



NFF

Joe Tiller Chapter of Northwest Indiana

"Building leaders through football"

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'CRADLE OF ASTRONAUTS' TO BE CELEBRATED JUNE 16TH DURING CHAPTER'S 7TH ANNUAL HONORS DINNER

After attracting a record crowd of 800 people to Purdue University for last year's NFF Honors Dinner while saluting one of Northwest Indiana's best-known athletic traditions, the "Cradle of Quarterbacks," the Joe Tiller Chapter of Northwest Indiana decided to shoot for the moon this year.

So, on June 16, 2011, at the 7th Annual "Celebrating Our Legends" Honors Dinner at the Purdue Memorial Union Ballrooms, one of America's best-known academic traditions, the "Cradle of Astronauts" will be in the spotlight, along with some of Purdue's most famous football alumni.

"A main purpose of the Honors Dinner each year is to recognize our area's high school scholar-athletes and to announce the recipient of our chapter's Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award," says chapter president Bart Burrell. "The award is based on academics (40%) and athletics (40%) along with community service, leadership and citizenship (20%). So, it makes perfect sense this year to recognize one of the best known academic traditions, the 'Cradle of Astronauts'."

Four young men who are likely to be valedictorians of their senior classes are among the six prep football standouts chosen as finalists for this year's Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award. In all, five of the 24 players nominated by their schools are valedictorians and six have a grade point average of 4.0 or better.

"To help us salute academics, we have invited three of the most accomplished people ever to represent this state, region and nation," says Burrell. "We will present our chapter's Gold Medallion to the first and last men on the moon, Neil Armstrong and Eugene Cernan, and to the astronaut, Jerry Ross, who was the first person ever to launch into space seven times, a world record he now shares with one other NASA astronaut." As of late April, all three Purdue graduates said they have the June 16 event on their calendars and expect to return to West Lafayette barring schedule changes.

Armstrong, Cernan and Ross are among the 22 Purdue alumni who have been selected to fly in space. The NFF's Gold Medallions were presented last year to Drew Brees, Bob Griese and Len Dawson as Purdue's three Super Bowl Champion quarterbacks. Only the University of Alabama matches Purdue's record in that category.

Brees, the All-Pro quarterback of the New Orleans Saints who was Purdue's last Heisman Trophy Finalist, will attend the Honors Dinner again this year for the seventh consecutive year and will present the Brees Mental Toughness Award to Purdue's consensus All-America defensive end Ryan Kerrigan.

The chapter's Distinguished American Award will be given to another Purdue All-American and Heisman Finalist, Leroy Keyes, who retired earlier this year from the Boilermaker athletic staff, where he was an assistant director in the John Purdue Club.

Former chapter award winner and board member,



Neil Armstrong



Eugene Cernan



Jerry Ross

Bernie Flowers, will be remembered during the program for his tireless efforts in building up the chapter's memberships and sponsorships – helping it to become the fourth largest chapter in the country (among 120 chapters) in less than seven years. Flowers, an All-America receiver for the Boilermakers in 1950-52, died unexpectedly in April.

This year's Award for Outstanding Contribution to Amateur Football will be presented to Jon Speaker and Lane Custer for their efforts in starting a youth football program in West Lafayette called West Side Flag Football, which has provided introductory level football for hundreds of young children in Tippecanoe County.

Also, for the first time, the Tiller Chapter will present the Citizenship Award to a graduating university player in the region who has exhibited exceptional community service, leadership and character. The inaugural award goes to Kyle Adams, a Purdue tight end, who led numerous mission trips to Haiti and was a two-time recipient of the Kiwanis Community Service Award.

The six finalists for the prestigious Scholar-Athlete of the Year Award are Jesse Dority of Clinton Prairie High School, Sam Ficken of Valparaiso, Alex Hegg of Seeger Memorial, Spencer Murphy of North Miami, Kyle Patton of West Lafayette and Dustin Rivich of Michigan City. Hegg, Murphy, Patton and Rivich are

the top ranked students academically at their respective schools.

These six finalists were chosen from a field of 24 scholar-athletes who were nominated earlier this year by their schools from throughout the 18-county region of Northwest Indiana. The announcement was made Mar. 6 at the chapter's Scholar-Athlete Banquet at Valparaiso University's Harre Union Ballroom. Each nominee receives NFF scholarship assistance.

