

WELCOME TO THE 12TH ANNUAL  
AVON PARK CHAMPIONS CLUB



HALL OF FAME BANQUET

INDUCTEES

**Bryan Arnold**  
**Mort Jackson, Jr.**  
**Dr. Katharine Markell**  
**Hal McRae**  
**Lew Mundt**

MARCH 2, 2024



## TONIGHT'S SCHEDULE

Welcome ..... Walter Nunnallee  
Invocation .....Father Ronnie Sison  
Pledge of Allegiance ..... Walter Nunnallee  
Opening Remarks .....Chet Brojek, President  
APHS 100th Anniversary Presentation ..... Karen Edsall  
AP Baseball Museum Presentation .....Dr. Ron Seigny  
Entertainment ..... APHS Show Choir  
Dinner ..... Served by APHS Culinary  
President's Award .....Chet Brojek, President  
Student Scholarships ..... Scott Dressel, Vice-President

***Induction of Bryan Arnold***

***Induction of Mort Jackson Jr.***

***Induction of Dr. Katharine W. Markell***

***Induction of Hal McRae***

***Induction of Lew Mundt***

Closing Remarks .....Chet Brojek, President

# OUR PURPOSE

The purpose of the Avon Park Champions Club is to create a championship environment in Avon Park both by honoring the past and supporting our local academic and athletic programs. All the championships in the history of Avon Park were a product of the support of families, coaches, teachers, teammates, classmates - the entire community. Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community effort to produce championship caliber programs. The Avon Park Champions Club was formed to provide the support necessary to afford each student that same opportunity that many of us experienced in years past. To steal a quote from Field of Dreams, "build it and they will come;" create a championship environment in our community and the championships will come!

If you are interested in supporting the Champions Club, please visit our website at [www.apchampionsclub.com](http://www.apchampionsclub.com) or scan this QR code to make a donation



For more information:  
118 South Lake Avenue, Avon Park, FL 33825  
Phone: 863-453-5959 | Email: [info@apchampionsclub.com](mailto:info@apchampionsclub.com)

# TONIGHT'S SPONSORS

## **PLATINUM PLUS (\$1,250)**

Avanti Co.	Dr. James Marcum
Bagwell Lumber	Jarrett Gordon Ford
Bill Jarrett Ford	John Palmer Electric
Carney Foundation	Kenny Dixon
Cowpoke's Watering Hole/ Wild Turkey Tavern	MIDFLORIDA Credit Union
David Sisemore devtech	NUCOR
Huston Chevrolet	Sevigny & Associates
Jahna Concrete	SouthState Bank
	Walter & Joyce Nunnallee

## **PLATINUM (\$500)**

Avon Park Noon Rotary  
Chet & Chris Brojek  
GeoDev  
Griffins Dry Cleaning & Laundry  
Heartland National Bank  
Our Lady Of Grace Catholic Church  
Souther Signs

## **GOLD (\$250)**

Barben Fruit Co.  
Designer's Top Shop  
Edgewood Landscape  
Edward Jones (Jeff Roth & Cheryl Brown)  
Dennis Johns, LLC  
Hicks Oil  
Long's Air Conditioning

## **SILVER (\$100)**

Jean Lund  
Olympic Restaurant  
Dr. Ron Sevigny  
18 East Restaurant

# HALL OF FAMERS

## **Class of 2012**

Lucy Derkman  
Joe Franza  
Reginald "Guy" Garrett  
Thomas Gordon  
Ronnie Jackson  
Bill Jarrett

## **Class of 2013**

Chet Brojek  
Frederic "Fred" Jahna  
Virgil Martin  
Rance "Hoppy" Rewis  
J. C. Walker

## **Class of 2014**

Ralph Hill  
Dewayne Lemler  
Dexter Seigler  
Ronald Sevigny  
Don Sisemore

## **Class of 2015**

Robert Barben  
Rodney Davis  
Dale Landress  
Jean Lund  
Jimmy Prevatt

## **Class of 2016**

Alvin Conner  
Cherri Lee  
Al Loveless  
Fred Montsdeoca  
Wendell Williams

## **Class of 2017**

Chuck Anderson  
Thomas Bagwell  
John Crittenden  
Willie English  
Anthony Gordon

