

# DOMINIC

## Manchester's Best All-Around Athlete of the Ages

### Lest we Forget

There are few if any alive today who can recall Manchester High school's athletic legend, Dominic Squatrito. He was the envy of Connecticut's high school coaches and respected and admired by his teammates and competitors. Squatrito's credits had been accepted by Fordham University and he was already enrolled as a student to matriculate next fall. His expenses through college had been guaranteed by friends and his future as a college athlete was considered exceptionally brilliant. It was said he had the potential of becoming an Olympic star.

1932-May 13 Front-page headlines from the Manchester Evening Herald read, DOMINIC SQUATRITO DEAD IN CAR CRASH Dominic Squatrito, one of the most outstanding athletes ever developed at Manchester High school, was instantly killed this afternoon in an automobile accident on Nigger Hill in Bolton when a



Ford roadster in which he and other senior students at the local school were riding, collided with a heavy truck loaded with milk cans. The other three passengers escaped with minor injuries and were removed to the Manchester Memorial hospital.

“The accident in which Squatrito was killed was his third in the last two years.

About a month ago he was driving on Center street near Pine street when another machine sideswiped the same roadster in which he met his death yesterday. Salvatore, his brother, was riding with him at the time, but no one was injured. Two years ago in Old Lyme, Squatrito suffered a serious head injury when he was hurled from the front seat of an automobile driven by Frank Scarlato, another M.H.S. athlete. Three other persons riding in the car were injured. That injury kept Squatrito out of athletic engagements for some time and when he finally did resume play, it was against the advise and wishes of his parents.

### “Skipped” Period

The roadster which he was driving on the ill-fated trip yesterday-Friday the 13th - was owned by his sister, Miss Rose Squatrito. According to Lithwinski, one of the passengers in the car with Squatrito, they “skipped” a study period and were out for a short ride. Lithwinski, speaking from his bed at the hospital, said they were driving a little over 20 miles per hour when the accident

happened shortly before 2 o'clock.

A blue sedan passed us shortly before the crash," Lithwinski explained. It had hardly cleared us before the big truck loomed in front. I relaxed and the next thing I knew I was lying in the road. I was a bit dazed at first. Then I saw Squatrito lying in the road. I ran to him and tried frantically to awaken him. I could not believe he was dead. A few minutes before, he said, "we must drive slow because the road is wet." That's about all. The next thing I knew I was in the hospital.

Couldn't Explain It

Frank King, 20, of Lebanon, driver of the truck which struck the roadster, could not offer any explanation of the accident. Questioned as to a report that the steering apparatus of the Rio truck went out of commission, King would not answer one way or the other. He said he was driving down the hill on his way toward Hartford and that the roadster was coming up the hill. The vehicles collided head-on. The truck continued down the hill fully a hundred yards and then veered off the highway through a billboard into a pile of cider pomace. The driver was not injured.

The roadster was turned completely around by the impact and bits of the machine strewn along the road for a distance of twenty feet. Squatrito was hurled to the pavement and apparently met instant death.

His companions, Edward Lithwinski, Miss Evelyn West and Miss Ruth Stavinsky were hurled from the machine but when examined at the hospital were found to be suffering from minor cuts and bruises.



EDWARD LITHWINSKI  
"FLITCH"

*"They who have light in themselves, will not revolve as satellites."*

Captain Swimming Team 3, 4; Football Team 2, 3, 4; Track Team 1, 2, 3, 4; Torch Club 1; Glee Club 1; Sock and Buskin 4; Student Council 4; Cast of "Bab."

RUTH STAVNITSKY

"STAVIE"

*"Feminine vanity; that divine gift which makes woman charming."*

Decoration Graduation Committee 4; "Somanhis" Typist 4; Prom Committee 3; Honor Roll 1.



EVELYN WEST "EV"

*"There is a woman at the beginning of all great things."*

Decoration Committee 4; Prom Committee 3; Photograph Committee 3; Honor Roll 3.

### *Dominic's accomplishments*

During his incomplete four years at Manchester High, the curly, black-haired lad of only 18 summers won 15 "M's" for his athletic ability. He captained the football team in 1930 and last year was selected as the only Connecticut player on the All-American Junior Football team. Without question, he was the backbone of the Manchester team for the past three years. Opposing schools found it exceedingly difficult to stop him from gaining ground. His junior year he was accorded the honor of "outstanding football player in Connecticut" by the Scholastic Association of America. The previous year he was selected All-State guard after the state basketball tournament. In 1932 he also played with the local National Guard team and was selected All-Service guard after the military basketball tourney.

