

Francis Clifford

Class of 1958

Columbia High School

Mr. Francis “Frank” Clifford has distinguished himself through his professional achievement and outstanding service. A veteran, he is a highly successful business owner and entrepreneur whose ventures include telecommunications, software, restaurants, and commercial real estate. His support of the East Greenbush Central School District’s athletic programs and facilities, most notably through the Columbia All-Sports Club, has been generous, thoughtful and extensive. He and his wife, Nancy, are the proud parents of Ken, Kevin, Donald and Timothy.

At Columbia, Mr. Clifford served as the Vice President of his junior and senior classes; meanwhile, he was elected the king of the Senior Prom. He was a distinguished scholar-athlete who lettered perennially in three sports. He served as captain of the varsity football and basketball teams. He was undefeated in the 880 for three years, culminating his track career with a state title in his event at the meet held at West Point. In his senior year, Mr. Clifford earned Columbia’s coveted Robert B. Chipp Memorial Award for excellence in athletics and citizenship. In 2007, he was elected to the EGCSA Athletic Hall of Fame.

Following his graduation, Mr. Clifford enlisted in the United States Air Force, and served for four years; two were spent as an air traffic controller in Keflavik, Iceland, followed by two years stationed in Omaha, Nebraska as a photo interpreter and MIO intercept operator. After his military service, he worked for twenty-two years as an FAA air traffic controller at Albany County Airport and Boston’s Logan Airport. His leadership, skill and composure proved invaluable in 1975, saving the Goodyear blimp “America” from peril during a thunderstorm. Mr. Clifford, who was promoted to training officer at the control tower in 1978, attained outstanding evaluations several times throughout his air traffic control career.

The move from public to private sector for Mr. Clifford followed in 1985, and his remarkable track record as an executive calls to mind his successful 880 races on the oval of Columbia. Hundreds have been employed by this ambitious businessman. Patiently, he started the Telecommunications Analysis Group, which he later sold for a substantial profit, and the local Martin Environmental Services. Shrewdly, he also purchased Glens Falls Communications—shortly after its merger with NEC America, it became Tech Valley Communications, a multi-million dollar telecommunications company. Today, Mr. Clifford is the co-owner of Cornerstone Tech, a hardware sales arm of Cornerstone Telephone. He owns and serves as the CEO of Automated Management Solutions Software Company, which is a fast-growing developer of software for insurance companies to complete their audits of federal, state and local governments. He owns CIT (Communications Integrated Technology), a company that installs high tech cable and long distance exchange services. His local business interests include the Bomba’s Pizzeria franchise, the Olympian Village Resort in Lake George, and Cornerstone Lands LLC, which operates buildings in many locations, including East Greenbush.

Mr. Clifford’s long-standing commitment to the East Greenbush Central School District’s epitomizes the outstanding service that merits his induction, too. His generous donations went to the purchase of equipment for the fitness center at Goff Middle School. Perennially, Mr. Clifford has supported the Columbia All Sports Club’s renovation and expansion of the Athletic Hall of Fame trophy cases, as well as the funding of its scholarship and professional development programs for students and coaches respectively. According to Michael G. Leonard, Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics, “Whenever there is a need, Mr. Clifford has always helped with his support, going above and beyond.”

The East Greenbush Education Foundation is honored this evening to induct Mr. Francis Clifford to the Columbia High School Hall of Fame, for his professional achievement and outstanding service to his alma mater and our country.