Besides the six scholar-athlete award finalists, the 18 other high school football players nominated this year were: Austin Atherton (Crown Point), Jonathan Bush (Carroll), Keisten Childers (Knox), Cody Christopher (Lafayette Central Catholic), Arion Clanton (East Chicago Central), Austin Colby (Kokomo), Daniel Falloon (Munster), Tyler Hanson (River Forest), Brant Hartman (Caston), Tanner Hess (Logansport), Garrett Howe (Twin Lakes), Justin Hunt (Maconaquah), Derek Mumaw (Northwestern), Alex Niccum (McCutcheon), Kramer Phalen (Lake Central), Tanner Pierce (Fountain Central), Joel Ripke (Lafayette Jefferson) and Alec Stuard (Frankfort).

The cumulative grade point average of this year's 24 nominees was 3.67 (equated to a 4.0 scale) and many of the young men were named to all-conference, all-region and all-state teams.

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ORDER DEADLINE JUNE 1 FOR MEMBERS, SPONSORS, FAMILIES OF HONOREES

The 2011 "Celebrating Our Legends" Honors Dinner promises to draw another very large crowd to the Purdue Memorial Union Ballrooms on June 16. Sales and seating priorities are being offered first to chapter members, sponsors and families of the honorees with a priority deadline of June 1.

Prices for the Honors Dinner remain the same as last year ... \$35 each for NFF member students, \$40 for NFF members and non-member students and \$50 each for non-NFF members. Sponsors and families of

honorees are considered members.

Also, a limited number of tickets will be sold for \$200 each to the VIP Reception, which will allow access to the honorees prior to the dinner. Proceeds from the VIP Reception will go to support the PALS (Purdue Athletes Life Success) Program, which provides participation opportunities for under-privileged youth in Northwest Indiana.

Please use the order form on page 3 or call 765-427-3303 for more information.

TRIBUTE TO A PAST BOARD MEMBER:

Excerpts from the Eulogy "There is Only One Bernie"

Prepared and Presented by Adam Nelson – Eldest Grandson, at Funeral of Bernie Flowers at St. Mary's Cathedral, Lafayette, April 20, 2011

Perhaps you have had the privilege of meeting Bernie Flowers in and around Purdue's campus. If so, you most likely understand when I say, "There is only one Bernie."

Perhaps you've received one of his self made 4" x 6" business cards highlighting his lifetime achievements or attended one of his bi-annual Hall of Shame dinners. If so, you definitely understand when I say, "There is only one Bernie."

Whether it was the way he dressed, typed a day to day email, identified his golf ball or accepted an awards speech, my grand father had a natural way of distinguishing himself from the rest of the crowd.

My grandfather was born Benjamin Bernard (Kwiatkowski) Flowers in Erie, Pa. Bernie was one of 15 children raised by their hard working parents Constantine and Albina. Bernie had a rough childhood to say the least and his family lost their father to black lung disease in 1939. Bernie was 9 at the time. Education and athletics were merely extracurricular activities for Bernie during those times, and he instead was more focused on helping support his family just to survive and make ends meet. Luckily for Bernie, athletics was a natural gift. Bernie ended up with many laurels in basketball, football and track at Erie Tech Memorial high school during the late 1940's. His high school accolades drew interest from most notably Purdue assistant coach Hank Stram. Bernie ultimately chose to attend the out of state Purdue University in 1949 on an athletic football scholarship.

Bernie spent the early part of his collegiate career playing as both an offensive end and defensive back. He routinely walked by the picture of the football team's starting lineup displayed in front window of the Harry's Chocolate Shop and used it as self motivation to make that picture one day. We all know the end result as he became a consensus All-America End during his senior year in 1952. His favorite college memory was beating Notre Dame, and their 39 game unbeaten streak, in South Bend during his sophomore year in 1950. His most notable performance was catching three first half touchdown passes during Purdue's first nationally televised matchup against Illinois during his senior season. What the record books won't tell you is that he overslept the morning of the game and almost missed the team bus. In addition to football, my grandfather was actively involved with the Lambda Chi Alpha Fraternity throughout his college years where he developed lifelong friendships that lasted throughout his entire life.

My grandfather was drafted by the Baltimore Colts in 1953, but instead chose to play for Ottawa Rough Riders in the Canadian Football League, because they offered more money. After earning All Pro Honors in 1953, my grandfather was compelled to halt his pro football career and enlist in the United States Navy. He looked up to his older brothers, Eddie and Stan, who served in the United States Military and wanted to follow in their footsteps. During his two year Navy service, my grandfather played in the U.S. Navy service league in Japan for the Yokosuka Seahawks. He did everything for the team, including helping to coach it. Bernie did the Seahawks punting,

kicking off and extra point tries. He even ran and passed the football himself on occasion. He earned All-Sea Service honors both in 1954 and 1955.

