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May 22

## A gem of an honor

### Max Bartikowsky among Junior Achievement's Business Hall of Fame honorees

By BILL O'BOYLE boboyale@timesleader.com

WILKES-BARRE – Max Bartikowsky smiles when he talks about his No. 14 basketball jersey that hangs on the wall inside the Jewish Community Center's gymnasium.

Bartikowsky is now "commissioner" of the "5:30 Club" – a group of multi-aged men who have played basketball at the JCC, it seems, since the days of peach baskets and two-hand set shots. Bartikowsky laughs when he talks about some of the past stars of the club, people like the late Leonard Brader.

"I took over as commissioner after Leonard died," Bartikowsky said. "We've always had a lot of fun playing a game we love."

But Bartikowsky, 80, turns serious when he talks about the honor about to be bestowed upon him. Bartikowsky, president of Bartikowsky Jewelers, will be one of three people to be inducted into Junior Achievement's organization's Business Hall of Fame. Carol Mueller of McDonald's and Earl Berger of Berger Family Dealerships are also being inducted during the 24th Annual Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame dinner that will be held May 25 at the Woodlands Inn & Resort in Plains Township.

"It's quite an honor," Bartikowsky said. "I looked at the list of past recipients and it really is a Hall of Fame."

Bartikowsky should feel even more honored by the award because the recipients are chosen annually by the winners.

In addition to the Hall of Fame inductees, Junior Achievement will honor the recipients of the Entrepreneur of the Year award: Scott Lynett, George Lynett Jr., Bobby Lynett and Matthew Haggerty of Times-Shamrock Communications.

Bartikowsky said he's working on his speech for the big night. He said he will tell the story of Bartikowsky's from its beginnings in 1887 when the first store opened with his grandfather, also Max, at the helm. But Bartikowsky intends to focus on his involvement with the business, an association that began in 1948 and continues today.

"I think it's important to tell people how we built our business," Bartikowsky said. "And I want people to know why we decided to remain in the downtown."

Bartikowsky's was located on Public Square from 1948 to 1974 at the site where the Ramada Inn now sits. When the Agnes flood hit in June 1972, Bartikowsky said the store moved to a modular building at the corner of North Main and Union streets where Blue Cross is now located.

"We wanted to stay downtown," he said. "We were always a downtown store."

Bartikowsky's moved to its current location at 141 South Main Street in 1978. Bartikowsky said the location formerly housed a Giant Food Market. He said the building was ideal and the parking was just what the business needed.

Born and raised in Wilkes-Barre, a young Max Bartikowsky attained celebrity status as the



Max Bartikowsky, president of Bartikowsky Jewelers, will be one of three people inducted into Junior Achievement's Business Hall of Fame on May 25.

Clark Van Orden/The Times Leader

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### if you go

What: 24th Annual Junior Achievement Business Hall of Fame Dinner

When: Wednesday, May 25

Where: Woodlands Inn & Resort, Plains Township

Time: 6 p.m.

Tickets: \$125

Info: Call 602-3600

### Max Bartikowsky

Name: Max Bartikowsky

Age: 80

Residence: Forty Fort

Work: President/CEO of Bartikowsky Jewelers, Wilkes-Barre

Education: Wyoming Seminary ; University of Pennsylvania 's Wharton School ; Wilkes College

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impish inspiration for cartoonist [Ham Fisher](#)'s "Little Max" – a supporting character in the [Joe Palooka](#) comic book series.

Bartikowsky is a graduate of Wyoming Seminary and he attended the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and Wilkes College. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1951 through 1955. After completing the [Gemological Institute of America](#)'s Diamond Grading class, he took an active role as the third generation running the Bartikowsky family jewelry business. Max is currently the president and CEO of Bartikowsky Jewelers which will celebrate 124 years in business this year.

Bartikowsky has been involved with many community organizations and programs, such as the Jewish Community Center of Wyoming Valley, Wilkes-Barre Lions Club, the Board of Temple Israel, Wyoming Seminary Alumni Association, Wyoming Valley Family Service Association and the American Heart Association.

In 2008, he and Anna Cervenak received the Distinguished Community Service Award from the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

In 1964, Bartikowsky purchased his first horse and raced it at Pocono Downs. He still owns horses and he operates Big 10 Stable.

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