

HALL OF FAME BIOGRAPHY

JOHN VERNACCHIO – CLASS OF 1996



John Vernacchio was born in 1936 and grew up in Norristown, Pennsylvania. He attended Holy Savior Catholic Elementary School and graduated from Bishop High School in 1956. He attended Shippensburg State University where he played football while attaining his degree. After graduation in 1961, he finished his education at Temple University where he earned his Masters degree in Exercise Physiology. John taught High School for several years and coached football. He has also coached football at the College and minor pro league level. John has also worked as a rehabilitation therapist for a Chiropractor. John has two grown sons – John born in 1962 and Jeffrey born in 1965. John lives in Texas and has two daughters. Jeff lives in Pennsylvania with one son. Both received B.S. degrees from Westchester State University. John started training when he was 13 years old at the local YMCA and began competing in weightlifting in 1957 with friends Richard Durante and Domenic DeSanto. John Vernacchio won his first National

title in 1961 at the National Collegiate Weightlifting Championships. He continued to train under the direction of James Messer at the Holy Savior Weightlifting Club. John got his start in Olympic lifting, but eventually competed in powerlifting for many years for the Valley Forge Weightlifting/Powerlifting Club. John was one of the charter members of the USAWA, being involved since the beginning in 1987. He was introduced to the USAWA by Bill Clark. John has served two terms as President of the USAWA, and one term as Vice President of IAWA. He has promoted several National and International competitions throughout the years. He has promoted three National Meets – in 1988, 1989, and 2004. John has the distinction of being the Meet Director of the very first USAWA National Championships (1988). He has promoted three IAWA World Championships – in 1989, 1991, and 1997. He also promoted the 2003 IAWA Gold Cup. His favorite lifts were the military press and the squat. Even though John has won numerous weightlifting, powerlifting, and all-round meets through the years, when asked what his greatest accomplishment was, he replied, “My biggest accomplishment was to see both my sons graduate from College.” John Vernacchio displays every quality a Hall of Famer should possess – excellence with the iron and excellence in life. John died on December 27th, 2012.

