

UPLAND HALL OF FAME Connor Morris

Upland is a truly special place. It is a place that allows a starting player on the hockey team to be a straight-A student and a lead in a play. Dr. John M. Cleveland, Elle Cleveland, Court Dunn, and Clee Edgar were added to the Inaugural Upland Athletic Hall of Fame Class. Each has dedicated their life to this school and made it what it is today.

Everyone who has entered the Chester County Skating Club has heard of Dr. Cleveland. Dr. Cleveland was the Head of School, the first Head Coach of the Boys' Varsity Hockey team, and a language teacher at Upland. After interviewing both Mr. Dunn and Mr. Edgar, the common theme I found about Dr. Cleveland was his vision for Upland. He knew exactly what he wanted Upland to become and how to do it. Dr. Cleveland made everyone feel important, from his colleagues to his students. Mr. Dunn shared that when he was a teacher at Upland, at just 21 years old, Dr. Cleveland would ask for his opinion on Upland's future.

Dr. Cleveland brought both ice hockey and the 9th-grade model to Upland, two characteristics that define the school. He believed the 9th-grade model was important for students. It allows 9th graders to be the school's leaders, rather than at the bottom of the food chain, like the traditional high school model. When Upland had plans to build a community athletic center, Dr. Cleveland suggested a rink. When his idea was accepted, he raised the funds, helped build the rink, founded the Chester County Skating Club, and created the Upland hockey team. The Upland Rink/Chester County Skating Club is now named after Dr. Cleveland.

Dr. Cleveland also started the Upland Invitational Hockey Tournament, the longest-standing junior ice hockey tournament in the country. Each year, this tournament is the goal of the hockey team. The tournament includes both clubs and junior schools. The tournament consists of club and junior schools and since 1996 has been exclusively junior schools, Rumsey Hall School and New Canaan Country School being the two teams in it every year. Though he had a true affinity for hockey, Dr. Cleveland's vision for Upland was the Four A's: Athletics, Academics, Arts, and Attitude. He wanted every student and teacher at Upland to be involved in all four of these categories. He thought that Attitude was the most important because the other three came from having a better attitude. Dr. Cleveland left a huge impact on Upland and the school would be completely different without him.

Elle Cleveland, Jack's wife, was the opposite of Jack Cleveland. She was, as Mr. Dunn described her, "the life of the party." Mrs. Cleveland was the Girls' Field Hockey Coach and Girls' Lacrosse Coach for Upland. She coached and developed many Division I college athletes, including Missy Meharg, the current coach of the University of Maryland field hockey team. Mrs. Cleveland was a language teacher at Upland, teaching Latin and Spanish. Mrs. Cleveland was one of the kindest people the world has ever known. According to Mr. Dunn, she made you feel like family no matter what. She would always bake a cake for each faculty member's birthday and make brownies for the players and coaches on the hockey trips. She lived life to the fullest and always put others ahead of her.

When you think of Mr. Court Dunn, you think of hockey and athletics, but he first came to Upland as a piano player. That's when he first found Upland and Dr. Cleveland took him under his wing. Mr. Dunn was named Head Coach of the Boys' Varsity Hockey team in the 1981-82 season and won his first Upland Invitational Tournament in 1983, Upland's first win. Since then, he has won 12 Invitationals as head coach and most recently this year as an assistant coach, totaling 13 Invitational tournaments. Coach Dunn achieves all Four A's, as he is a legend in the hockey program, a fantastic science teacher, a master musician, and a person who pushes the people around him to be better people.

Mr. Clee Edgar is the most of an Upland "lifer" as you can get, he started at Upland as a student in the school's first year in 1948 and was later a teacher, coach, and parent. He was an assistant coach of the first Boys' Varsity Hockey team and the first head coach of the Girls' Varsity Hockey team in 1996. Mr. Edgar played lacrosse at the University of North Carolina and brought the sport to Upland in 1968. He started the lacrosse program and was the first Head Coach. Mr. Edgar is one of Upland's greats because he started two athletic programs at Upland, was a phenomenal administrator and classroom teacher, and inspired everyone he met.

Without these four individuals, Upland would be a completely different school. Students would not be able to be themselves and try new things. Most people think the star athlete being the lead in the musical is only on Disney shows, but Upland turns that theory right on its head because of the Inaugural Upland Athletic Hall of Fame class. They showed all of us that athletics is more than just playing a game.