

Eldridge among M'head famous

A News sports staff report

Perhaps Kenny Eldridge, one of the greats from the early 1960s, said it best after learning that he'd just been selected for the Marblehead Magicians Gridiron Club Hall Of Fame.

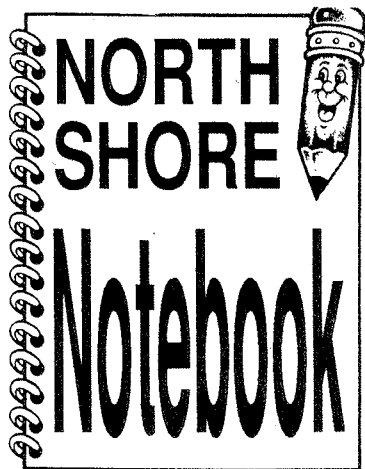
Eldridge, the '62 football captain, now a budget analyst for Raytheon, will be one of six inductees Thursday, Dec. 5, at the Gerry Five in Marblehead.

"This is kind of exciting. It brings back all kinds of memories," said Eldridge, 46. "I was privileged to play on that (8-1) 1960 team with Buckets Manning and Bob Radcliffe when I was a sophomore. One of my best recollections is an 82-yard kickoff return against Swampscott as a senior (when Marblehead won, 7-0).

"Really, it's nice to be remembered. I mean it was a long time ago."

Others designated for Hall of Fame honors are one of the truly great passers in school history, Ronnie Conn, a quarterback from 1955-57; Dave Bartlett, a half-back-end who was Herm Hussey's first captain in 1948, and at 14 was one of the youngest starters in Magicians' history; Lindsey Brackett, a backfield force in 1931-32-33; and the late William "Mandy" Gillis, a lineman of distinction in 1919-21, and the father of ex-Salem State athletic director Bill Gillis.

Additionally, a new category in



the Hall of Fame for those who made an impact but did not play football will include the late Dr. Stanford W. Hopkins, the beloved physician for the football team for 40 years. The current football stadium in Marblehead is named after Dr. Hopkins.

Bartlett, 60, the head of Slee Insurance Agency in Marblehead, was only 14-years-old in his sophomore year when he inherited the starting role as the spinner back in the single wing.

"I played on teams that had a lot of heart and 160-pound linemen. We had leather helmets. Ed Stucke broke his leg before the opener in my sophomore year and I became the spinner back. I re

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ceived the ball on every play. I still had two years of eligibility, age-wise, when I graduated," Bartlett said.

He cherishes his high school memories, including a 24-0 romp over Swampscott as a senior, and an unforgettable Saugus game. He scored two touchdowns that day, one on a pass from QB "Gaga" Hamlin as time expired.

"It was going to be the last play and I told Gaga to get back there and throw it as far down the middle of the field as he could and that I'd catch it. I was lucky to catch it over my shoulder. My biggest thrill. It was on a Monday. Not many fans were there. But I remember Trim Robarts (a legendary assistant coach) being there. That was the first game he saw that year. Generally, he was always scouting the next opponent on Saturday."

He said the '48 Magicians had a good year, losing only to Beverly's Class A champs and a Lynn English team that included Lou Tsiopoulos at end.

Conn, like Bartlett, also started at a young age. He was 15 in his varsity debut at Bertram Field and on his first play from scrimmage hooked up with Charlie Gilligan on a 70-yard pass play that led to a 22-7 triumph over Salem. Conn starred as a three-sport ace in Marblehead, also serving as a

shortstop-catcher in baseball and as a guard in basketball. He turned down a pro baseball shot to attend Colby, where a shoulder injury ended his active days as a freshman.

Conn's son, Gary, became an All-America hockey performer at UMaine.

Eldridge had two daughters, Sarah and Susan, who were field hockey all-stars at Marblehead. Another daughter, Amy, was an MVP in the annual local Powder Puff Game and played hockey at McGill University.

□ The St. John's Prep footballers moved up to 13th in the USA Today Super 25 national rankings Tuesday.

□ Ex-Bishop Fenwick coach Scott Baldwin, a candidate for the Salem boys' soccer post, has been the St. John's Prep Jayvee coach for two years and has an extensive background.

"I miss running my own program, and certainly Salem has a good one. I've also heard (AD) Bob Geswell is good to work for. Salem has a lot of appeal. It's a great opportunity. The kids love to play and there's an excellent youth program there," Baldwin said.

He's 60-41-7 as a head coach at Fenwick (3), Maynard (3) and Saugus (1) and has been an assis-

tant at Lincoln-Sudbury and Weston. Baldwin was interested in the Salem swimming job, but applied too late.

□ WNSH will broadcast Prep-at-West Haven Friday night.

□ David Mesgar, the Manchester quarterback, is drawing plenty of college attention. BC has invited him to be its guest for the Miami game while Merrimack and Keene State like Mesgar as a hoop prospect.

□ St. Joseph's of Maine feels strongly about Peabody's Rick Sweeney as a hoop prospect, despite the fact Sweeney has been sidelined for two years with shoulder problems.

□ Ray Carey of Marblehead and St. John's Prep wasn't even challenged when the Stanford freshman won the 200-yard butterfly in 1:47.74 over Texas in that big NCAA showdown of the top swimming powers in the country. The No. 2 finisher, Josh Davis of Texas, clocked 1:50.12.

□ Another North Shore product based in California, tennis ace Lisa Albano of Peabody, Pingree and Cal-Berkeley advanced to the quarters of the prestigious Riviera All-America Tournament, despite a broken toe. She had two wins before falling to No. 9 seed Heather Williams of Stanford, 6-4, 5-7, 6-1.