In between his Navy service, my grandfather met his one and only Adella Vehos and they got married in Westminster, Maryland on September 22, 1956. After his Navy career, my grandfather joined the Baltimore Colts for a short stint career cut short due to injuries and a family on the way. As Bernie tells it, his NFL career highlight was catching Jonny Unitas first touchdown pass. Listening to Bernie you would have thought it was in the Super Bowl, however, in reality it was only in practice.

After the NFL, my grandfather decided to become a high school physical education teacher in Chicago to make more money to support his growing family. Within a couple years, he decided to move back to Lafayette to start selling life insurance. He sold life insurance for over 40 years in Lafayette and was consistently one of the top ten life insurance salesmen in the country. His charm, desire and ability to never take no for an answer were remarkable and truly set him apart from the rest.

Despite all I've said, my grandfather's greatest accomplishment is his family. My grandparents raised 5 children (Dayna, Cathy, Kerry, Jody and Paige); all of which are Purdue graduates as displayed on his license plate 5PUKIDS. Bernie is also survived by his 6 grandchildren (Adam, Rachel, Joseph, Eric, Oscar and Sebastian).

I have so many Bernie stories to tell, but I'll just stick to one of my last encounters with my grandfather. We were playing golf the day before the Homecoming football game last year with a group of his golf buddies. Before the round started we were having one of our usual match play duals on the putting green, where the losing person had to fork over a nickel. Towards the end of the match, I was up considerably when my grandfather suggested we have the next hole be winner take all. I had no incentive to agree to those terms, but had the urge to really let him have it. I won the hole and he then suggested we do double or nothing. Again with no incentive to continue I agreed, looking to rub it in a little more. With the marshal flagging us to the first tee, we knew we only had time for one more hole. This one was for all the marbles and by now we had quite the gallery of spectators. I picked a near impossible putt; a 25 footer with considerable break. My grandfather was struggling to make 5 footers, let alone this putt. With everyone watching my grandfather stroked his putt and, in typical Bernie fashion, he sank the putt dead center. You would have thought he had just caught a touchdown pass in Ross Ade Stadium and the victory lap had begun. He looked at me and said "I wasn't All-American for nothing – how bout them apples!" trying to get a reaction out of me to take me out of focus. Luckily someone from the gallery yelled out "It's not over yet, your grandson still has to putt!" I kept my focus and lined up over my putt as things quieted down. I wasn't going to somehow let my grandfather steal the victory at the end. I stroked

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Web site: www.footballfoundation.com

College Football Hall of Fame
111 South Saint Joseph Street
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E-mail: hof@collegefootball.org
Web site: aaa.collegefootball.org



Bart Burrell

VIP RECEPTION OFFERS CHANCE TO MEET ASTRONAUTS AND POSE FOR PICTURES

Purdue's three most-famous astronauts – Neil Armstrong, Eugene Cernan and Jerry Ross – will be among the honorees during a 60-minute social hour prior to the June 16 NFF Honors Dinner. No autographs will be given, but professional photographers will be available to take posed pictures of each ticket-buying guest with the group of honorees of their choice. Space at this exclusive opportunity will be limited to the first 150 people who order tickets. The price is \$200 per person and does not include the dinner ticket. Proceeds from the VIP Reception will be donated to the PALS Program for under-privileged youth in Northwest Indiana.

The Honors Dinner Raffle will be held again this year prior and during dinner. Raffle tickets may be purchased in advance or during the events of June 16 for \$5 each. Organizers plan to have more than 100 donated prizes valued between \$20 and \$500. Proceeds will go to the NFF Scholarship Fund.

Tickets for the VIP Reception and the Honors Dinner Raffle may be purchased via the form below. Tickets bought in advance will be distributed during registration in the Purdue Memorial Union, near the Great Hall and Lounge where the Silent Auction Reception and will be staged beginning at 5 p.m.

An Autograph Session featuring current and former Purdue players and coaches will be held on the lower level of the Union, near the Food Court. That event is open to the public free of charge.

YOU CAN STILL PLAY IN NFF 12TH BOILER GOLF OUTING

Opportunities are still in place for NFF chapter members and their guests to play in the NFF/12th Boiler Golf Outing May 11 at Purdue's Birck Boilermaker Golf Complex. Featured guests include former Boilermaker head coaches Gene Keady (basketball) and Bob DeMoss (football) along with college football Hall of Famer Leroy Keyes.

Cost is \$150 per person or \$600 for a foursome and the price includes cart, lunch at the course and dinner at Bruno's Restaurant after golf. Contact Jim Vrugink (765-427-3303) to enter or to secure more details.