A hard plugging fullback, his black, curly locks have wormed through opposing lines on many state gridirons as he tossed away his helmet in the thick of the fray.



FOOTBALL TEAM

Top Row : Moriarty, '30 ; Davis, '31 ; Robertson, '31 ; Dowd, '30 ; Nicola, '30 ; Manager Crockett, '29.  
 Third Row : Mr. Bailey, George, '30 ; Eells, '31 ; Hanson, '30 ; Taylor, '29 ; Murphy, '30 ; Coach Kelley.  
 Second Row : Lupien, '30 ; Potterton, '30 ; Davis '29 ; Squatrito, '32 ; Moriarty, '29 ; Lessner, '29 ; Mercer '29.  
 Front Row : Happenny, '29 ; Cheney, '29 ; Johnson, '29 ; Captain Treat, '29 ; Johnson, '29 ; Spencer, '29 ; Healey, '29.

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Dominic is pictured here, center, row two with the football team for 1928-1929 as a freshman.

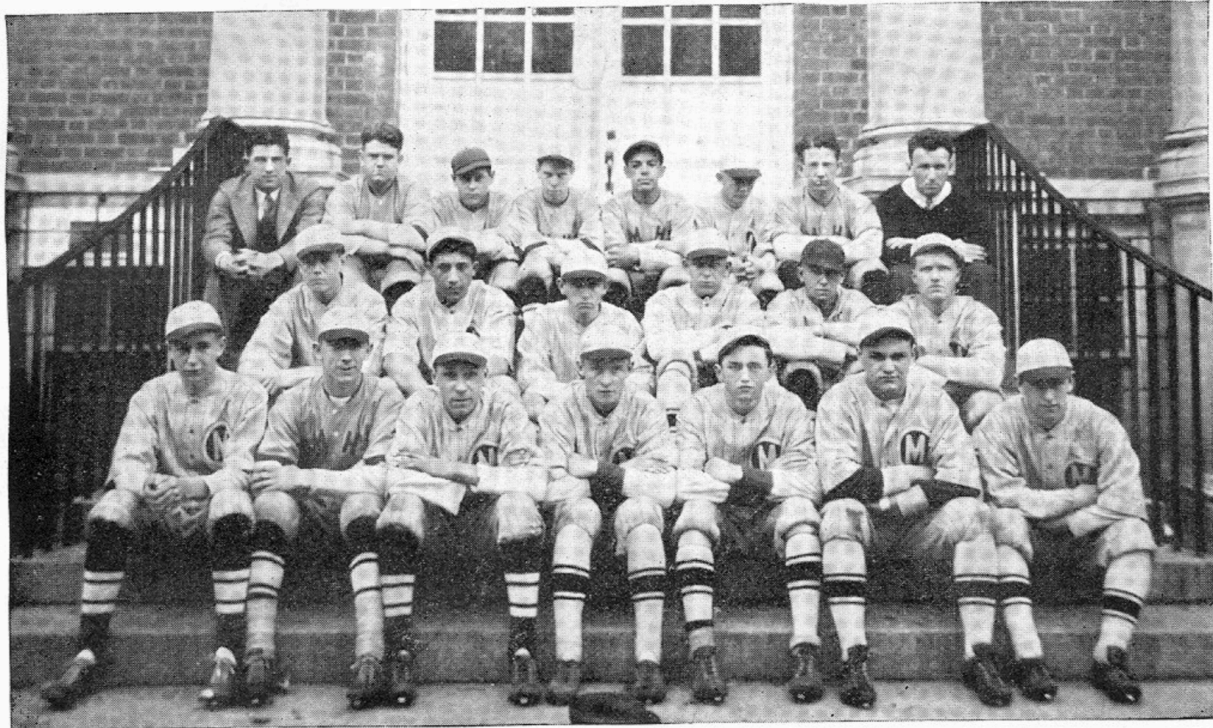
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### *Coach Tom Kelly said of "Squat"*

Coach Tom Kelly, Football and Baseball Coach: The sudden passing of Squatrito has removed from Manchester High school its most outstanding athlete. He leaves a gap that cannot be filled. "Squat" had an extremely promising athletic future. We had all looked forward to his accomplishments at Fordham. I feel the loss keenly.

