

Paul Bamford

Distinguished Service Award 2023

Paul Bamford exemplifies the word "service". His contributions to not only the Oyster River community, but the entire seacoast area itself have been amazing. Paul's love for Oyster River started back in his days as a student-athlete here. A 1971 graduate of ORHS, Paul was a standout soccer and basketball player. Since that time, Paul has given countless hours of his life giving back to sports as an ORHS as a coach. He has coached basketball for many years here in the past and is currently the school's golf coach. Some of the very most important lessons that Paul emphasizes with our student-athletes is to give back and to strive to make a difference in someone else's life. His teams have always set the standard for others in terms of community service and fundraising for worthy causes. An example of this is the charity golf event that Paul puts on every year, in which all proceeds go to Cancer research. His team is always actively participating in the event.

In the spring of 2021, the Athletic Director approached Paul about looking at ways to fundraise for a press box for the High School Turf Field. Paul jumped right in to help and has been working on it ever since. He has created a committee and is working with coaches and other alumni to make it happen. In the Fall of 2021, Paul organized an ORHS Soccer Weekend that brought alumni from a wide range of graduation years back to campus for a celebration. All proceeds from the weekend were to go towards the press box fund.

The following are some thoughts people have about Paul:

Former ORHS Boys Varsity Basketball Coach Lorne Lucas:

"I was fortunate to have Paul Bamford volunteer to assist the boys' basketball team. Paul immediately made an impact with the team and coaching staff on the floor and off. He got to know each player and member of the coaching staff and would check in with all of us everyday. I can easily say that my life and all that are fortunate to have met him are better due to knowing Paul Bamford".

Jack Edwards, Boston Bruins Play by Play Announcer and ORHS Alum:

"From his "lighthouse" vantage point, standing taller than most of the world, Paul Bamford has had a good view of the rising tide that raises all boats. I first met Bamf when I was an anxious 13-year-old. My parents had just gotten divorced, and I found solace in sports. The biggest sport was the Oyster River High School Soccer team, which drew several hundred fans to each home game -- even on rainy weekdays. I got a job as a ball-boy on the sideline nearer to the school, and I would run myself ragged to stay with the play, enabling my heroes to inbound another ball as soon as the one in play went out. At the end of every victory (that team was literally perfect), I would rush onto the pitch (we called it a "field" back then) and hold my palms together: that was the precursor to the high five. We called it "gimme some skin." Bamf would smile at me just like I was his teammate and bring his one massive hand down across my two. He, at 6'7", could have looked right over me and joined his real teammates as they gathered in the sweaty celebration of another win. But he made a point of including me... and every kid who approached him. That made us all feel really special. He has not changed. He made his

living as an insurance executive. Think about that. Protecting people and planning for their futures. He has raised funds for many causes, coached in several sports at all kinds of levels, and has helped many more people than the public knows about.

If you ask him to take credit for something, he'll deflect the conversation. He'll end up telling you of how incompetent he was in Junior High Shop class and you will laugh so hard at his self-deprecation that tears will come to your eyes. He is a beacon on a stormy, rocky coast. We all should follow his illuminating path”.

Suzanne Filippone, Assistant Superintendent at ORCSD

“Paul inspires me every time I speak with him. He brings positive energy and love to everything and everyone he meets. I can’t thank Paul enough for all he has given and continues to give to our students and community”.

Jen Goldberg, ORHS Parent

“He did reach out to me when my older son passed away in 2017, having gone through his own terrible ordeal. I will just say, that is the kind of person he is – you don’t even have to know him and he’s there for you”.