



WILLIAM J. RAFTERY
St. Cecilia HS
Athlete - Basketball

He has one of the most famous faces and one of the most recognizable voices in the sport of basketball. And for Bill Raftery, it all started in an immigrant household in Kearny. Raftery, whose parents came to New Jersey from Ireland, grew up playing basketball, baseball and soccer in the Hudson County town.

He attended St. Cecilia High School in Kearny, where he was a star in all three sports. Basketball, however, was clearly his best. As a senior in 1959, he set a state record by scoring 827 points. It boosted his career total to 2,193, which established a state career scoring record.

His next stop was LaSalle University in Philadelphia, where he averaged 14.6 points during his career. He was then invited to training camp with the New York Knicks, but was one of the final cuts. He landed a job as recreation director in Kearny, and was soon hired as head basketball coach at FDU Madison, where he stayed four years. He then moved on to Seton Hall, where he went 154-141 during an 11-year run that saw the Pirates grow into a charter member of the Big East Conference.

He resigned prior to the 1981-82 season, and soon started his amazing broadcasting career. He initially worked college games for the Big East, CBS and ESPN, and also replaced Phil Jackson as the color analyst for New Jersey Nets games on SportsChannel. During the course of his 37-year association with CBS, he's risen to become the analyst for the past four NCAA Final Fours. Prior to that, he was also the radio analyst for the Final Four at Westwood One Radio Sports for 23 years. When the Big East was reconstituted in 2013 and aligned with FOX Sports, Raftery joined the network and became the lead analyst for its conference telecasts on FS1.

In 2017, he was inducted into the Sports Broadcasting Hall of Fame, and earlier that year won his second consecutive Sports Emmy Award for Outstanding Sports Personality/Sports Event Analyst for his work during the NCAA Tournament for CBS/TBS/TNT/TruTV. Among many other prestigious honors, he has been inducted into the National Sportscasters and Sportswriters Hall of Fame, and has received the Curt Gowdy Media Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.