"A sure All-American. Nothing would have stopped him." was the way Coach Tom Kelly expressed his praise for the dead athlete.

His speed and hitting ability was capitalized in the outfield of the baseball team until his senior year when Coach Kelly, seeking a first baseman, stationed the versatile Squatrito at that position. On the day after his death he was scheduled to play first base against Bristol High School at Fouracres Lot in a game to decide the leadership of the C.C.I.L.



#### BASEBALL

Top Row: Coach Kelley, McKinney, '30; Sendrowski, '32; Tierney, '31; Vince, '32; C. Dowd, '30; Smith, '32; Manager Johnston, '29.  
 Second Row: O'Leary, '32; Squatrito, '32; M. Moriarty, '30; Magnuson, '31; Bycholski, '30; Trueman, '31.  
 Front Row: Woodbridge, '29; Renn, '29; Samuelson, '29; Captain E. Dowd, '30; H. Moriarty, '29; Lupien, '30; McConkey, '31.

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Dominic appears as a member of the 1928-29 baseball team as a freshman.

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*Coach Charles “Pete” Wigren said of “Squat”*

Coach Charles Wigren, Track Coach: Domenic Squatrito has left us only pleasant recollections of a brilliant young athlete who never “gave up.” His good natured smile has been the means of inspiring the best efforts of those around him. Although he will not be in uniform again, we shall feel that he is always with us as Manchester teams continue to be inspired by the memory of his example.



TRACK SQUAD

Top Row : Assistant Manager Cubberly, '30 ; Coach Wigren, Manager Glenney, '29.  
 Fourth Row : Robertson, '31 ; Urbanetti, '32 ; Silverstein, '31 ; Lynne, '31 ; L'Heureux, '30 ;  
 Gudzunus '32 ; R. Cheney, '31.  
 Third Row : Heckler, '29 ; Petersen, '31 ; Sasiela, '32 ; Bengston, '30 ; Smith, '32 ; Gordon,  
 '31 ; Jamroga, '31 ; McBride, '32 ; Sheridan, '32.  
 Second Row : Wittman, '32 ; O'Leary, '32 ; A. Smith, '32 ; Murphy, '30 ; Fisher, '32 ;  
 Squatrito, '32 ; Mozzer, '30.  
 Front Row : Johnson, '29 ; L. Cheney, '29 ; Spencer, '29 ; Dowd, '30 ; Captain McCluskey, '29 ;

