

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD



Jim Lane, shown here interviewing Cal Ripken at Blair County Ballpark in 2000, will receive the Hall of Fame's first Lifetime Achievement Award.

Lane a sportswriter for a 'lifetime'

By John Hartsock
Altoona Mirror

Since its inception in 1987, the Blair County Sports Hall of Fame has adopted the mission of honoring its native athletes, coaches and community pillars who have made large contributions on both a national and regional level.

This year, the Blair Hall has initiated a Lifetime Achievement Award, and Jim Lane, who has covered high school, college and professional sports for the Altoona Mirror for the past 50 years, will be the first recipient.

Lane is being honored for 50 years of promoting interest and fostering the growth of sports in the region.

"We think Jim has been somebody who has helped make local sports a regional and national attraction for many years," Hall of Fame President Dave Andrews said.

Andrews said the award will not necessarily be presented at every banquet and is not necessarily limited to those who made their career in Blair County, but he said. "Our board felt strongly Jim is a good person to start with."

Lane, who began with the Mirror as a sports writer in 1961, became the newspaper's sports editor in 1983. He stayed in that position until his retirement in 2002.

"The Hall of Fame, to me, is probably one of the greatest things that's ever been formed in Blair County, and to know that I am going to be a part of it is a humbling experience."

Lane, 70, is still employed by the Mirror as a sports correspondent. He expressed gratitude to the Hall of Fame.

"I'm very appreciative at being selected," he said. "It is a real honor. The Hall of Fame, to me, is probably one of the greatest things that's ever been formed in Blair County, and

to know that I am going to be a part of it is a humbling experience."

Lane counts among his career highlights his coverage of the Pittsburgh Pirates' World Series championships in both 1971 and 1979 as well as his trip to New Orleans in 1975 to cover the Pittsburgh Steelers' first-ever Super Bowl victory — a 16-6 win over the Minnesota Vikings.

His one-on-one interview with future NBA Hall of Famer Michael Jordan at the Pittsburgh Civic Arena during an exhibition game remains one of Lane's most cherished personal memories.

But covering the area scholastic sports scene has been Lane's top priority over the past half-century.

"I've always enjoyed covering high school sports as much as anything else," said Lane, who also served for many years as an umpire, coach and administrator in various area youth baseball leagues. "I was fortunate that the Mirror put a lot of emphasis into covering local sports. That was always big for me."