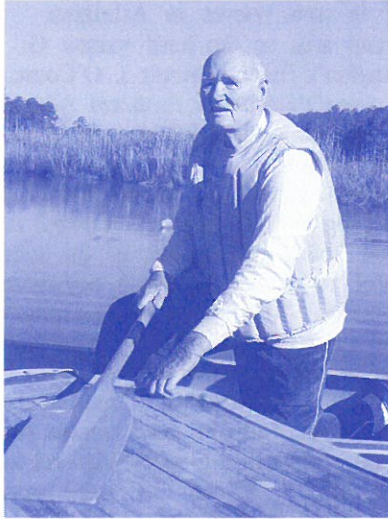


ARLINGTON SPORTS HALL OF FAME INDUCTEE - MAY 31, 2006



William D. Havens, Jr. is one of the most outstanding canoeist ever produced in the United States. He was a “natural” in the sport. Havens is the son of the late and famous canoeist, Bill Havens, Sr., nephew of Olympian, Charles Havens, and brother of Frank Havens, an equally famous canoeist and Gold Medal Olympian (1952) and Arlington Sports Hall of Fame member (2003).

Bill Havens, Jr. was born 87 years ago, January, 1919. He grew up in Arlington and graduated from Washington-Lee H.S.(1937). He became an Arlington elementary school teacher and served for many years in the Arlington County system as an elementary school principal, a position from which he eventually retired.

He was an outstanding athlete in high school and in college at George Washington University. He excelled in several sports (football, boxing, track, swimming and wrestling) and gained national prominence in canoeing at the tender age of 16, winning his first National Canoe Tilting title and finishing third in the Olympic trials for single-blade canoe (C-1). He was named to his first of four Olympic teams. Bill was an alternate on the 1936 U.S. Olympic Canoe team and was named to the three following Olympic teams as a member in 1940, 1944 and 1948.

Bill Havens, Jr. went on to win 19 more National Championships, including 12 National Championships in Canoe Tilting. Beginning in 1936 when he was a high school junior, through 1953, Bill dominated the sport. No one was better in this event. He was the undisputed champion and defended his Canoe Tilting title over 500 times. He was dethroned only once, and that by his brother Frank in 1947, at the American Canoe Association regatta held at Sugar Island on the St. Lawrence River. He regained the title, defeating Frank the very next day.

In 1940, Bill Havens, Jr. won three races at the National Championships and was named to the Olympic team. He was also named to the 1944 Olympic team. However, neither of the 1940 nor 1944 Olympic Games were held because of WWII. In 1948 Bill Havens, Jr. again made the Olympic team, finishing 5th in the single-man canoe race at the Games held in London. Following the '48 Olympics, Bill and his brother Frank set as their goal, winning the Two-man canoe race at the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki. To achieve their goal, they followed an intense training regimen and based on their competitive race results and timings leading up to the '52 Olympics, they were favored to win the two-man event. However, fate denied Bill the almost sure chance to make the '52 team or the opportunity to win an Olympic Gold medal. In a freak accident, he severed the tendons in his hand attempting to help one of his fellow teachers free her car which was stuck in the snow. His brother Frank went on to win two medals, a Silver and a Gold, at the 1952 Olympic Games.

Despite the serious injury, Bill was far from finished as a competitive canoeist. After regaining most of the use of his injured hand, he continued competing in many more national and international regattas, setting records and winning many more gold, silver and bronze medals, racing in Senior and Master Canoeing and Kayaking events.