is typically only one way out.

Don Scholla and wife, Janine moved into the City of Olean in 1988 for teaching positions and quickly felt the sense of community. This was an insulated place where they could raise a family, be contributors and impact thousands. Don retired from the Olean City Schools in 2013 after a 35-year career in education. Prior to Olean City, he got his start at Rushford Central in 1980 and stayed seven years teaching, coaching soccer, basketball and baseball while also serving as athletic director. He split the next year between Letchworth and Elba Central Schools once again coaching basketball and baseball. He earned the job of his dreams at Olean where he tripled-up again by teaching, serving as AD and coaching boys and girls varsity soccer and girls basketball.

The ethical, 'how can I help you', small-town feel you may get from Don, emanates from his hometown of Angelica (Section V), a tiny hamlet in Allegany County, with a population of 1,000. There were no secrets in his graduating class of 36 and Don competed in soccer, basketball and baseball while also showing his diplomatic side, as Student Council President. He followed up at Genesee Community College where he also played basketball. Scholla continued at SUNY Cortland earning a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and completing his post-secondary education at Alfred University with a Master's in Coaching & Education. He completed his School Administrator/Supervisor (SAS) certificate at Olean's St. Bonaventure University.

As the second oldest of seven children in the family, Don initially followed the lead of his older sister who entered college two years ahead of him and who become a physical education teacher herself. "I loved sports more than anything in the world and teaching Physical Education seemed like a logical way of staying involved

in sports. It was a great decision, as I have had a truly rewarding career as a teacher, coach and athletic administrator”.

Scholla also credits his high school basketball coach, Bruce Voorhis, who served as a mentor and who had a large influence on him, especially in his coaching career. Don continues to stay in touch with Coach Voorhis even to this day more than 50 years later. “I have been touched and have learned from the many people I have met over my years in education. They have all influenced me in some ways, and I have stolen many good ideas from several them. I have also been blessed to be married for 37 years to Janine, the best and most dedicated History teacher I have ever known (teacher at OHS, ’88-’13). She too has been an important role model, sharing her knowledge, offering encouragement and support.

Scholla should not downplay his own coaching skills. For 33 years, starting at Rushford, he led basketball and soccer teams to over 400 wins. Starting in 2006 with the Olean girls’ basketball program, his teams went 116-44 and won five Class B Sectional titles. Along the way, he led teams to 14 league titles, six Sectional championships and a Regional Title as well. He also worked seven years in college basketball, as the Associate Head Coach at Houghton College and as an assistant at the University of Pittsburgh at Bradford. He remains the radio color analyst for St. Bonaventure basketball.

His other inspirations are daughter Molly and Patrick, both true red/gold Olean alums. Both were 3-sport athletes at Olean. Molly (’04) competed in soccer, basketball and softball while Patrick (’13) played football, basketball and baseball. Both made the jump and played Division III intercollegiate athletics at John Carroll University in Ohio; Molly in basketball and Patrick in baseball. Both have gone on to careers in teaching and coaching. Molly teaches English at Portville Central School and Patrick teaches Health and serves as Assistant Athletic Director at Avon High School in Avon, Ohio. Molly and husband Jeff McMahon, gave Don and Janine a granddaughter, Madigan who is 2 years old.

If Madigan is ever lucky enough to get a pony, she has a built-in trainer in Poppy, her name for Don. A rare fact about Scholla is his time as a member of the United States Trotters Association. He was a licensed trainer/driver/groom in the sport of harness horse racing. He has demonstrated commitment and endurance completing three marathons, the last in 2007.

Likewise as a dedicated professional, Don was a frequent attendee at the New York State Athletic Administrators Association Conference (NYSAAA). He attended countless professional development sessions and was an active member of the association. Scholla also had immeasurable contributions at the league level. He was the Olean City Schools AD for more than 20 years. He has served seven years as the Section’s Treasurer since his retirement.

“I served Section VI as our boys’ representative to the NYSPHSAA for 10 years. It was truly a rewarding learning experience and one that allowed me to become involved and contribute to my school, league, Section VI and the NYSPHSAA. I am most proud to have the opportunity to stay involved and continue to serve in my role as Section VI Treasurer”.

It is probably no surprise that Don’s favorite movie of all-time is, ‘On Golden Pond’. Although the 1981 movie was filmed in New Hampshire, the connection to the environment of the Southern Tier is unmistakable. The story of Ethel and Norman and their daughter’s family may as well have been shot in the Alleghany Mountains. Summer was fading and the trees were shedding one coat for the electrifying autumn kaleidoscope. The loons were headed out. There was family and in the end, there was comfort, dependability, commitment and consistency. Who would ever think about leaving?