

To: Gary Mols

From: Gerhard J. Lang  
Park School of Buffalo-Class of 1964

Subj: Supporting nomination of Herbert J.Mols to the Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame (HOF)

Date: April 15, 2012

Dear Sirs/Ms.

I am honored to have been asked to support the nomination of Herbert J. Mols to the Buffalo Sports Hall of Fame. To this end, I will begin by discussing the many impressions, talents and qualities of this selfless and extraordinary man:

*\*athlete      \*coach      \*role model      \*mentor      \*motivator      \*facilitator*

*\*census builder                      \*visionary/big picture guy*

*\*organizational and administrative genius      \*diplomat      \* ambassador*

No single individual has left a larger imprint on my sports career and personal life than Herb Mols. What I learned from him as a 4 sport athlete at the Park School of Buffalo in the mid-1960's may have showed up on the sports pages in some measurable or quantifiable way. However, what I learned from Coach Mols –the person--was more remarkable as it will endure a lifetime.

My first recollection of Coach Mols' influence on me came at mid-term in my junior year. I had recently transferred to Park from the Manlius School in Syracuse, N.Y. I recall Coach Mols introducing me to the basketball team and suggesting I could be an asset to the team down the stretch. When, after 3 games, I wasn't starting and seeing limited action at that, I openly displayed my frustration and ego in the locker room. Coach took me aside to let me know I was an unnecessary distraction and that no individual was bigger than the team—at Park or anywhere else. The incident cost me 2 games on the bench before I finally settled in as Park's 6<sup>th</sup> man for the remainder of the season. Coach Mols was clearly in charge.

Coach Mols was forever the teacher and tactician when it came to getting the most from his athletes. Whether one was playing football, basketball, baseball or track & field (which he coached for 27 years at Park), Coach Mols made sure that the classroom and learning process didn't end when the game was over. Win or lose, Coach wanted to know what we learned from the game and how to apply lessons learned to the playbook of life. As we players endeavored to find something meaningful, Coach Mols was learning much about us with his 'dig deeper' philosophy.

Coach Mols was the consummate practitioner of the ‘power of suggestion’.

One day after seeing me throw a baseball from deep centerfield to nail a runner at home plate, he casually remarked, “Too bad they outlawed the javelin in high school. With your arm and a few practice runs, you could easily win the regional AAU--sanctioned events.”

About a year later while watching ABC’s Wide World of Sports Olympic track & field coverage on television, I recalled Coach’s remarks about the javelin. Two weeks later, I had purchased a new javelin at Dick Fisher’s and participated in my first javelin competition, winning the event and breaking the previous record by 30 feet. I went undefeated in the javelin for the next 3 years and can say unequivocally that, “Coach Mols made me do it!”

Seeing Coach Mols in action on any given game day is testimony to his work ethic which was second to none. He reminded me of a NASA flight engineer with pens, slide rules, and various other gadgets and measuring devices stuffed into his pockets. He moved around Park’s sport complex, a study in perpetual motion going through a checklist of game preparation tasks. A teammate of mine remarked on Coach’s work ethic at Park’s 2009 reunion “Can you imagine Coach in time lapse photography?”.

He was adroit in dealing with details—an organizational and administrative genius. With his increasing involvement and responsibilities with the Niagara AAU, the Olympic Basketball Committee, Empire State Games and other organizations. Coach’s dining room and sun porch at 99 Chateau Terrace became the ‘nerve center’ for his many activities in Western New York, nationally and abroad.

Coach Mols was an idea man—a visionary. He saw the big picture and had the contacts, savoir faire and charisma to make things happen. The Empire Games was his greatest achievement—a monument to an energetic, humble man who loved the people and spirit of Western New York. When Herb Mols passed in 1986, the people of Western New York acknowledged his many accomplishments and contributions to sports with a funeral procession of uniformed athletes marching down Main St.

“In my opinion, there is no one else more deserving of such a honor.”

.