NFF ORDER FORM

“Honors Dinner 2010” - DVD

DVD copy of the entire program, featuring the presentations, comments and “celebrity” appearances of some of Purdue's most famous athletes and personalities who were part of a June event, the 2010 NFF Honors Dinner, that will be long remembered and difficult to top. You'll especially enjoy the interviews of honorees Len Dawson, Bob Griese, Drew Brees, Mark Herrmann, Joe McConnell and Daniel Wodicka.

“Ross-Ade Stadium Panorama” - Autographed Photo

A panoramic night view of Ross-Ade Stadium captured from the top of the east stands during kickoff of the 2009 Purdue-Notre Dame game facing the press box and a beautiful sunset, make this 13” X 40” picture a keepsake. Already autographed by Purdue Head Football Coach Danny Hope makes it suitable for framing.

“Mackey Arena Panorama” - Autographed Photo

A panoramic view of Keady Court captured from the west camera deck of Mackey Arena during the 2010 Purdue-Indiana game creates a 13” X 40” piece of Boilermaker history. Already autographed by Purdue Head Basketball Coach Matt Painter, this picture is a “must-have” for fans commemorating Purdue's 22nd Big Ten basketball championship.

Support the chapter by purchasing any of these items, please complete this form and return it to the address below. For tax purposes, the NFF local chapter's ID# is 20-2151811 and the National Football Foundation's ID# is 221-50-8812.

All proceeds go to scholarships.

“Honors Dinner 2010” DVD _____ X \$25 ea. = \$ _____
 “Ross-Ade Panorama” photo: _____ X \$50 ea. = \$ _____
 “Mackey Arena Panorama” photo: _____ X \$50 ea. = \$ _____
 “Tiller Roast & Toast” DVD: _____ X \$20 ea. = \$ _____
 Levi Riggs CD: _____ X \$15 ea. = \$ _____
 One-year NFF membership _____ X \$40 ea. = \$ _____
 Three-year NFF membership _____ X \$99 ea. = \$ _____

Prices include shipping and handling TOTAL = \$ _____

Annual Honors Dinner

“Celebrating Our Legends VII”

Thursday, June 16, at Purdue Memorial Union in West Lafayette with Silent Auction and Reception at 5 p.m., VIP Reception at 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 6:45 p.m., and Awards Program at 7:45 p.m. These tickets/items will NOT be mailed

Non-NFF members: _____ X \$50 ea. = \$ _____

NFF members*/non-member student: _____ X \$40 ea. = \$ _____

NFF member students*#: _____ X \$35 ea. = \$ _____

Tables of eight*#: _____ X \$400 ea. = \$ _____

(or \$320 each for members or \$280 each for students)

VIP Reception @ _____ x \$200 ea. = \$ _____

Raffle Tickets +: _____ X \$5 ea. = \$ _____

Autograph football: _____ X \$50 ea. = \$ _____

One-year NFF membership: _____ X \$40 ea. = \$ _____

Three-year NFF membership: _____ X \$99 ea. = \$ _____

TOTAL = \$ _____

*NFF members get price break & priority seating, if ordered by June 1; #Student rate applies thru college age.

@ - Limited to first 150 patrons

+ Featuring valuable autographed items

Indicate here if you are interested in participating in the 12th Boiler Fund Golf Outing on May 11 _____.

Indicate here if you are interested in helping to sponsor a scholarship. Yes, I'm interested _____

Indicate here if you are interested in purchasing tickets (\$175 each) to join our chapter's table at the July 16 College Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement Dinner, including Purdue alumnus Mark Herrmann.

Yes, I'm interested in _____ tickets _____

GRAND TOTAL FROM BOTH LISTS
 (Pay with one check).....\$ _____

Name: _____ Company Name: _____ Email Address: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Contact Jim Vrugink by email (jvruggink@purdue.edu) or phone (765-427-3303) with questions. (Please make check or money order payable to **National Football Foundation** and send to: NFF Executive Director, 320 Dehart St., West Lafayette, IN 47906-2730.)



NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION & COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME, INC.
 JOE TILLER CHAPTER OF NORTHWEST INDIANA
 320 DEHART STREET
 WEST LAFAYETTE, IN 47906 -2730

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 11** – 12th Boiler Fund Golf Scramble, Birck Boilermaker Complex, West Lafayette
- June 16** – NFF Honors Dinner, Purdue Memorial Union Ballrooms, West Lafayette
- July 16** – College Football Hall of Fame Enshrinement Dinner, South Bend, Ind.
- Sept. 4** - Purdue Home Opener

BREES, KEYES, KERRIGAN, ADAMS JOIN ASTRONAUTS ON JUNE 16

(Continued from front page)

“This is just an outstanding group of young men,” says Burrell. “The members of our scholarship committee, who serve as judges, have a very difficult task to select one winner to represent our chapter. So far, they have narrowed the process to the top six by carefully reviewing all the nomination forms, academic records and letters of recommendation. They are very impressed with the quality of our nominees this year.”

