

# Aquinas' annual sports dinner draws some impressive faces

## Massimino, Giants' Martin head celebrity table line-up

By Richard A. Kiley

Last season may not have indicated it, but defensive lineman George Martin of the New York Giants and Buffalo Bills' cornerback Charles Romes have something in common: they've both endured more than their share of losing seasons.

And while Martin and his fellow "Jints" have been enjoying the fruits of their labor in recent grid campaigns — notable this January's Super Bowl championship — Romes is still waiting for the Bills to make the turn.

The two respected football veterans were in Rochester last Sunday evening to attend the annual Aquinas Sports Celebrity Dinner. Among other sports-world notables seated at the impressive head table were Villanova head basketball coach Rollie Massimino and former Red Wing and Oriole manager Joe Altobelli. Master of ceremonies for the dinner was Jerry Flynn, a 1936 Aquinas graduate.

Just two weeks earlier, Martin and his mates were steamrolling over the Denver Broncos in Super Bowl XXI, and although some of his teammates have gone into hibernation in these winter months, Martin chooses to tour the country and do a little public speaking.

"I guess I'm sort of a workaholic," said the lineman, who once played for the University of Oregon. "I'm not like these young guys who like to sit around in the off-season."

And who can blame Martin for wanting to talk about the successes of the Giants in recent years? He and his teammates were the butt of many jokes in his early years, and that's why he can relate to the situation with the Bills.

"We're (the Giants) finally enjoying the fruits of our labor, but I certainly know what they (the Bills) are going through," said Martin, who is attending Fairleigh Dickinson University full-time to get his M.B.A. degree. "It's important to emulate the people who are winning, when things aren't going well."

The 13-year lineman, who holds the distinction of having the most touchdowns of any defensive lineman ever, said that it is also important to have leaders in the down years as well as the up years.

That's no problem for the Bills. Romes' teammates look to him for his experience on defense, and who could ask for a much more charismatic showman on offense than Jim Kelly?

"We need to get some people who can go deep and then turn Kelly loose," said Romes, a graduate of North Carolina Central.

One thing the Giants have had of late is a stable coaching situation, while the Bills have had three coaches in the past three seasons.

Romes said that has to change.

"It's tough keeping a team together through all of this," Romes said. "What we need to do is get a coaching staff and keep them in here for awhile. We can do it (start winning more), but not if we keep changing coaches."

Romes had just returned from North Carolina and was surprised, and even a little disappointed, that it had been a mild winter



George Martin



Rollie Massimino

thus far.

"I just bought a new snow blower, and now it won't snow," said Romes jokingly. "I'd like to see us get some more snow, because I want to try my new four-wheel drive."

The Bills schedule next year is certainly no joke. In addition to playing the Super Bowl champions, Romes and his teammates will be squaring off against Washington, Denver and Cleveland, as well as divisional foes Miami, New England and the Jets.

"We're really looking forward to next

season," said an optimistic Romes. "We seem to play tough against the tough teams."

The Bills' defensive back also said he wouldn't be surprised to see the Giants repeat as champs.

For Martin, it was a little too early to tell. "People talk about how difficult it is to repeat; it's pretty difficult to do it (win the Super Bowl) a first time," said Martin, who admitted that he didn't even know the Giants' schedule for the upcoming season. "But there's no such thing as an easy schedule."

Massimino arrived at the Rochester Plaza fresh off a tough one-point loss on Saturday to 10th-ranked Georgetown.

The colorful Massimino — whose Wildcats upset Georgetown in the NCAA final just two years ago in what is considered one of the greatest upsets of all time — was non-committal when pressed for his pick as a winner of the Big East. He did, however, say that he liked the chances of Georgetown, Syracuse and Pittsburgh.

Not surprisingly, he thought that the Big Ten conference had a chance to field an eventual national champion.

"I like Iowa's style; Purdue; Indiana because of Steve Alford and Bobby (Head Coach Bobby Knight); and Michigan," Massimino said.

What the Wildcat coach doesn't like is the three-point shot that was reinstated in the game this season. "I think it's absurd," Massimino said. "I'm in favor of the shot, I just don't like the distance. It just kills the game."

Massimino has been to the Flower City before, most recently six years ago, when Villanova played the Orangemen of Syracuse in the Rochester Classic. "It (the game) was a debacle," Massimino said. "I was on top of the chairs."

Massimino received a \$17,000 check from Bruce Catone at the Aquinas dinner, which was held at the Diplomat Party House in Rochester, to help Delaware Valley March of Dimes poster child Karen Thom. The money will go toward the purchase of a specially equipped van for Thom, who has spina bifida.

The money was raised at a special golf tournament held in Rochester last summer.

"So I've got two recollections of Rochester," Massimino said, "one of them a little shaky and the other a very, very positive note."

## Boughton finds consolation in Mercy's recent losses

Rush-Henrietta Central School successfully defended its title in this year's Mercy Invitational at St. John Fisher College with two impressive wins over the host Monarchs and Sacred Heart Academy of Buffalo.

The Lady Comets jumped out to an early lead over Coach Kathleen Boughton's squad in the second game of the doubleheader Friday night, but had to come on strong in the game's waning moments to win, 51-45.

Rush-Henrietta was spurred by Kris Eckert and Jenny Seymour. Eckert, who missed most of last year's Section 5 Class AA final against Mercy when she sustained an ankle injury, paced the Lady Comets with 16 points.

Seymour was perfect on two free throws down the stretch, to preserve the win for Coach Tom Dulmage. The loss to Rush-Henrietta marked the second time in three nights that the Monarchs had to overcome a slow start before rallying late in the contest.

"We start out slow, (and) come back from being down, but then we just seem to run out," said Boughton, assessing the losses to Rush-Henrietta and Cardinal Mooney. "We don't read what the other team is doing soon

enough. We have to learn to use our strengths; they (her players) don't believe in themselves sometimes."

Boughton's squad rebounded in the consolation game by wearing down a pesky Notre Dame of Utica team, 58-50.

The key to the win was Mercy's balanced scoring — four out of five players reached double figures — and its ability to get points during the transition game.

Boughton hopes to use the two recent losses to her advantage.

"I think we can look positively on them (the losses)," said Boughton, who also lost standout player Rita LaForce recently. LaForce averaged seven points and three rebounds for Mercy last season, but was hampered by an ankle injury earlier this season. She informed Boughton of her intention to transfer, immediately after her 25-point performance in a 42-41 win over Fairport. "We've won four games without her," said Boughton.

The Monarchs face a big test this weekend when they travel to Lockport for a tournament there. In addition to the Lions, who



Jeff Goulding/Courier-Journal

Mercy's Beth Wambach and Cathy Nietopski of Mooney struggle for possession during Monarchs' tough league loss to the Cards.

beat Mercy in last year's state playoff, the Monarchs will face Sacred Heart and Newfane Academy.

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