

Chester Joseph Cashman Jr.



Cashman, Chester Joseph, Jr.

Mr. Chester Joseph Cashman Jr. passed away June 9, 2011 at the Highland's Care Center in Laporte, PA after a long courageous battle with Alzheimer's disease. He was born in Ithaca, NY December 19, 1942 to the late Alice Degraw-Cashman and Dr. Chester Joseph Cashman Sr. He is survived by his loving wife of 43 years Mrs. Carol Hutcheson-Cashman, a daughter Michelle Cashman-Szczerba, a son Sean Cashman, his brother James Cashman, two nieces Kim and Gina and his grandchildren Arianna and Owen, as well as other extended family. He is also survived by many, many friends, colleagues, fellow boxers, and countless community youth he has helped throughout his life often when others would not.

Chet graduated from Ithaca High School in 1961, he went on to earn his bachelors from the University of Georgia in 1965 and later his Masters degree in Education from Elmira College. He worked for Agway and later Cornell University as a chemist and lab technician for many years. He had a strong love for all animals but took great pride in his pigeons that he raised for fun and show.

Chet's love of boxing and the community was originally instilled in him by his father and later Rev. Cunningham at the Southside Community Center in Ithaca, New York where he honed his skills throughout his amateur career. Chet later took over the program and moved it to the Greater Ithaca Activities Center where it continues today and is now one of the longest running not for profit program in Ithaca, New York thanks to the selfless efforts of Chet. Chet was a courageous man who fought for others when others would remain silent. He was a modest advocate for many of Ithaca's youth and less fortunate. Chet always stressed the importance of education, the positive aspects of the sport of boxing while being a devout community servant who never asked for anything in return.

Chet's final days were spent surrounded by family and had his son by his side during his final moments. He was loved and admired by all he met. Many will continue to be inspired by this great man and he will be forever missed. Calling hours will be held at Wagner Funeral Home located at 110 South Geneva Street in Ithaca, NY at 2:30 on Saturday the 18th of June followed by a celebration of his life at G.I.A.C. located at 318 N. Albany Street, Ithaca, NY at 5 p.m. Anyone whose life has been touched by this amazing man is strongly encouraged to pay their respects, share their thoughts and memories of this great community leader. Donations in Chet's honor can be made to the boxing program at G.I.A.C.

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The following story appeared as a Sports article on www.ithaca.com, home to Ithaca Times and Finger Lakes Community newspapers, on June 16, 2011.

Difference Maker: Remembering the impact of Chet Cashman

By Steve Lawrence | Posted: Thursday, June 16, 2011 3:50 pm



I have written a lot of stories about a lot of coaches, and I can say without hesitation that Chet Cashman had as powerful an influence on the lives of Ithaca's young people as any coach I have ever met. I have a lot of respect for my many friends in the coaching staffs of Cornell and Ithaca College, but I will say with all due respect that few of them ever helped kids overcome

so much to realize their potential. Unlike many of the kids from stable, middle-class homes, many of the young athletes Cashman helped to reinvent themselves came from very different sets of circumstances. I personally witnessed some of these transformations through interviews and observations, and when Chet died this week, he left behind a lot of admirers.

In 1982, Cashman moved the boxing program from Southside Community Center to GIAC, where it thrives today as one of the longest-running not-for-profit programs in Ithaca. Danny Akers was one of Chet's early charges, and he remembers, "I started with him in 1970, and I remember he would pack seven fighters into his Camaro and we'd travel to Rochester for our fights." Akers, along with his co-trainer Patrick O'Connor, saw considerable success in the ring, and is now widely regarded as one of the region's preeminent trainers and motivators. The two men have picked up Cashman's torch in their efforts to transform lives through the Sweet Science, and Akers

offers, "If it weren't for him, I wouldn't have accomplished anything in boxing. In fact, who knows what would have happened to me."

O'Connor walked into Cashman's gym in his mid-20's, and he recalls, "I was a street-tough kid who thought he could just kick anyone's ass." Cashman saw a lot of potential in the tough but raw kid, and knew that O'Connor would learn and grow a lot more if he were to be on the receiving end of some of those ass-kickings, and O'Connor is grateful for the guidance. When asked to describe Chet in one word, O'Connor said, "Influential." Now, Akers and O'Connor have taken several fighters much farther than they would possibly have gone on their own, and they thank Cashman for the wisdom, the guidance, and especially, the endless hours.

Mike Thomas has worked at GIAC since 1984, and he is well-acquainted with many of the fighters Cashman influenced. "Chet was well-respected and well-liked," Thomas said, "and he got right in their face if they weren't doing well in school. He was a huge advocate for education." Mike thought a moment, and added, "I'll tell you how I measured his impact on these kids: They stayed in touch with him and visited him whenever they could, 10 or 15 years after they left his program. That says a lot."

Cashman's calling hours are at 2:30 p.m. on Saturday at Wagner Funeral Home, and there will be a 10-Bell Count and a celebration of his life at GIAC at 5 p.m. All are encouraged to attend.