

# "Swanny" Swanson Scholarship Fund

By **MATTHEW JONES**

Craig "Swanny" Swanson's personality and talent made an impression on those he came in contact with.

Although he died in a car accident in 1991, his name and ideals live on through the Craig "Swanny" Swanson Memorial Scholarship Fund. If you'd like to learn more about this talented young man, read on.

Craig Swanson, "Swanny" to his friends, was born in 1965 and grew up in Frewsburg. Baseball quickly became a part of his life — by the age of five he was playing Farm League ball. By age eleven, he was a promising southpaw pitcher.

While he attended the Frewsburg schools, Craig made a name for himself in sports. Whether it was Babe Ruth, high school baseball, basketball or football, Craig played hard and received a number of recognitions of his abilities.

Thanks to his athletic skill, Craig was offered and accepted an athletic scholarship to Canisius College, where he pitched for the Division I Golden Griffins. In 1985, his pitching earned him MVP honors at the St. Bonaventure Fall Classic.

Craig graduated with a business degree in 1987 and tried his hand at several ventures before returning home to accept a position with Chase Lincoln Bank. He worked his way up to a position at the main branch of Chase, where he was a bank officer.

Craig enjoyed giving back to the community as a volunteer for the United Way Pacesetter campaign and the Chautauqua County Fund for the Arts. In addition, he drew upon his talent in sports to coach for Little Hoopers basketball. He also had hoped to coach for Little League baseball.

All through his life, Craig

made a number of friends. On the athletic field, he was a stern competitor, but off the field he was kind and considerate. As an only child, he considered his friends as his brothers and sisters and always tried to be there for them.

After his death, Craig's family, friends and loved ones decided to memorialize him through an annual scholarship. To do this, they started the Craig Swanson Memorial Award, presented each year to a senior athlete at Frewsburg High School who participated in baseball or softball, was outgoing and demonstrated solid leadership and athletic abilities.

The fund was recently moved to the Community Foundation to take advantage of the professional scholarship management experience that it offers.

In eight years, the fund has awarded over \$10,000 in scholarships to Frewsburg graduates. A dedicated committee raises funds for the scholarship by organizing annual golf, bowling and softball tournaments.

Craig's talents on the playing field were recently recognized by his induction to the Chautauqua County Sports Hall of Fame this year. A number of people came forward to speak of their memories of this talented young man.

If you knew Craig and would like to honor his memory, please consider a gift to his fund at the foundation. All gifts are tax deductible, and you can take comfort in the fact that you are supporting students with the same values that made Craig "Swanny" Swanson such a special young man.

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