## **Class of 2018**

Charles "Charlie" Bonjokian  
Joe Jackson  
Laurie Welch  
Stanley Wells

## **Class of 2019**

Ann Carter  
Kenny Long  
Steve Maxwell  
Clyde "Chop" Pough

## **Class of 2020**

C. Elton Crews  
Kenny Dixon  
Dean Lemler  
David Sisemore

## **Class of 2022**

Kimberly Best  
Dr. Catherine P. Cornelius  
Sherwin Mackintosh  
Durrah Martin

## **Class of 2023**

Adrian Battles  
Don Hickman  
Dr. James Marcum  
Walter Nunnallee

# SUPPORTING THE PRESENT

**The Avon Park Champions Club helps support the following programs, sports, clubs and organizations:**

All Avon Park Public Schools  
APHS AVID  
APHS Culinary  
APHS Baseball  
APHS & APMS Basketball  
APHS & APMS Cheer  
APHS Football  
APHS Soccer  
APHS Tennis  
APHS Girl's Flag Football  
APMS Volleyball  
Avon Park Diamond Club  
Avon Park Youth Football  
Avon Park Dixie Youth Baseball  
APHS Choir & Band  
Boys' and Girls' Club  
Music on Main Street  
APHS Student-Athlete of the Month  
Parade of Athletes  
Central Florida Striders  
Champions Elite Track Team  
Children's Museum of the Highlands  
Marc Mero (motivational speaker)  
Jingle Bell Run  
Harvest Festival Anchor Sponsor  
School Advisory Committee  
Joe Franza Scholarship  
Sebring Firemen, Inc.  
APHS Robotics  
APHS FBLA  
AP Touchdown Club  
APHS Project Graduation  
School Advisory Council  
Leadership Highlands

# ENCOURAGING THE FUTURE

The Avon Park Champions Club seeks to assist students who have demonstrated integrity, strength of character, financial need, a good academic record, commitment to pursue a college education and a desire to contribute.

## **Scholarship Recipients**

### **2014**

Charles Council  
Maria Tataris

### **2015**

Brianna Cox  
Rachel Gaidos

### **2016**

Paul Devlin  
Chase Langston

### **2017**

Cassidy Beers  
Luis Cervera  
Jaydee Grice  
Diana Eugenio-Hernandez

### **2018**

Kristen Farless  
Joseph Franza  
Bryce Langston  
Denise Limdimas  
Madison Thomas

### **2019**

Neaychma Fogle  
Kirsten Oca  
Magnolia Santiago  
Amy Schlosser  
Miranda Bustos

### **2020**

William Parker  
Jacey Pella  
Kevin Myers  
Olivia Guerndt  
Aiden Pierce

### **2021**

Hannah Loomis  
Joshua Farless  
Jazmia McDonald  
Samuel Morgan  
Jocelyn Hernandez  
Ja'Nya Jenkins

### **2022**

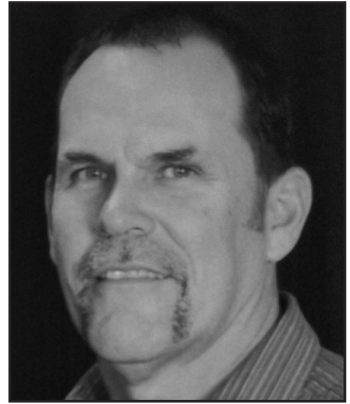
Alicia Perry  
Hadley Jackson  
Landon Cox  
Addie Ferguson  
Briana Martinez  
Adrianna Martinez

### **2023**

Reagan Richards  
Ryan Rivera  
Janelle Hamilton  
Jack Barben  
Madison Cornell  
Bonny Sizemore  
Britney Sosa

# BRYAN ARNOLD

Avon Park native Bryan Preston "B.A." Arnold started playing competitive baseball at the age of five in Avon Park Dixie Youth League. His father, Donald Arnold, volunteered for many years, sharing his knowledge of the sport teaching Bryan and his teammates the fundamentals of the game. As Bryan's passion for the sport grew, his talent and competitive nature also blossomed. As a first-year varsity starter for Avon Park High School, he got to share the experience of playing in the state playoffs his sophomore year as the team came in second place. In 1984, which was Bryan's senior year, the Avon Park Red Devils became the Class AA State Champions.



