



Frank Januszewski, 89, ex-Oceanside basketball coach, dies

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Francis "Frank" Januszewski, a 14-year basketball coach at Oceanside and a veteran of World War II and the Korean War, died Sept. 16, 2017, at 89. (Credit: Courtesy Jil Krol)

As a child, Frank Januszewski would peer through the window of the local basketball gym, unable to afford the 10-cent membership. The gym's director noticed the 9-year-old at the window and decided to let him in. The decision opened the door to what would be Frank's lifelong passion.

Januszewski was the head basketball coach at Oceanside High School for 14 seasons, guiding his team to county titles in 1959 and 1961. He won multiple coach of the year awards and coached and helped develop Art Heyman, who played at Duke University and was the No. 1 pick in the 1963 NBA Draft by the Knicks.

Januszewski, known as "Coach Jan," died Saturday morning of natural causes at South Nassau Communities Hospital. He was 89.

Januszewski always tried to open doors for his players.

"He just cared about helping them shape their lives and putting them on the right path, like people did for him," his youngest daughter, Jill Krol, 52, of Oceanside, said. "That was everything. That was more important than the game even, even though he loved the game."

Born July 30, 1928, in New Britain, Connecticut, Januszewski became a captain of the basketball team at New Britain High School and then Springfield College.

He joined the Marine Corps, serving as a sergeant in World War II and the Korean War.

He was selected to play on the Marine Corps basketball team, his daughter said.

“Basketball was such a theme in his life, saving him at many times, and directing him,” Krol said.

At Springfield College, Januszewski met coach John Bunn, who had coached at Stanford University and was later elected into the Basketball Hall of Fame.

“Coach Bunn became a real mentor to him and really saw the potential in him to coach,” Krol said. “He told him ‘You need to coach,’ and it kind of directed his path.”

Januszewski met his wife, Diane DeSapio, at Springfield College. The two dated four years and married two weeks after Diane finished school. Diane came from an athletic background as well, coaching softball and volleyball at Lynbrook High School. The two were married 61 years.

“He was the best,” said Diane, 82. “He was full of fun. He was very, very loving to everybody, and especially his family, and he was very dedicated to the boys he coached.”

Richie Woods, who coached basketball at Oceanside for 12 years, said Januszewski was a mentor to him as a coach, teacher and person.

“His players really, really believed in him,” said Woods, 59, of Baldwin. “He had that ability. He believed in his players and his players believed in him. They loved playing for him.”

In addition to his wife, Diane, and his daughter Jill Krol, Januszewski is survived by daughters Bonnie Ytuarte, 60, of Rockville Centre; Christine Pitchford, 56, of Easton, Maryland; and sons Jerry, 59, of Annapolis, Maryland; and Frank, 53, of Eatontown, New Jersey.