

# Mario Generali

1924 -

*"The purpose of the Boys Club is not to make adults of young people... but to build young people who will make better adults."*

## - Mario Generali

Mario Generali was born in Providence, Rhode Island on August 22, 1924. Shortly thereafter his family moved to Waterbury. It is no exaggeration to say that he influenced more young men in Waterbury than anyone in the history of the City. For forty-five years, he was at the Anderson Boys' Club seemingly around-the-clock, making life more enjoyable for young people. Thousands of youngsters who came under the enlightened guidance of the Club when Generali was a staff member and later Executive Director can attest to his amazing contributions and dedication.

He started his Boys' Club career as a full-time employee in 1943. After serving with the Army Air Corps in World War II, he returned, in 1944, to resume his vocation of helping the children of Waterbury.

The first Boys' Club opened in 1888 on North Elm Street. After various moves it began operation in 1904 on Cottage Place. It remained there until 1965 when it opened at its present East Main street site. There have been only four directors in its long distinguished existence: Nicholas Combellack, William Johnson, Mario Generali and Robert Generali. The Boys' Club became the Anderson Boys' Club in 1986 in honor of the benefactor and Board member, Ernest Anderson.

During Generali's tenure as Executive Director, 1967-1989 the agency never suffered a deficit in its operating budget. He was as skilled an administrator as he was a physical education director. Under his direction, the endowment fund grew significantly to the point where future revenue for the Club was assured. Former Wilby High School coach John McKenna once said of Generali: "He was as much at home with 8 and 10-year-olds as he was with captains of industry".

Mornings, afternoons and evenings found "Mr. G" at the Club. Boys always knew a loving Generali would be there to advise them on everything from sports to life. Each year he was primarily responsible for the enrolling of 2,000 members in well organized, sound programs that would accommodate individuals with varying interests and talents. Generali had a concern for discipline and taught strong moral values which were forever instilled in the boys.



He offered a parental image that led to his being referred to as "The Foster Father" to an array of diversified youngsters.

Generali was honored by the daVinci Lodge #66 for lifetime service to the community and was presented with awards from the Olympian Club and the Connecticut Bar Association. On his retirement, he received the Northeast Award from the Boys' Clubs that recognizes exceptional contribution to youth. It was only the third such award ever given.

There are adults throughout the country with secure professional and personal positions whose lives were profoundly improved by having known Mario Generali. His Boys' Club was a second home to many youngsters. To some, it was their first home!