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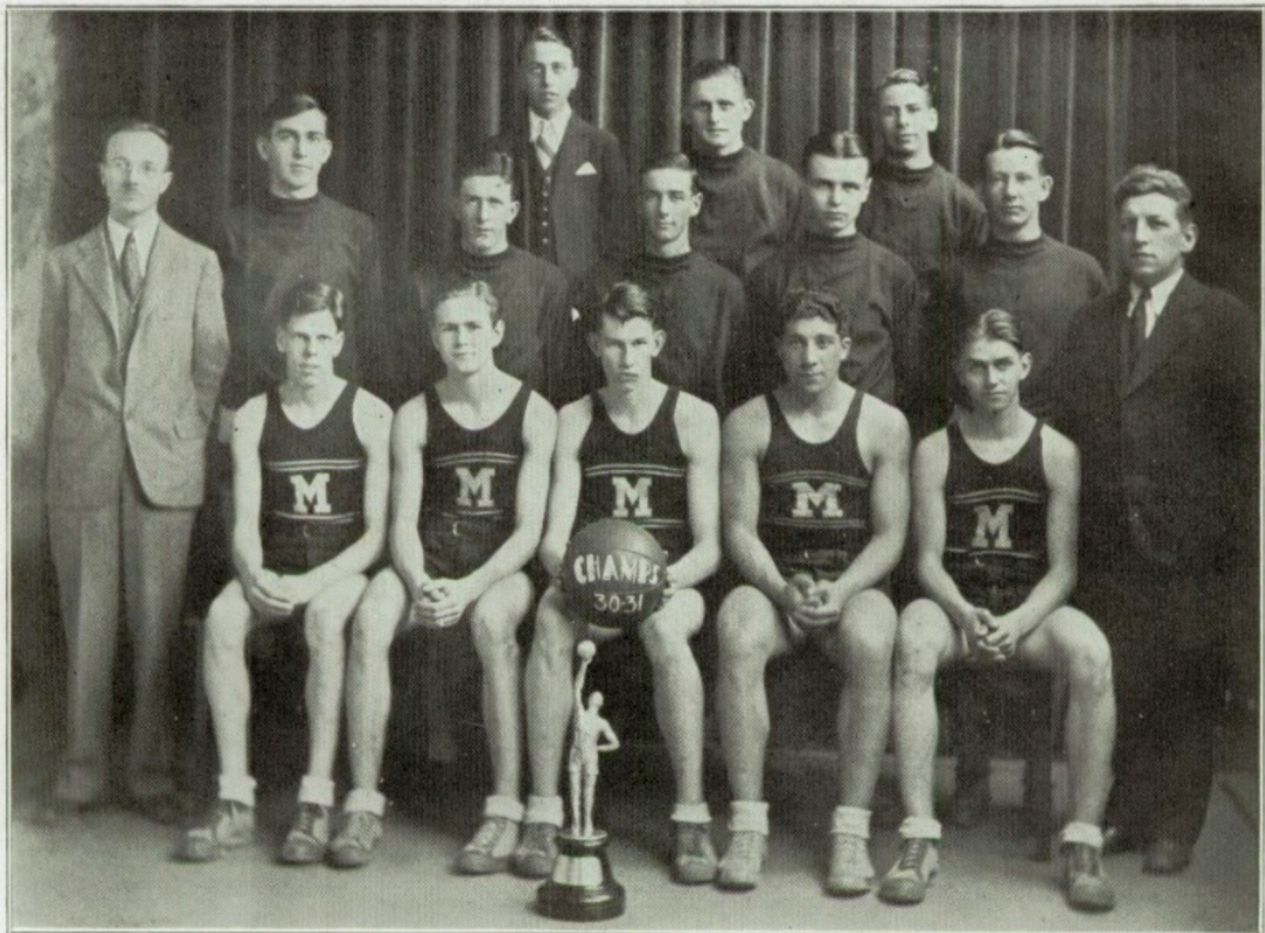
The 1928-29 Track and Field Team appears above. Olympian, Joe McCluskey captained the squad in Dominic's freshman year. McCluskey would go on to Fordham University and evidently convince Dominic to follow suit.

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During his senior year he added his name to the record books for his efforts in the 100 yard dash by covering the distance in 9.9 seconds. That record stands today. The National Federation of State High School Associations reports the current record for all of American high schools is 9.30 seconds set in 1975.

*Coach Wilfred Clarke said this about Squat.*

Coach Wilfred Clarke, Basketball Coach: "Squat" was one of the best basketball players I ever had and a good boy to work with. Physically, he was a man, but in actions and facial expressions, just a boy. His athletic feats speak for themselves. Squatrito is gone but will never be forgotten. He was a fine example of young manhood.



**BASKETBALL**

Top Row, L. R.: Dotchin, manager; Fraser, Werner.

Middle Row, L. R.: Mr. Perry, faculty manager; McCormick, McHale, Kerr, Lerch, Smith, Mr. Clarke, coach.

Front Row, L. R.: Tierney, O'Leary, Turkington, captain; Squatrito, Hedlund.

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The 1930-31 basketball team includes "Squat" as captain of the squad in his junior year

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### *Final Respects Paid*

The thunder of applause and the roar of cheering crowds meant nothing to Dominic Squatrito as his athletic prowess spelled victory after victory for Manchester High school, but he rode to his final triumph this morning saluted with the greatest tribute of all—silence. A hush settled wherever “Squats” remains were borne today with a spontaneity that spelled honor and respect for the young athlete’s name and record. Despite the bustle of marching hundreds who took part in the funeral procession, scarcely a discordant note was audible as the young idol of sports lovers went to his grave.

### *Over 1,000 at Service*

More than a thousand friends, including many from other parts of Connecticut, turned out this morning to bid farewell to one of the most outstanding athletes ever developed at Manchester High School. Several hundred persons were unable to find even standing room in St. James Church where the public funeral service was held.