After high school, Bryan continued to play baseball at both South Florida and Polk community colleges. While playing for the Polk Eagles during the 1986 season, Bryan helped carry the team by hitting nine triples, a school record that still stands to this day. His last two years playing at the collegiate level were at Florida Southern College under Chuck Anderson, another fellow native to Avon Park and a member of the Avon Park Champions Club Hall of Fame. Bryan continued his outstanding performance throughout his senior year, contributing seven home runs and 41 RBIs during the 1988 season. The Florida Southern Moccasins stayed strong that year to become the Division 2 World Series champions. Bryan was also chosen as First-Team Sunshine State Conference performer and a Division 2 All-South Selection.

Bryan joined the professional ranks in June of 1988 when he signed with the Pittsburgh Pirates as a catcher/designated hitter. After only one season with the Pirates organization, he decided to settle down, get married, and start his own business in construction as a tile setter. Of course, he started playing men's slow-pitch softball in local leagues, as well as tournament ball throughout the United States. In 2008, "B.A." was inducted into the International Softball Association (ISA) Hall of Fame with recognition in the players category. He was a wide-open player who was named to 10 All-World All-American teams, also winning one Major Championship, three AA World Championships, five A Championships, three B World Championships, two Winter World Championships, and four Masters World Championships.

Bryan boasts a list of many accomplishments, but his most precious accomplishment would be his family, especially his daughter Kaylie Rae, his "huntin' buddy." As Bryan retired from playing ball, he stayed incredibly involved with the sport that he loved. He shared his passion by offering professional instruction to all ages at the Cage Rage batting cage facility, which he founded in 2009. Bryan passed away on his 51st birthday, June 3, 2017. His legacy lives on at Cage Rage as players continue to advance in the sport that Bryan loved so much!



# MORT JACKSON, JR.

Mortimer Jackson, Jr. was born on January 11, 1959, in Avon Park, to Mort Jackson, Sr. and Nancy Jackson at Walker Memorial Hospital. He attended Avon Elementary, Avon Park Middle School, and Avon Park High School where he and younger brother Jeff Jackson could be found getting into various forms of mischief.

Mort got married on July 14, 1979 to the love of his life and high school sweetheart, Mary Linda Derkman. The two have been married for 44 years and look forward to many more years of wedded bliss. He has two children, Mortimer (Bo) Jackson III and Jenna Kate (Jackson) Hancock. Mort has six grandchildren listed in order by age: John Hancock, Kasen Jackson, Jackson Hancock, Kellen Jackson, Lyla Hancock and Kayten Jackson. All six excel in sports and academics.



During Mort's high school career, he played football and baseball for the Red Devils. His freshman year, he played tight end in football and started at second base for the varsity baseball team. His sophomore year, he did not play football and played shortstop and catcher and won the batting title. His junior year, he played football as the starting quarterback, and was the starting catcher for the baseball team and was named best all-around player that year. His senior year, he was a football team captain, the starting quarterback, and earned the award for best offensive player. In baseball, he was chosen as a captain and won the MVP award.

Mort received a full athletic scholarship to SFSC (then South Florida Junior College.) His freshman year he played for Tim Hill and then for Clay Gooch as a sophomore. He got his AA degree and was awarded the Florida Blue Key Award for Scholastics, Citizenship and Athletics. He transferred to the University of Central Florida and made the baseball team as a walk-on.

At this point in his life, important decisions for the future led Mort to retire from baseball to concentrate on graduation and beyond. Since he did not see a future for himself in professional sports, he wanted to move back to Avon Park. Mort ran Mort Jackson and Sons Masonry for three years before leaving the construction industry and starting his teaching and coaching career.

