

# Danny Maroney (NGM)

**Handball started for Danny Maroney at a young age at a park near where the Maroneys lived in Ridgewood, Queens, where he grew up with his best friend Barnard Hintz.**

Danny involve himself in a multitude of competitive sports including, track, martial arts, hockey, wrestling, baseball, soccer, bowling, century bicycling, and more. Having lived with twelve brothers and sisters all involved with sports made him innately driven to succeed.

When a neophyte handball player, Danny was mentored by his friend "Billy" Hintz, whose ambidexterity made the game look easy. Danny knew then that he wanted to learn this skill.

Handball became serious to him in Automotive High School when his science teacher/track and wrestling coach asked him to join the handball team. That was his real introduction to his 45 year commitment to the sport. During his four years in high school he achieved on a high level in several sports. In three years on the handball team his record was 25-5. He was runner-up two straight years in track running a 10:25 100 yard dash and a 21:10 220 yard dash.

He was among the top runners in the tri-state and regional area. His career as a high school wrestler was short-lived. He competed for one year at the 135 lb. weight class and had a 23-4 record, but he stopped because he was losing weight at an alarming rate. In baseball he played 20 games in two years with a .465 batting average and 38 stolen bases. On graduating he was presented the Kennedy Distinguished Athletic Award, given to a senior for being the best conditioned athlete in the school four years.

After graduating Danny worked for Luby Chevrolet as a mechanic in the electrical division, but, unfortunately, the dealership closed one year later. But he did accomplish his goal of building a car with his brother, John, which he raced at the drag strip ¼ mile track for four summers.

Shortly after his mom passed away, Danny pursued college and was accepted to Oskaloosa Walton College in Florida. There, along with his studies, he ran track and played 4-wall and European handball regularly with his brother, Tom, at Eglin Air Force Base. Tom eventually retired from the Air Force as a Major after 27 years of service.

Completing college, he worked in the janitorial/chemical field as a salesman. At this writing, after 35 years in the field, he works for a company in Huntington Station, New York as Vice-president of Sales Operations.



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He returned to playing handball with greater interest than ever, and began playing more throughout the tri-state area, looking for games to help him improve. Coney Island had the reputation of having the best 1-wall players, but it wasn't easy to break into the "fraternity" there. Thanks to Danny Flickstein, Mark Levine, and Marty "the Farmer" Cushman he was made to feel welcomed. He could always rely on Marty, Fred Feit, and Ruby Obert for singles games.

His true enjoyment in intense play came at Rockaway Beach, where he made great friends with Al Torres, Arty Reyer, Eric Klarman, John Reicher, Fred Sylvia, Charlie and Dave Sheldon, Kenny Holmes, Wally Ulbrich, Ray Valentine, Buddy Shapiro, Jim Tomasulo, Ken Ginty, Ed Maisonet, Mike Dikman, Paul Williams, Dave and John Stocchetti, Bill Farber, Roger Casuso, and even more.

Ironically he met his wife, Marie, in Rockaway. She was an avid paddleball player and an elite marathon runner, accomplishing eight NY Marathons in a row. She also became a semi-finalist in National 1-wall and 3-wall for two consecutive years. Maroney felt he owed a debt of gratitude to the "crazy's" he played against in his home park, where he had the most fun playing handball.

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He played regularly with very close friend Graham Palmore. Graham's ability to hook the ball on the serve forced Maroney to learn to read the serve in order to return the ball well. He also was grateful to the Obert brothers, Carl and Ruby, for tutoring him. In the New Jersey/New York 4-wall league, Maroney learned technique from Ken Smolack, who encouraged him not only to play 4-wall, but to travel to the National 3-Wall in Toledo. 3-wall became Maroney's favorite handball venue.

He also played at the NYAC with Fred Munsch and company. After games there the guys would go out for a few drinks, but Maroney always declined because he didn't imbibe. Once, on his birthday, they insisted and Maroney could not remember how he got home that evening!

Maroney received an invitation from Eric Klarman to play with him in the NYAC Open Tournament, which they won by defeating the pro-team of the Dunn brothers from California. Danny reciprocated and played with Eric in the 1990 USHA National 1-Wall Open Doubles. They won the championship!

He was fortunate to play with men who were blessed with natural talent, such as Al Torres, Ruben Gonzalez, Al Apuzzi. But the player who stood out most in his eyes was Joe Ivy, from Michigan. He was Danny's doubles partner for three years in the National 3-Wall. Within a brief time they gelled as a team and won the

Nationals back to back. Danny also slammed one of those years. He recalled Joe as "nothing sensational, but he had everything he wanted in a partner including lightning fast reflexes and an ability to do the unimaginable. He made returns after catching up to the ball by the long line and climbing walls as high as the court number!"

Dennis Uffer also stood out in Maroney's memory for being his traveling partner for many years playing 1-, 3-, or 4-wall. He and Dennis won a World's masters event in Canada by defeating Howie Eisenberg and a partner.

For nearly 50 years handball was a part of Danny Maroney's life. His successes never came easy. He always put in time with rigorous training regimens. This included 30 miles of running a week, with 50/100 miles of biking, and weight training every day before every tournament. But an accident, caused by a collision with his bike and a truck, took its toll on him, and he had to retire from the game.

All his love for handball aside, Danny's greatest pride and joy was his 18 year old son (at this writing), Dan. Maroney watched him grow into a mature, intelligent young man with elite athletic ability in baseball, track, and the martial arts. "He strives to achieve excellence and have fun at the same time. He has a great outlook on life," noted the proud father, adding, "He is in college now on a full academic scholarship majoring in drafting design and architectural engineering

holding a 3.95 average."

Danny Maroney loved playing handball, but loved equally the lifetime friendships he made through the sport.