Rarely has Manchester paid such a tribute to the memory of a dead athlete. Crowds gathered all along the line of the funeral procession on Main and Center streets. Traffic was at a standstill at the Center for nearly half an hour. Five members of the Manchester Police Department were assigned to handle the traffic by Chief Samuel Garden. Company G, one of Manchester’s two national guard units, escorted the body to its place of rest in St. James Cemetery.

### *Church Filled*

Except for the section reserved for special friends, St. James’s Church was taxed beyond capacity long before the funeral service began. Even the sacristy was filled. The stairways leading to the main auditorium of the church were crowded beyond the outside entrances of the building. Many others stood outside the church. First came the service at the home, 164 Oak Street, and then a solemn requiem high mass at the church.

The six pall bearers, all senior high school students who had been athletic comrades of young Squatrito, wore their bright crimson sweaters, rewards for proficiency in athletics. The dead athlete also went to his final resting place wearing the sweater that denoted his school. The bearers were James O’Leary, John Lerch, Otis Kerr, Stuart Vennart, Richard McCormick and Albert Smith.

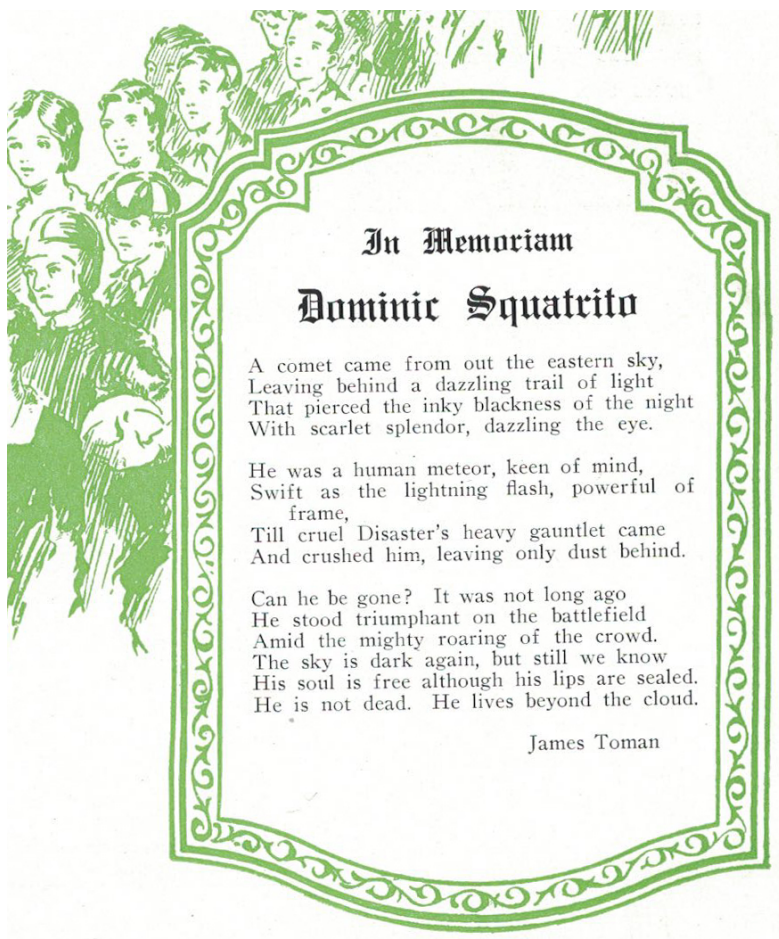
Approximately 75 automobiles formed in the procession which moved slowly up Main, down Center onto Griswold and into the cemetery. Company G, with practically every member in uniform, marched at the head under the command of Captain James H. McVeigh. The bearers walked with the hearse, three on a side. Another very large crowd gathered at the cemetery for the committal service.

The Squatrito home on Oak street was visited by hundreds Saturday afternoon and all day Sunday. Many organizations came in groups to pay their final respects. The Loyal Order of Moose, of which the boy's father is a member, came in a body. The Salvation Army band played at the Squatrito home Saturday afternoon.

*Students Attend*

The attendance at Manchester High School dropped to about a third of the usual enrollment this morning, but was back to normalcy that afternoon. Principal Clarence Quimby had excused all students wishing to attend the funeral.

