

Forfeited Baseball For Education

'Chuck' Lahey Retires After 30 Years

Dr. W. Charles ("Chuck") Lahey has retired from the history faculty at State University College at Potsdam after 30 years of service with the college.

Lahey has an interesting history of his own, for, had a few circumstances been slightly different back in 1938, Lahey probably would have been a shortstop with one of four major league baseball teams and the Potsdam college would have been deprived of one of its finest history teachers.

Ron Burkman, former St. Lawrence University Coach and Athletic Director, remembered Lahey as "probably SLU's all-time greatest infielder." After Lahey graduated Magna Cum Laude and Phi Beta Kappa from St. Lawrence in 1938 he received offers from the major leagues but chose a career in education instead.

Today Lahey still feels he made the right decision.

"Of course, if the salaries for ballplayers were back then what they are today, it might have been a different story," he said. "Why, they got Dizzy Dean for practically nothing."

The fact that he spent three years in the U.S. Marines as an officer from 1942 to 1945 was another factor.

"That should have been the period in which I was reaching my peak as a ballplayer if I was going to play professionally and I didn't even touch baseball in all that time," he explained. Lahey has no regrets, primarily because he has enjoyed the profession he chose as historian and teacher.

A native of Massena with family lines on both sides tracing back to Irish immigrants who settled in the North Country in the mid-19th Century, Lahey was valedictorian of the Massena High School graduating class of 1934. He holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in history from Syracuse University.

An avid student of Colonial and New York State history and folklore, Lahey's courses at Potsdam have been primarily centered on those subject areas, but have also included courses in Canadian history, political science, sociology, education and social science.

He has served as the Potsdam college's official historian with the writing of "The Potsdam Tradition", the history of State University College at Potsdam on commission for the college's 1966 sesquicentennial celebration.

Lahey was one of the pioneers in the "Discovery Approach" to teaching social studies which has been adopted for the social studies curriculum of the State Education Department. This method emphasizes personal involvement as opposed to memorization of places and dates.

Honors and awards he has received include designation as an "outstanding Educator of America" in 1971, an appointment in 1971 to the National Archives Advisory Council, a grant from the New World Foundation for a 1964 workshop on the implementation of the "Discovery Approach" to the social studies, and a Life Membership in the State University College at Potsdam Alumni Association "in recognition of exemplary service to the college and the community."

For many years Lahey was very active as a public speaker and consultant on numerous topics, including the Discovery Approach and various topics related to his discipline.

Among his numerous publications are "The Potsdam Tradition," "The St. Lawrence Valley: Avenue of History" (co-author with Luther Gulick and Carleton Mabee); and articles in various professional journals.

Before entering college teaching Lahey was history teacher and coach of baseball and basketball at Hamilton Central school from 1939 to 1948. He has also served as manager for various semi-professional baseball teams in summer leagues in northern and central New York.

In retirement, Dr. Lahey plans to teach extension courses for the Potsdam College, serve as assistant coach of the college's baseball team, and "spend as much time as I can at the spring training camps of the professional teams in Florida."

Dr. Lahey and his wife, Jane, have four daughters and one son. They are Mrs. Joseph (Patricia) Snell of Potsdam, Mrs. Roger (Carol) North of Rome, Mrs. Stephen (Kathleen) Paul of Schenectady, Karen of Gouverneur, and William who is a student at LeMoyne College in Syracuse and pitcher on that college's baseball team.



RECEIVES AWARD—Charles Cameron of Potsdam, President of the Wolf Pack Snowmobilers is shown receiving an award from the Honorable John H. Terry, chairman of the board, New York State Division Inc. American Cancer Society

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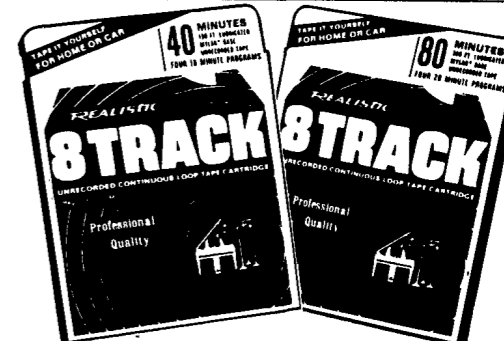


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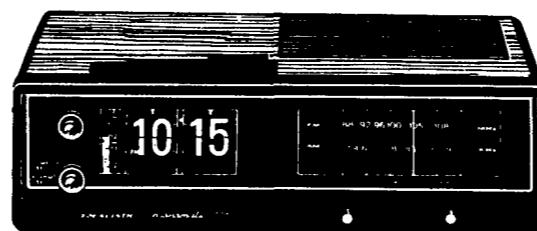
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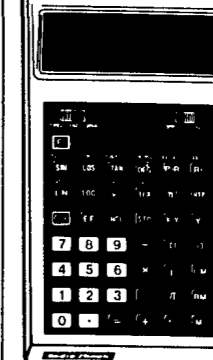
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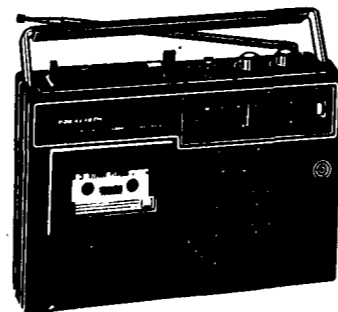
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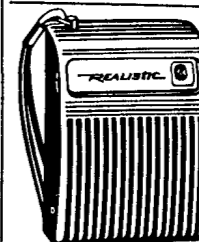


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