

Machine Gun Lou Butera Pool Champion

WHEN?

1937-2015

EVENT

Lou won numerous championships and was selected for the Hall of Fame



WHERE?

Pittston, Pennsylvania

VOCABULARY

billiards
pool

The United States was still in the midst of the Great Depression in 1937 when Sam Butera opened his pool room on South Main Street in Pittston, Pennsylvania. That was the same year his son, Lou, was born. The game Sam enjoyed would soon become one that his son not only enjoyed but would play with the best in the world.

Lou and his friend Steve LaTorre (the LaTorre family also owned a pool room) started playing when they each had to stand on soda boxes in order to reach the top of the table. The two friends loved the game and played whenever possible including skipping school to do so (Pittston Dispatch). When Lou saw the BCA (Billiard Congress of America) Hall of Famer Edwin Rudolph play in an exhibition match, he knew his life would revolve around pool.



He won many tournaments including the All-Japan championship, the World Trick Shot championship, twice won the Pennsylvania State Championship, and the World Championship in 1973 at 36 years of age. It was his style of play, moving quickly from ball-to-ball, that earned him the nickname "Machine Gun" Lou. He set a world record of running 150 balls in 21 minutes and consistently pocketed many runs of 100+ balls.

While in the Army he ran 93 balls in 8 minutes for a sanctioned record. By the time he was 49 years old, he was selected into the BCA Hall of Fame joining a very select group of expert players (Luzerne Hall of Fame).

Butera also appeared in several movies. He played himself in "The Baltimore Bullet" and played as a pool player in "Police Academy 6: City Under Siege." "Racing to the Moon" was another movie where he played as a pool player and served as a technical advisor. Most recently he was selected as one of the characters on the Inspiration Mural in downtown Pittston. (Pittston Dispatch).

He and his wife Carolyn LaNunziata have seven children. He passed away at age 78 in 2015.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[Pittston Dispatch](#)

[Luzerne County Hall of Fame](#)



ONLINE RESOURCES

[PA HISTORICAL MARKER](#)

[Gilded Age](#)

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

1. Create a photo display of the Lattimer Massacre
2. Create a photo display; choose a person in one of the photos to tell the story of the massacre in first-person.
3. How else could the strikers have voiced their demands?

