



Dennis Ritlinger

Year of Induction: **2022**

Year of Graduation: **1965**

On November 13, 1963, the headline in The Sun-Bulletin newspaper read, “Campbell, Ritlinger lead TC Stars”. Dennis Ritlinger, offensive end of the Johnson City Wildcat football team, was named as a member of the All Triple Cities Team, which was selected by the Sun-Bulletin sports staff “on the basis of individual performance and coaches’ observations.”

A talented athlete, Ritlinger was a three sport athlete playing varsity football, baseball and basketball as a starter for three years during his high school career. As a member of the Wildcat basketball team, he was reported to be “formidable under the boards”. With a 36% shooting average (the third highest on his team), basketball coach Joe Cordts described him as “strong”. In baseball, he was dependable in the field and at bat. His hits were critical to many of the Wildcat wins.

In December 1963, he was named to the Syracuse-Herald Upstate All Star High School Football Team, which at the time was a great honor to be recognized with other upstate standouts in high school football. The accolades for Ritlinger continued throughout his high school years. At 15 years old, he was named to the 3rd team All-Central New York as an end and also to the All Triple Cities Team. That year he was also named Lineman of the Year for the Southern Tier Conference (STC). As a junior he was also named to the STC All-Star Team by the Binghamton Press.

Ritlinger’s football achievements included 437 yards receiving on 31 catches and five touchdowns. In 1963, he set the season record for receiving (450 yards) which remained until 1988 when Chris Jones surpassed it. As a senior he caught 26 passes for 341 yards.

As a January 1965 graduate, Ritlinger was also a stand-out in his class being recognized with the Student Council Award and being voted by his classmates as Class Athlete.

Ritlinger was respected and admired by his teammates and coaches. He always attributed his success to being coached by great men: Hank Diller, George Britton and Joseph Cordts. However, should these three men be alive today they would undoubtedly state that Ritlinger was a very coachable athlete whose team spirit and dedication contributed to his success on the football field, the basketball court and the baseball field.

Sadly, Ritlinger passed away on March 30, 2022 in Florida where he made his home with his wife, Liz.