

**MSGR. MARTIN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL  
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

*Fiftieth*



**MANHATTAN COLLEGE  
CUP PLAYOFFS**

**STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE SPORTS ARENA**

March 2, 7 and 9, 1997

PROGRAM \$1.50

# 1997 Manhattan College Cup Champions



**CANISIUS HIGH SCHOOL**



# FIFTY FABULOUS YEARS



by Paul Hutzler

The 1997 playoffs mark the fiftieth year the Monsignor Martin Athletic Association schools have played for the Manhattan Cup. At the start of the 1947-48 basketball season, the Manhattan College Alumni Association donated a trophy to be awarded to the winner of the playoffs among the four top teams after the regular season ended. Winning the playoffs three times enabled a school to permanently retire the cup. From a modest four team entry in 1948, the tournament expanded to eight teams in 1956, to ten in 1964, to twelve in 1969, and in 1979 to an open tournament, with all schools having a chance to win the cup. Presently, the top six qualify.

In 1958, the first All Tournament Team was selected. Mike Walton from Timon (71+72), and Eric Eberz from St. Joseph's (91+92) have the distinction of being the only players selected MVP two times. Thirteen different schools have won the title, but only St. Joseph's and Timon have ever retired it. St. Joseph's has gained permanent possession four times, while Timon has retired two cups.

Naturally, over the course of fifty years there have been many exciting games. Some more than others, and more than a few memorable ones. To those of us familiar with the league's history, surely underdog St. Francis upsetting previously undefeated St. Joseph's (20-0) for the 1950 title is one. After two consecutive losses to Canisius in the final, Timon's first championship, a 53-52 win over St. Joseph's in 1954 is another. Bishop Ryan defeating a Tony Masiello led Dougherty team in double overtime in 1965, and small school Olean Walsh capping an undefeated (22-0) 1968 season by beating three large schools, Dougherty, Turner, and Canisius in their march to the championship, defeating the Crusaders by a single point for the title, are others.

Timon's overtime victory against Neumann in 1979 ended the decade of the 70's, dominated by the Tigers who appeared in the title game eight times, winning it all five times, including an unprecedented three in a row. The 1980's saw five championships decided by three points or less, highlighted by the four Timon vs. Turner-Carroll clashes, with three of them won by three or less points. The 1990's have so far seen the return of St. Joseph's as the outstanding team. They won an unparalleled four Manhattan Cups from 1990 to 1993, while appearing in the title game six times in the last seven years. Canisius' dramatic 56-54 triumph last year prevented the Marauders from retiring their fifth cup.

In forty-nine years there have been countless thrilling individual performances as well. (Not all were necessarily in championship games.) 1954 the consolation match, Canisius' Jim Cunningham scored a then playoff record 34 points in a 66-54 victory over Bishop Fallon. MVP Bob Sheldon from St. Francis scored 32 points in a losing 55-54 consolation game against St. Joseph's in 1963. In 1964 Dougherty's Tony Masiello scored 33 points in losing the double overtime title game to Bishop Ryan, while Ed Eberle personally carried Bishop Fallon to a third place finish that same year, scoring eighty-eight playoff points, with only a one-point loss to Champion Bishop Ryan in the semi's preventing a third game appearance by the Flyers. The 1967 final pit the top two career scorers at the time, St. Joseph's Dale Tepas and Bishop Timon's Paul Grysga against each other. Tepas' one point margin (23-22) carried St. Joseph's to a 52-51 triumph. 1975's playoffs : Dwight Williams from Neumann score 41, 45 and 46 points in three games, yet his team lost the championship game to Bishop Timon 73-66. The following year, Aaron Curry, on his way to becoming WNBA's all-time leading scorer, averaged 32 points for 11 games in helping Neumann win the title over Timon. St. Joseph's Eric Eberz dominating play in the 1981 final against St. Francis, (82-59), when he led the scorers while winning his first MVP award, was a preview of what was to come the following year. The 1992 title win against Turner-Carroll (88-70) was totally dominated. Scoring a career high and playing a tying record 45 points, he hit 17 of 26 from the floor and 11 of 13 free throws, again being named MVP. Gary Raimondo's MVP performance in the 1995 final against Turner-Carroll (76-51) led St. Joseph's to their fifth title in six years. He scored 33 points, with 18 coming in the first quarter, as the Marauders took a 18-2 lead and never looked back.

In fifty years we have seen many changes. From a high of twenty basketball playing schools in the 60's, to the present nine. The number of schools involved in the tournament from a high of fourteen in 1979 to the present six. There has been a change in the finals being staged in Memorial Auditorium, with all games being played at the present site, The St. Joseph's Teachers College Sports Arena. Through it all, FIFTY FABULOUS YEARS, one thing has remained constant. The Manhattan Cup remains the most sought after trophy in the Monsignor Martin Athletic Association.