

Mel Horowitz

Few alumni have reached iconic status in the 128 years of secondary education in Wallingford. Every so often, a single student garners an eminence, capturing the attention and adoration of almost every student who passes them in the hallways of the Wallingford Public Schools and on the streets of our fair town. Such has been the life of Mel Horowitz, a member of the Lyman Hall High School class of 1961 and a member of the Hall of Fame since 1985. Small in physical stature, he was a colossus in the eyes of the Wallingford citizenry, who would line up many hours before a home or away basketball game to see what form of dramatic round ball wizardry he would conjure up. Mel entered Lyman Hall High School in September 1958, right in the middle of the third golden era of Lyman Hall basketball, the others being 1926-1940 and 1947-1953. More than a star for three years, Mel's Lyman Hall basketball teams played before a record 34 straight sold-out home games, and when there was a need for last-second heroics, Mel rarely failed to lead the Trojans to victory. He led the Blue and White to the State Finals in 1961, losing to Plainville, but the state's sportswriters still named him the state tournament's Most Valuable Player, totally unprecedented in Connecticut schoolboy lore. Following graduation, Mel went on to a Hall of Fame career at the University of New Haven. Concurrent with a stint with the Army National guard, Mel became the number one driver over 38 years with Dichello Distributors. An astute entrepreneur, Mel opened Wallingford's first satellite sports bar, "Mutt & Jeff's," in 1985. In 1995, he opened "Courtside Café" with an eclectic menu, playing a massive role in the renaissance of Stimpson Court, becoming a fantastic destination for Wallingford dining and entertainment. Now, well into his 70s, Mel still plays for the Wallingford Silver Bullets, the Wallingford senior basketball team, never tiring of the game and an opportunity to discuss the fine details of contests played over a half a century ago.