If you didn’t know better you’d swear that Mike Oropollo and Jack Armstrong were the same person. Since nobody has ever seen them together, who is to say they aren’t? Certainly, the start of his wrestling career was straight out of a storybook.

For the record, he was also a catcher on the baseball team for three seasons during the second of which he hit for a .360 average. But it was as a heavyweight wrestler that Oropollo’s efforts made their biggest impact on the school's athletic history.

In 1963, Bob Mizerek, the coach who was about to turn a losing program around, was hunting for a heavyweight. He didn’t find him at the team tryouts. He didn’t find him on a tip from a high school coach. The place he found him was in a compulsory gym class, which Mizerek was teaching at the time.

“Have you ever wrestled?” the coach asked,
“No.”
“Would you like to try?”
“Well, I…”
“Great. I knew we could count on you.”

He was a star in the very first college wrestling match he ever saw. Dead even going into the final bout at CCNY, it came down to the heavyweights and Mike Oropollo won it. A four-year letter winner with a .750 winning average, he played a key role in the incredible upset which brought Rutgers-Newark the Metropolitan Intercollegiate Wrestling Championships, shocking a 15-0 opponent from the Merchant Marine Academy in the semis to gain the vital point without which Rutgers-Newark could not have won.

Today, he is a partner in the law firm of Hoagland, Longo, Oropollo and Moran in New Brunswick.