In 1984, Mort was hired at APHS as a science teacher. He taught earth space science from 1984-1987. He became a full-time biology teacher in 1987. In 1998, he was the lead science teacher for the Health Academy that was established at Avon Park High School. He then became an anatomy and physiology teacher from 2002-21. In 2011, he became the coordinator for the Executive Internship Program. He was selected to become the third Athletic Director in APHS's

storied history, holding the role from 2002 to 2021. During this time, Mort was able to add wrestling and girls' powerlifting to the list of sports offered at APHS. He was able to hire quality coaches for these positions and, as a result, the programs produced two wrestling state champions, one wrestling state runner-up, and two girls' powerlifting state champions in his tenure.

Mort became a coach immediately upon accepting a teaching position at APHS. He worked as the junior varsity football coach for four years, amassing a 29-3 record. He was a varsity assistant for some 21 years. He was also the varsity head football coach for two years where he had a 6-14 record. Though the record is not impressive, this was a period of time when the districts were realigned and APHS faced some larger schools than they had previously. As a consolation, during this period, Mort and his Red Devil varsity football team beat the rival Sebring Blue Streaks every time they played them.

Mort also coached baseball for 25 years. He was the head junior varsity baseball coach for three years, earning a 47-4 record. He became the head varsity baseball coach in 1988 and continued for 22 years until his retirement. In 22 years, his record was 372-222. During his tenure, he won 12 district championships and five district runner-ups. His teams made the playoffs 17 out of 22 years. Mort was selected as the FACA 2A coach of the year in 1988 and 1990. His early 2000s teams got to enjoy some great baseball on the road, as Coach Jackson took them to Charleston, S.C. in 2001 and to Washington, D.C. in 2004.

Mort also was a Dixie Baseball coach, taking his team to a World Series 13 out of 14 years. He was an assistant coach on the 1986 and 1987 World Series teams. The 1987 team is the only team to win the World Series in Avon Park's history. Mort won seven Dixie State Championships, which got them in the World Series. He also coached four teams as the host team for the World Series.

Mort is well known and loved for his easy-going and fun disposition. He is hardworking, patient, and kind. As a teacher, coach, parent and grandparent, he has high expectations while allowing the younger generation to make mistakes and learn from them. He has that special quality about him that makes you want to live up to his expectations. This disposition has enabled him to easily make friends, maintain relationships, and have such an impactful career as a teacher and coach.

Family ties are a recurring theme in Mort's life. He played baseball and football under his uncle Ronnie Jackson for all four years of his high school career. Upon returning to Avon Park and becoming a teacher and coach, he had the opportunity to impact nephews, nieces, cousins, and his own son and daughter. One such student and player is APHS' current head baseball coach, Kyle Jackson. He is preceded into the Champion's Club Hall of Fame by his mother-in-law Lucy Derkman and uncles Ronnie and Joe Jackson. He continues their legacy of encouraging excellence in Avon Park athletics.

# DR. KATHARINE MARKELL

Dr. Katharine Walcott Markell is a dual-boarded general and colorectal surgeon who served 20 years in the Medical Corp of the United States Army, retiring as a colonel in August 2022.

She began her dream of becoming a physician by attending Cumberland University where, having played softball and volleyball at Avon Park High School (graduating in 1993), she had been recruited to play softball and volleyball.

She obtained a bachelor's degree of science in biology with a minor in chemistry and graduated with Honors (Magna Cum Laude).

Dr. Markell joined the Army in 1998 as a recipient of the Army's Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) and received her Medical Degree in 2002 from the University of Miami School of Medicine. She completed her internship and general surgery residency at Madigan Army Medical Center in 2007 and her first assignment was to the United States Army Institute of Surgical Research, where she served as the Burn Fellow. During this year, she also completed the Critical Care Air Transport Team (CCAT) Course in order to participate on the Burn Flight team.

In 2008, she began her Colon & Rectal Surgery Fellowship at Northwest Colon and Rectal Clinic in Seattle and, upon completion, she was assigned to Brooke Army Medical Center (BAMC) in 2009 as a General & Colorectal Surgeon and Teaching Faculty for the General Surgery Residency. Dr. Markell is dually board certified by the American Board of Surgery and the American Board of Colon & Rectal Surgery and she is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a Fellow of the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons.

