

## *Mario Salomone*



**M**ario Salomone has devoted nearly half his life to youth sports in this city and he hasn't shown any signs of slowing down.

The 58-year-old Salomone first got involved in Little League baseball and Bidy basketball in town back when his own two sons, now both in their 30s, played. That was in the early 1970s and today, a quarter of a century later, Salomone is still involved more than ever.

He became a coach in the Norwalk YMCA Calvin Murphy Bidy Basketball League 26 years ago, coaching first The Hour team and then Nash Engineering, which he led to several league championships. Salomone later gave up coaching to become league commissioner, and when the new Norwalk Bidy Basketball Association was formed a few years ago, he also assumed the commissionership, a position he still holds.

Counting both leagues, he's been a commissioner the past 14 years.

Just about the same time he started coaching basketball, Salomone got involved with the Norwalk International Little League when the coach of his son's Cap League team asked if he could "help out" a little. Twenty-four years later Salomone is still "helping out." After coaching the Lions for over a decade, Salomone became league president and recently completed his twelfth year in that capacity.

Salomone's involvement in sports hasn't been limited to just coaching, however. Growing up in South Norwalk, he attended St. Joseph School and later Wright Tech in Stamford, where he was an outfielder on the baseball team and a three-year shooting guard on the varsity basketball team.

He later played for Nash in the Norwalk Industrial Basketball League beginning in 1956. In fact, he has been involved with the local loop for the past 40 years, first as a player, then an official, and most recently as an administrator.

In addition, Salomone has been a member of the International Association of Approved Basketball Officials' Fairfield County Board for over 30 years. He is also regarded as one of the top volleyball officials in the area, officiating girls and boys high school matches in the fall and spring as well as the newly formed Norwalk Recreation and Parks Beach Volleyball League the past couple of summers. He has also bowled in the Knights of Columbus Friday Night League since the 1960s.

Salomone is the latest in a long line of former Nash Engineering employees to be honored by the Norwalk Old Timers Athletic Association, including a "special award" given to the former Norwalk-based company in 1976 for its longtime support, contribution, and participation in the local sports community.

Salomone, who has three grandchildren, worked at Nash for 37 years as a toolmaker and later a manufacturing supervisor.