



## **PYA Hall of Fame**

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### **JIMMY COSOLITO**

Jimmy has the distinction of holding the office of President of PYA for the longest term in our 37-year history. Under his leadership, the organization has realized unprecedented growth in terms of number of children served, programs developed, and fundraising results.

As part of only the second father-and-son legacy inducted into the PYA Hall of Fame (his father Bart was honored in 1994), Jimmy has brought to the organization a resurgent intensity, vision, and passion for growth ever since he first took on the responsibility of leading PYA in 1985.

First stepping onto Lion's Field himself at the age of 8 in 1963, Jimmy's athletic career began in peewee football, and for the next 4 years saw him learn the team basics in basketball and baseball as well. In 1967, he was part of the All-Star District Baseball Champions, a level Port Washington would not reach again until almost 30 years later. This early success propelled Jimmy to a fine athletic career at Schreiber High School, where he earned a total of 7 Varsity letters (again in football, basketball, and baseball) by the time he graduated in 1972. He being named to the All-League team in his senior year highlighted his scholastic baseball career.

Jimmy ultimately headed north to Ithaca and graduated from Cornell University's School of Industrial Labor Relations. From that point, he continued to be active in post-graduate club sports (football, basketball, and baseball, of course) for a number of years.

In the late 1980's, as his young family (which includes his wife Theresa, and their sons Jim, Michael, and Christopher) grew, he began to offer his skill and expertise to the youth sports programs in town, including the struggling PYA. At that point, our organization was in a steady state of decline over the previous decade, with facilities suffering from a lack of maintenance, programs stagnating from lack of attention and growth, and an eroding capital base. It was at this point at a board of directors meeting in June 1989 when Harvey Cohen (PYA HOF '91) and the late Marty Rybecky (PYA HOF '92) convinced Jimmy that his energy and drive to salvage PYA's future would rest squarely in his hands.

The new president went to work immediately, drafting numerous colleagues, local businessmen, and long-time friends with young children in town to volunteer involvement and board membership. While he is often the first to give credit for team successes where it is due, he was in fact one of the key people who initially conceptualized this PYA Hall of Fame and Dinner Dance fundraiser, and now the "Field of Dreams" project.

For all his administrative achievements, he still managed to coach PYA football for 6 years, serve as baseball commissioner ever since 1938, and as basketball commissioner for a time as well. His development of the instructional level in this sport and coordination of all levels of the program was the initial catalyst to PYA's gradual return to fiscal prosperity during the first few years of his presidency.

While other volunteers have helped PYA for valuable brief periods of their children's involvement, as "Mr. President", Jimmy has given a continuous and dedicated 12 years (and counting) to one of the most successful volunteer organizations in town.

