



HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE

FRANK MAESTAS

written by Ken Sickenger

Frank Maestas received a firsthand education in New Mexico sports, and he made it count.

A Las Vegas, New Mexico native, Frank grew up in and around athletics. He was a four-sport athlete at his beloved West Las Vegas High School and lettered in football, basketball, baseball, and track — becoming the first to do so at the school.

Those experiences and the knowledge he accumulated from them would serve Frank well as went on to a distinguished career in sports journalism. Frank is best known for his long tenure as a sportswriter for the Albuquerque Journal, where he helped to promote and build high school sports coverage while serving as a pioneer for Hispanics in the profession.

Frank was a three-time New Mexico Sportswriter of the Year (1966, 1968, 1970) and was honored by his alma mater, New Mexico Highlands University, with a special remembrance tribute following his passing in 2006. Frank also received a posthumous “Award of Distinction” from the New Mexico Sports Hall of Fame in 2015 for his contributions to New Mexico athletics. The NMSHOF board of directors voted to induct him in 2024.

“My dad wasn’t into the accolades, but I think he would have appreciated this,” said Frank’s son, New Mexico State Representative Antonio “Moe” Maestas. “He would have been most proud to be part of this class, people who’ve made great contributions to New Mexico sports. Somewhere I think he’s smiling right now.”

After graduating from New Mexico Highlands with a degree in political science and journalism, Frank took a few years to settle into his career. He spent a year as a sportswriter at the Albuquerque

Journal, a year as sports editor at the Santa Fe New Mexican and taught history for a year at Pojoaque High School.

Frank returned to the Journal in 1962 and would stay there as a sports journalist for the next 28 years. During that time, he covered pretty much everything sports related, including University of New Mexico football, basketball and baseball, Albuquerque Dukes/ Dodgers baseball, and many of the state’s top boxing talents such as Bob Foster and a young Johnny Tapia.

Frank had a talent for personality features and became known for his popular “Let’s Be Frank” opinion pieces. He was an Associated Press Top-25 voter for college football and basketball, voted annually on the Heisman Trophy and John Wooden Award committees and, in 1983, served as Official NCAA Media Host for national sports journalists during the Final Four in Albuquerque.

But Frank held a deep love and appreciation for high school sports and did his best to promote and increase statewide prep coverage. He built relationships with coaches around the state, encouraged them to call in scores and statistics and pushed the Journal to increase its coverage of high school games and events.

Frank Maestas was also known for his professionalism and his fiery passion for sports. He was often heard prodding young journalists to pick up the pace on deadline: “Hey, we’re a morning paper, rookie. Let’s go!” But Frank also mentored many of the state’s top up-and-coming sports journalists, including some who are still in the business. His impact on New Mexico sports coverage is indelible and will continue for years to come.