

# Schenectady City School District

108 Education Drive  
Schenectady, NY 12303-1238



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September 16 2019

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## MEDIA ADVISORY

# Three to be inducted in the Schenectady Athletic Hall of Fame tonight

SCHENECTADY – The 22<sup>nd</sup> Annual Schenectady City School District Athletic Hall of Fame and Reunion Dinner will be held **Monday, September 16, 2019** at Glen Sanders Mansion. The 2019 inductees are Willie Deane, Gale Knull and Billy Petrolle. The ceremony will also include a legacy tribute honoring the 1959 Mont Pleasant Track and Field Team. The reception begins at 4:30 p.m. The induction ceremony will immediately follow dinner.

**MEDIA IS INVITED. Inductees will be available for interviews at 4:15 p.m.**

Information on the inductees is attached.

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Glen Sanders Mansion is located at 1 Glen Ave., Scotia, 12302

## ◆ OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

**Laurence T. Spring**  
Superintendent

**Dr. Patricia Paser**  
Assistant to  
the Superintendent

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## 2019 Inductees

**Willie Deane** led the Schenectady High School boys' basketball team to the 1998 New York State Public High School Athletic Association championship. He averaged 23 points, 7 rebounds and 5 assists that year. He was named the 1998 State Tournament MVP and an All-Tournament selection in the 1998 Federation Tournament. He is the Schenectady HS career scoring leader. He was a *USA Today* Honorable Mention All-American. After playing his freshman year at Boston College, Willie transferred to Purdue. He led Purdue in scoring, steals, made 3s, 3-point shooting percentage, made free throws & free throws attempted as a junior. He led the Big Ten in scoring in overall games in 2001-02 (17.3 ppg). He was All-Big Ten 2<sup>nd</sup> Team (media selection) as a junior. Willie led Purdue in scoring as a senior (17.8 ppg) and was an All-Big Ten 1<sup>st</sup> Team selection as a senior. He was named Purdue's John Wooden Team MVP as a junior & senior. He was one of 36 players on the Senior CLASS Award Watch List and played in the National Association of Basketball Coaches All-Star game in New Orleans. He had a very successful 15-year career playing pro basketball overseas, winning three Bulgarian championships, one Bulgarian Cup, a French championship & an Italian championship.

**Gale Knull** was an outstanding offensive lineman & hard-hitting linebacker on the undefeated 1967 Mont Pleasant High School football team. This team was ranked #1 in New York. He was the Thom McAn Bronze Shoe Award winner in 1966 & 1967. He was the first junior to win the award. Gale was a 1967 *Parade* All-American High School Football Team member. He was also named to the *Coach & Athlete Magazine* High School All-American Football Team. He was an undefeated wrestler as a senior at MPHS (27-0), winning the 1968 Sectional & State Wrestling Championships. He went to St. Lawrence University where he was MVP in football and wrestling. Gale was a three-time ICAC Conference wrestling champion, finishing his collegiate wrestling career with a 53-1 record. He was named the 1972 Outstanding Senior Athlete at SLU and is a member of the St. Lawrence U. Athletic Hall of Fame & the Mont Pleasant Sports Hall of Fame.

**Billy Petrolle** was raised in Schenectady and attended public school. He began his amateur boxing career in Schenectady at age 15. His pro boxing career began in 1922. He was once rated as the top challenger for the welterweight, junior-welterweight & lightweight titles. He fought for the World Lightweight title vs. Tony Canzoneri on Nov. 4, 1932, at Madison Square Garden, losing a 15 round decision (he previously beat Canzoneri). He had other notable fights vs. Barney Ross, Battling Battalino, Jimmy McLarnin & Kid Berg. He fought ten current or past world champions, defeating five of them. He fought 11 bouts at Madison Square Garden. He also fought at Yankee Stadium, Boston Garden & Chicago Stadium. He was known as the "Fargo Express" and was on the cover of *The Ring* magazine three times. Billy was a very popular boxer who drew large crowds. BoxRec.com lists him as the 47<sup>th</sup> best welterweight of all time. He is a member of the International Boxing Hall of Fame, World Boxing HOF, *The Ring* magazine HOF & Minnesota Boxing HOF. He was named a Schenectady Patron. He will be inducted posthumously.

This year's **Legacy Tribute** will honor the outstanding **1959 Mont Pleasant High School track & field team** (60<sup>th</sup> anniversary). Mont Pleasant finished undefeated, winning three dual meets, the Rye Invitational & the Utica Interscholastic Track & Field Meet. It tied powerful Bishop Loughlin (NYC) for the Schenectady Interscholastic Sports Carnival title and easily won the Class "A" Sectionals, winning eight of twelve events. Don Blaha (high jump) and Jim Scott (440-yd. run) were State champions. Scott set a new State record (48.8). Ron Horan, who set a Sectional record in the 880-yd. run, was runner-up at the State Meet. Blaha, a member of the SCSD Athletic Hall of Fame, was unbeaten in the high jump during the 1959 season.