During her career at BAMC, Dr. Markell served in a multitude of positions, including OIC of Wound & Ostomy Clinic for two years, Chief of Colorectal Surgery for three years, Associate Program Director of the General Surgery Residency program for three years and she served as Teaching Faculty for the Residency for 13 years. She served on several SAUSHEC GME subcommittees and has thoroughly enjoyed working with numerous graduating classes of surgical residents. Her career at BAMC culminated in her being chosen to serve as Chief of the Department of Surgery and Chair of the SAMHS Surgical Care Line Team from 2017-2021, where she oversaw the daily operations of 10 surgical sub-specialty divisions, including over 500 military and civilian members. She worked side-by-side with senior leaders at BAMC and the SAMHS Market.

Dr. Markell served her country with honor through four combat deployments, (16-plus months), including two tours in Afghanistan and two



tours in Kuwait. Her final tour in Afghanistan was on GHOSTT team, supporting the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force–Afghanistan, where she was the senior-most surgeon on her team, providing lifesaving trauma care to numerous coalition forces, bolstering the relationship building of the CJSOTF teams with host-nation forces. At the end of her tour, she was awarded the Bronze Star Medal. At the end of her career in the United States Army, she was awarded the Legion of Merit for her time served as Chief of Surgery and all of her military achievements leading up to retirement.

Upon retirement, Dr. Markell joined the South Texas Veterans Healthcare System in September 2022 and served as the Deputy Chief of Surgery and in January 2024, she became the Acting Chief of Surgery for the Department of Surgical Services at Audie Lee Murphy VA Hospital in San Antonio, Texas.

Dr. Markell is a wife to her husband Matt Markell for 17 years and they have two children, Joshua (15) and Rachel (12) and as a family they enjoy traveling, snow skiing, mountain biking, canyoneering and being outdoors with many of the children’s sporting adventures.



# HAL MCRAE

Harold "Hal" McRae was born in Avon Park in 1945 and attended Avon Park Hopewell School for elementary and middle school. He then attended E.O. Douglas High School (the African-American High School for Highlands County), graduating in 1963.

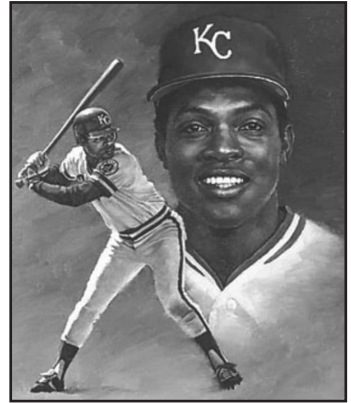
He received a baseball scholarship to Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, where he excelled. During his last year for the Rattlers, he averaged slightly under 4 RBIs per game, a Florida A&M University RBI record that lasted for 53 years. McRae later moved to Manatee County when he and Johncyna Williams were married in 1966.

He was selected by the Cincinnati Reds in the sixth round of the 1965 draft, being the 117th overall pick. Freed from a logjam on the Cincinnati Reds bench in 1968 and 1970-72, Hal at last found a home with the Kansas City Royals, where he played from 1973 to 1987. He became the first player to make a career out of being a full-time designated hitter and retired with nearly every major league record for that position. McRae was named Designated Hitter of the Year three times by both The Sporting News and the Associated Press. Hal ranks No. 7 among the top 50 all-time designated hitters in Major League Baseball history.

In a 19-year major league career, McRae posted a .290 batting average with 191 home runs, 1,097 RBIs, 484 doubles, 65 triples and 109 stolen bases in 2,084 games played. McRae played hard; so hard, in fact, that the rule requiring a runner to slide into second base when breaking up a double play is still referred to as the "Hal McRae Rule" in honor of the man whose cross-body blocks into second base broke up a lot of double plays and second basemen at the same time.