The Joe Tiller Chapter is developing a reputation for producing top scholar-athletes. Each of the last two years, this chapter’s Scholar-Athlete of the Year has advanced on to be named Midwest Scholar-Athlete of the Year, earning a trip to New York City in early December to attend the NFF’s prestigious Awards Luncheon and Dinner at the fabled Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. That distinction went to Matt Lancaster of West Lafayette High School in 2009 and Daniel Wodicka of West Lafayette in 2010, marking the first time in NFF history that back-to-back regional winners have come from the same high school.

To support the scholarship program, the Joe Tiller Chapter stages charity bowling and golf events in the spring and seeks donations and sponsorships from businesses and the general public. Also, the chapter



Drew Brees



Leroy Keyes



Ryan Kerrigan



Kyle Adams

receives money (\$500 for every 50 dues-paying members in the local chapter) from the national office in Irving, Tex. In its first six years, this chapter has recognized 98 scholar athletes and awarded them between \$250 and \$5,000 each and a total of \$112,000.

In addition to the scholarships, the local chapter is involved with youth football programs such as the Tippecanoe Football Camp (providing experiences for kids with disabilities) and the Lafayette 56ers, Attica Youth Football, Little Gridiron, and West Side Flag Football, providing opportunities for elementary school-aged players in the area.

The tax-deductible membership dues are \$40 per year or \$99 for three years, payable to the National Football Foundation. The NFF has 120 chapters and more than 12,000 members, nationally. It awards more than \$1 million in scholarships each year.

For more information, contact Jim Vrugink (email: jvrugink@purdue.edu; phone: 765-427-3303).

LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS CHAPTER ON OUR WEB SITE:
WWW.NFFTILLERCHAPTER.ORG

BERNIE FLOWERS TRIBUTE...

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my putt and it also went in dead center. My celebration was less flamboyant, I simply picked up my ball, gave my grandfather a big smile and said “You may have been All-American, but then again you didn’t have to compete against me”.

Bernie lived by the motto “laughter is the best medicine.” He always had a positive and upbeat attitude on life through both the good times and the bad. In times like these he would have rather focused on the good times and laughs we have experienced throughout the years instead of dwell on the negatives and sorrows we feel today. He would see no need to act any different now.

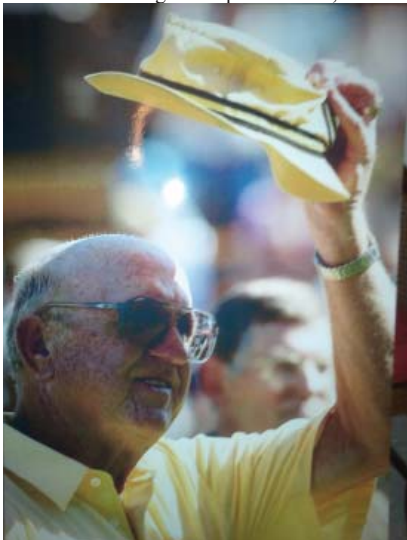
I am a firm believer in that things happen for a reason. It may not make sense in times like these, but I have faith in due time we will all come to feel at peace with the loss of my grandfather. Personally I feel it was my grandfather’s time. One of his biggest attributes was that he never let age be an excuse to slow him down. Despite life’s physical setbacks, he always found another way to fit in a good work

out, another way to find a new form of competition, another way to sell a product, and another way to tell a stranger a great story; all while supporting his family, friends and community.

He truly was a living example of the American Dream; rising from his poor Erie roots to becoming an All-American in anything he tried. God may have taken my grandfather’s physical presence away from us, but he can’t take away the memories we have. Hero’s are always remembered but legends never die. Bernie is a Purdue legend who will forever live on throughout the Lafayette community.

Right now he is probably sitting at a diner counter, ordering a chop steak sandwich with lettuce, tomato and onion; recapping a morning golf round with his new buddies; and bringing smiles and laughs to everyone who sits around him. That is the way he was and the way he would like us all to remember him.

“There truly is only one Bernie.” We all love you dearly and may god bless you in the next chapter of your life.



Bernie Flowers (1930 - 2011) ... helped build this chapter into the second largest in the nation currently with 326 members.