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Class has a local flavor

A&M pair among 2010's dozen electees

By DAVID BARRON
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Former Houston high school players Alfred Williams and Ronnie Caveness, former Texas A&M defensive lineman Ray Childress and former Aggies player and coach Gene Stallings were among 12 players and two coaches selected Thursday for membership in the College Football Hall of Fame.

Williams, the 1990 Butkus Award winner at Colorado and a former all-state defensive lineman at Jones, and Caveness, a two-time All-America at Arkansas who played at Smiley, both played for teams that won national titles. Childress was at the forefront of Texas A&M's football renaissance under Jackie Sherrill in the mid-1980s, and Stallings coached the Aggies to a Southwest Conference title in 1967 and Alabama to a national championship in 1992.

The four Texans were honored among a group that included 1991 Heisman Trophy winner Desmond Howard of Michigan, former LSU standout Jerry Stovall, Wisconsin coach Barry Alvarez and former Arizona State linebacker Pat Tillman, who was killed in Afghanistan

in 2004 while serving as an Army Ranger.

Stallings, a member of the Texas Sports Hall of Fame, was one of Paul "Bear" Bryant's "Junction Boys" of the mid-1950s and coached the Aggies from 1965 through 1971, including a 1968 Cotton Bowl win over Alabama. After coaching in the NFL, he coached Alabama from 1990 through 1996 and led the Tide to its first national title since the Bryant era.

He received the news of his selection in College Station, where he was attending meetings as a member of the A&M Board of Regents.

"What I would really like is for every player who played for me to feel they are a little part of this," Stallings said. "That would really please me."

Childress, who holds the A&M record for career tackles by a defensive lineman, was twice all-conference for the Aggies and helped lead A&M's turnaround in 1984 that culminated in a 37-12 win over Texas and set up their run of success from 1985 through 1994 under Sherrill and R.C. Slocum.

"I'm humbled and excited about this," he said. "I thought about how fortunate I was to be able to play football. It's a true honor."

Childress played 11 years with the Oilers and one year with the Cowboys, was named All-Pro six times and made five Pro Bowl appearances. He was selected in 2008 to the Texas Sports Hall of Fame.

Williams, who works as a radio talk show host in Denver after a nine-year NFL career, got the news of his selection while he was on the air.

"It speaks volumes about the team I was a part of at the University of Colorado," he said. "This is the 20th anniversary of our championship team, so it's even more special."

Williams had the ill fortune to play at Jones at the same time as Yates' behemoths of the mid-1980s, so he had to leave the state to win a title.

"I'm a product of South Park and Jones High School, Crispus Attucks Middle School and Fairchild Elementary," he said. "Those are my roots, and when I go home and take my kids there, it's an area I'm very proud of."

Caveness played on Arkansas' 1964 championship team alongside former college and NFL coach Jimmy Johnson and Cowboys owner Jerry Jones. He recorded more than 20 tackles in a game on four occasions, including the Razorbacks' loss in 1963 to Texas, which went on to win the national championship, and their 1964 win over the Longhorns that clinched the Southwest Conference title.

"I had a call from (former Arkansas coach Frank Broyles), and I told him it was all about team," Caveness said. "Good things happen when you go undefeated, and this is just one of them."

Caveness played six years in the AFL, including three years with the Oilers in 1966-68, and coached with the Oilers in 1973. He now works for an automotive group in Little Rock, Ark.

Also honored Thursday were defensive tackle Dennis Byrd, North Carolina State (1964-67); guard Randy Cross, UCLA (1973-75); running back Sam Cunningham, Southern California (1970-72); quarterback Mark Hermann, Purdue (1977-80); wide receiver Clarkston Hines, Duke (1986-89); and defensive back Chet Moeller, Navy (1973-75).

Finalists for this year's Hall of Fame voting included LSU running back Charles Alexander of Galveston, SMU running back Eric Dickerson, Rice quarterback Tommy Kramer, Baylor quarterback Don Trull and Penn State offensive lineman Steve Wisniewski of Spring Westfield.

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Thursday, May 27, 2010

Class of 2010 spans generations

By Ivan Maisel
ESPN.com

The College Football Hall of Fame covers the entire field every year -- every conference, every position, an all-time coach or two. They're all a given. Even with those parameters as givens, the 2010 class is notable. The generations mix. There are names we recognize, names we used to recognize and names that our parents may have recognized. Read about these 12 players and two coaches, and you'll have snapshots of college football dating back a half-century. That's exactly what the mission of a Hall of Fame should be.

