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## Remembering 'The Bull' Lammert and his 'boys' | Bob Shryock column

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For NJ.com

Historic Wenonah Military Academy was forced to close its doors in 1935 because of a scarcity of students in the wake of The Great Depression. But, in a tribute to headmaster and all-sports coach L. Leslie "The Bull" Lammert, "his boys" tossed him a memorable testimonial dinner May 21, 1955, at the Claridge Hotel in Atlantic City.



Bob Shryock

The man who was called the "guiding genius" of the academy was granted a colonel's commission from Lawrence W. Wetherby, the governor of Kentucky, honoring Lammert for his "untiring efforts to mould the character of American youth."

And that he did. Lammert was 70 years old on the day of his AC testimonial fete and was "beloved by all who have crossed his path."

Born in Frostburg, Md., Lammert won fame as headmaster and coach at the academy, which became one of the nation's most revered prep schools at the turn of the century. Noted for its academics, sports, and festive Sunday military parades, the all-male school occupied space east of the railroad tracks. Some academy markers remain visible today.

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"His boys," as they were known, included New Jersey State Sen. Frank S. "Hap" Farley; Dr. George K. Brazill, who played for the Chicago White Sox and became a prominent dental surgeon; future Pennsylvania boxing commissioner "Ox" DaGrosa; Amedor Mori, a builder whose projects brought wealth and new industries to South Jersey; Ralph Hackney, whose Atlantic City lobsters brought him fame and fortune; and Brig. Gen. William Preston Nuchols, a three-sport Wenonah star athlete who was media liaison at the Korean peace conference.

Pennock, an academy baseball star who later signed with the old Philadelphia A's and became one of the majors' most successful pitchers.

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Despite his size, just 128 pounds, Lammert entered Gettysburg College and reported for football practice in 1903. He acquired the nickname "the Bulldog Terrier" because of the way he barked signals from his quarterback position. "His boys" later shortened the nickname to "the Bull."

Lammert was a freshman when Penn handed Gettysburg one of its worst losses in history, 72-0. But three seasons later he helped lead the Bullets to a 6-6 upset tie with Penn at Franklin Field, a pivotal game in one of G-burg's greatest seasons.

After two seasons coaching football and basketball at Dickinson College, Lammert came to Wenonah in 1910 to coach all sports and teach biology, physics and chemistry. He became headmaster in 1917 but continued to coach all three major sports.

And "his boys" continued to excel in all fields after graduation from the academy - athletics, politics, military science, law, medicine, and dentistry.

Lammert was an old-school educator. "All this talk of juvenile delinquency today is hogwash," he once said. "'Parents are 95 percent responsible for the actions of their children. The kids are OK. The trouble is there's no parental restraint. I belong to the old school, and that doesn't mean sparing the rod and spoiling the child."

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When Wenonah Military Academy shut down, Lammert surfaced as Woodbury High School principal. He retired from WHS in 1947. He and his wife, Joyce, lived in Woodbury in a home filled with antiques.

The Bull enjoyed watching TV's early days, was a trustee at the Gloucester County Historical Society, and was past president of Woodbury Rotary. He also was a 32nd degree mason.

The Lammerts had no children. Well, that's not altogether accurate. A reporter once asked Lammert the same question.

Glancing at his wife, Lammert responded this way:

"We have hundreds, and they're all boys, scattered from one end of the country to the other...and we love them all."

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