

## Field flooded with kudos

# Who needs more sports awards?

By C. J. RISAK

This is no joke. It's true — there really is a National Polish Hall of Fame. It's on the Orchard Lake St. Mary campus, because the school is the center for Polish Studies and Culture.

The motto of the Polish Hall of Fame is, "To provide a means to honor and recognize American athletes, both amateur and pro, who have accomplished noteworthy accomplishments in sports."

There are already 15 former athletes in the Polish Hall.

But my question is, why? Why do American people of Polish descent feel they are being short-changed in other Hall of Fames, so much so that

they have to form one of their own?

I guess I just don't get it. And don't say it's because I'm Polish, either. It's not funny, and, anyway, I'm not. But in my grandfather's day, people thought we were.

My grandfather was Hungarian and he owned a barber shop in the multi-ethnic steel town of Youngstown, Ohio. He was a slick businessman, so he figured that most Czechs would go to one of their own to get his haircut.

Likewise, my grandfather figured, a Pole would go to a Polish barber and a German to a German barber. So if he was going to attract more than just Hungarians to his shop, he had to do something.

He did. He changed our last name so that people couldn't be sure what nationality he was. Our name sounded a bit like everything.

IT'S THE SAME kind of feeling, thinking about my grandfather's little trick, I get when I think about this Polish Hall of Fame. It's a con job.

Don't misunderstand me. Every member in the Polish Hall of Fame deserves recognition for his or her accomplishments. In fact, there are some very famous people in it.

Names like Stan Musial, the St. Louis Cardinal slugger who is second only to Ty Cobb on the all-time hit list, or Johnny Lujack, the Heisman Trophy winner from Notre Dame who went on

to star in the National Football League, or Al Simmons, the National League's Most Valuable Player in '29, and batting champ in '30 and '31 are included.

So has Tony Zale, the middleweight champ in the late '40s, and Ted Marchibroda, former Pittsburgh Steeler quarterback and now coach of the Baltimore Colts, and Stella Walsh, who held 11 women's track records at one time and won a gold medal in the '52 Olympics.

The names go on and on. Now they want to add the names of Bill Mazeroski, former All-Star second baseman for the Pittsburgh Pirates, golfer Al Watrous, winner of the '22 Canadian Open, and Olympic medal-winning

weight-lifter Norbert Schemansky.

If, say, there is no worthy candidate, why should the honor even be given?

A good example is the World Series MVP award. Can you tell me who won it in '67? Any Tiger fan can tell you it was Mickey Lolich. Lolich won three games, including the Series-

winner, a feat rarely accomplished in Series annals.

Now, here is the big test: Who won it the next year, when the Mets beat the Orioles? Give up? It was Don Clendenon, a first baseman who hit three homers, drove in around .300 in five games.

Now you tell me who had an outstanding series, Lolich or Clendenon. There have been lots of players who have equaled Clendenon's "feat" and never won any award. So if he didn't deserve it, and nobody else did, why did they give one away?

Good question. And why is there a Polish Hall of Fame?

C.J.'s Side



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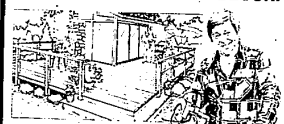
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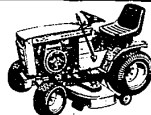
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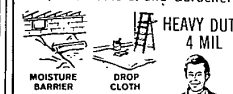
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