Following his playing retirement, Hal managed the Kansas City Royals (1991-94) and the Tampa Bay Devil Rays (2001-02). He also served as hitting coach for the Montreal Expos, Cincinnati Reds, Philadelphia Phillies, and the St. Louis Cardinals. McRae won a World Series ring playing for Kansas City against the Cardinals in 1985. In his first 40 at bats in World Series games, Hal hit an amazing .450! He also won a World Series ring as a coach for the Cardinals when they defeated the Detroit Tigers in the 2006 World Series. Hal retired from Major League Baseball after a 42-year career in 2009.

Harold and Johncyna are the parents of former Major League outfielder Brian McRae. They are also parents of son, Cullen McRae, Sr. (deceased), and daughter, Leah McRae Houston. They have six grandchildren.



### **CAREER HIGHLIGHT AND AWARDS**

3-time All-Star selection (1974, 1976, 1982)

2-time World Series Champion (1985, 2006)

Silver Slugger Award Winner (1982)

Hit over .300 six times for the Royals

Street Named "Hal McRae Boulevard" in Avon Park, Florida

Inducted into the Florida A&M University Sports Hall of Fame (1974)

Inducted into the State of Florida Sports Hall of Fame (1986)

Inducted into the Kansas City Royals Hall of Fame (1989)

Inducted into the State of Missouri Sports Hall of Fame (2004)

Star on "Walk of Fame" at Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg

### **HAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO MANATEE COUNTY**

Volunteer Baseball coach at Manatee High School

Volunteer baseball coach at Palmetto High School

Headlined GMC Hoagland Automotive Manatee County Hometown Heroes

Headlined Champs Celebrity Sports Night (2010) supporting the 13th Avenue  
Community Center

Headlined PACE Center for Girls, Manatee County fundraisers



# LEW MUNDT

Lewis (aka Lew) E. Mundt was born in Illinois City, Ill., in 1944. At a young age, his family moved to the small town of Coal Valley, Illinois, where Lew and his two brothers and three sisters were raised on a family farm. He graduated from Orion High School (in Illinois) in 1962 in a graduating class of 68 seniors.

Lew has been married to Judy (Culbertson) Mundt since 1966, and they have one daughter (Tori Trinder), three grandchildren, and five great grandchildren.

Lew joined the National Guard in 1968 (serving until 1974), and moved to Avon Park in 1969.

During his 55 years in Avon Park, Lew has been exceedingly active in youth sports and various civic activities. In the area of Avon Park sports, he coached Little League Baseball for 10 years, helped organize and supervise the annual Punt, Pass, and Kick competition for Bill Owens Ford for five years, and served a member and President of the Avon Park Athletic Association throughout the 1970s.

Lew has served as a valuable board member of the Avon Park Champions Club since its inception in 2012, having also served as its President.

On the civic front, Lew was a charter member of the Avon Park Morning Rotary Club and has also served as President of the Avon Park Noon Rotary Club (he was named as a Paul Harris Fellow). He served as a board member of the Avon Park Housing Authority for five years. In 1989, he was named the Sales Manager of the Year for the Gulf Life Insurance Company.

Over his more than five decades in Avon Park, Lew has been a prodigious fundraiser for a host of Avon Park civic, school, and sports organizations. It seems that when any of these organizations need to raise funds for a needed cause, Lew Mundt is the first person called to help raise those funds. He has built a long-term relationship with a host of Avon Park businesses and owners who place great value on Lew's judgment about which causes deserve their support. In most cases, these organizations and individuals will contribute to an organization or cause largely because Lew has endorsed the need as worthy of support.

Lew and Judy are active members of the Avon Park Lakes Baptist Church.





# CLUB BOARD

## Executive Board

President ..... Chet Brojek  
Vice President ..... Scott Dressel  
Secretary ..... Stephanie Devlin  
Treasurer..... Walter Nunnallee

## Board of Directors

Adam Crews, Kim Ferguson Amy Jackson, Ronnie Jackson,  
Lew Mundt, Joe Murphy, Hoppy Rewis



# BBQ CREW



**Head Chef**  
Ronnie Jackson

## BBQ Team

Lew Mundt  
Gary Smith  
Billie Jackson  
Keith Bentley  
Don Hickman

*Thanks to the  
volunteers who help  
us cook! We couldn't  
do it without you!*