*Dedicate SOMANHIS in "Squat's" Memory*



The highest testimony which his class could have given him was awarded in memoriam to Dominic Squatrito when at a mass meeting the class voted unanimously to dedicate the 1932 issue of Somanhis Year Book to the bereaved "Squat". This was the first time that such an honor has ever been paid a student, dedication always before having been reserved for members of the faculty who have been particularly beloved by the senior class.



### *Outcome of Death Inquest in Local Court*

Coroner John Yeomans conducted an inquest in the death of Dominic Squatrito on May 14th. State Policeman Thomas Hunt and Thomas Smith of the Stafford Springs barracks assisted in the investigation held in the town court room. Two witnesses of Hoffman's Garage, who brought the wrecked car to Manchester made an examination. Others who were examined were Frank King, 20, of Lebanon, driver of the 4 ton Reo truck and J.N. Manning of Lebanon, owner of the truck.

Coroner Yeomans interviewed Miss Ruth Stavinsky, Miss Evelyn West and Edward Lithwinski, companions of Squatrito at the Manchester Memorial hospital following the inquest.

King said that Squatrito was driving on the right hand side of the road and was not traveling at a fast rate of speed. He said that "something let go" in the steering gear and that the "brakes wouldn't work."

With the truck racing down the steep hill out of control, King was helpless to avoid the crash which occurred on the left side of the roadster. The impact spun the light roadster completely around throwing all four front-seat passengers into the highway. Then the truck continued its mad race down the hill, finally leaving the road and coming to an abrupt stop in a large pile of cider pomace. King escaped uninjured.

The state police had two mechanics examine the Reo truck. They found a broken steering knuckle and other damage, but could not agree definitely as to whether the damage resulted before or during the accident. The truck's owner said that the brakes were inspected recently and found to be satisfactory. However, the police found the emergency brake useless.

On May 28th, 1932 Coroner John Yeomans of Tolland County ruled in his finding that Squatrito met his death through no one's negligence. Yeomans said in part: The driver of the truck testified that he was unable to guide his truck just prior to the accident and that he believes something went wrong with his steering apparatus. There was also evidence offered by some alleged mechanics that the "drag link" which connects the steering-post with the front wheels might have dropped off prior to the accident.

"These mechanics further testified that this would be likely to happen only when the steering apparatus was subject to a severe shock. As the truck was traveling over a perfectly smooth highway, there was nothing to give the drag link such a shock. The fact that there were no marks on the drag link to indicate that it had struck on the concrete highway further refutes the supposition that this link dropped off before the accident.

"The Tires of the truck were old and smooth. Evidence was offered to show that this would make the truck skid easily, and that the truck may have skidded while rounding the corner (near the top of the hill). This would of course, make the driver unable to control the path of the truck."

The coroner concludes there is no evidence the truck was operated in a reckless manner or at excessive speed and exonerated King of blame.

*Reflections from the Author*

The Dominic Squatrito story needs to live on. His life and accomplishments need to be passed on to future generations. He was an amazing athlete, in my estimation the greatest ever to wear the red and white of the Manchester High School Indians. He had so much to live for, with a great future ahead of him, only to have it all taken away less than a month before graduation.

I first heard of Dominic while a member of the Indians Track and Field team in 1952, some 20 years after his death. Coach Wigren told us that young Dom set the record for the 100 yard dash in 1932 with a time of 9.9 seconds. Our meets then were held at the west side's Fouracres, on a cinder track located behind Washington School. That to me was most impressive, since 10.4 seconds and higher were typical winning times in our day.

You'll find little supposition in what I've offered here. The vast majority of what appears was taken from the local newspapers the very day the events presented themselves. Little is lost or embellished by those who would offer their own interpretation of young Dominic Squatrito's brief time on Earth.

I feel an association with him. He was born in the same time as my parents and that gives me a feel for how well I could have related to him. The school's coaching staff remained the same in our time. I ran on the very same track as he once did. His great-nephews, Salvatore and Dominic, were classmates of mine at Manchester High, Salvatore with our class of 1955, and Dominic two years our junior.

In our time Jim Roach was the athletic star, but Jim did not have the athletic versatility of a Dominic Squatrito. For that reason I consider Dominic "Manchester's All-Around Athlete of the Ages".

Dick Jenkins, Manchester High School, Class of 1955

Niceville, Florida 32578.