Here a quick look at the College Football Hall of Fame's class of 2010:

Dennis Byrd
Defensive tackle
NC State (1964-67)

In 118 seasons of football, North Carolina State has retired one number on defense. Tackle Dennis Byrd wore No. 77 on the "White Shoes" defense that led the Wolfpack to one ACC title (1965) and two second-place finishes (1966-67). The 1967 team throttled No. 2 Houston 16-6, and climbed to No. 3 in the polls before losing its last two regular-season games. Byrd, the first three-time All-ACC player, made the 50th anniversary all-conference team in 2003.

Ronnie Caveness
Center
Arkansas (1962-64)

Ronnie Caveness, a high school star in Houston, did the unthinkable in 1961: He went to play for Frank Broyles in Arkansas. Broyles knew how to judge talent. As a junior, Caveness started as a center/linebacker in the one-platoon season of 1963. As a senior, when the NCAA went two-platoon for good, Caveness stuck to defense, leading the Razorbacks to an undefeated season. Not only did he lead Arkansas in tackles for 21 consecutive games, Caveness had career highs of 29 tackles in one game, 87 unassisted stops in one season and 309 tackles over consecutive seasons. Nearly half a century after he graduated, those remain Razorback records.

Ray Childress
Defensive line
Texas A&M (1981-84)

By the time Texas A&M won three consecutive Southwest Conference championships from 1985-87, defensive lineman Ray Childress had taken his talent for sacks (25 in his career) to the NFL. But Aggies agree Childress lit the fire that fueled Texas A&M's rise. In his senior season of 1984, after the Aggies had lost 28-0 to Arkansas, Childress challenged his teammates and coaches to change. Texas A&M responded by defeating No. 17 TCU 35-21 and No. 13 Texas 37-12 to finish 6-5, its first winning record in three seasons under coach Jackie Sherrill. The rest made Aggie history.

Randy Cross

Offensive guard
UCLA (1973-75)

You don't win championships without players like UCLA offensive lineman Randy Cross. In 1975, Cross anchored a team that rebounded from a three-touchdown loss to Ohio State in October to trounce the No. 1 Buckeyes 23-10 in a Rose Bowl rematch. That team had offensive stars such as quarterback John Sciarra and running back Wendell Tyler, both of whom leaned heavily on Cross. He started every game in that 9-2-1 season and finished it as an All-American with a Rose Bowl ring.



Sam Cunningham
Running back
USC (1970-72)

The legend has grown that USC fullback Sam Cunningham personally integrated the state of Alabama when he rushed for three touchdowns in a 42-21 Trojans victory over Alabama in 1970. Whether true or not, the legend has directed attention away from just how good a football player "Sam Bam" was. Cunningham had the skills for tailback, but he blocked so well coach John McKay made him a fullback. He rushed for four touchdowns in the 1973 Rose Bowl, which clinched the national championship for one of the best teams of all time.



Mark Herrmann
Quarterback
Purdue (1977-80)

What Purdue quarterback Mark Herrmann might have achieved in today's passing offenses could make a grown Boilermaker weep. At a time when the power ground game reigned supreme, no one threw the ball like Herrmann. By the time he finished his four-year career as a starter in 1980, Herrmann set then-NCAA career records for passing yards (9,946) and completions (772) and took Purdue to four bowls. Alas, none of them were played in Pasadena. That might have been why he had two top-10 Heisman finishes but neither was higher than fourth place.



Clarkston Hines
Wide receiver
Duke (1986-89)

Before Steve Spurrier revolutionized the SEC with the passing game in the 1990s, he took Duke to the ACC title in 1989. Look no farther than wide receiver Clarkston Hines for an example of what Spurrier could do. If Hines had been bigger than 6-foot-1 and 170, he might not have ended up playing for Duke. Once a Blue Devil, Hines learned how to find open space in the secondary. Of Hines' 189 career receptions, 38 went for touchdowns. In other words, one of every five catches he made ended with him handing the ball to an official. The two-time All-American is Duke's first Hall of Fame honoree in 20 years.



Desmond Howard
Wide receiver
Michigan (1989-91)

Desmond Howard of Michigan is remembered for one pose at the end of his career: He made like the Heisman in the end zone against Ohio State, shortly before he won the trophy in 1991. The Hall of Fame membership serves as a spotlight on everything that came before the pose. Howard became a dominating offensive player at wide receiver, which isn't easy to do. In 1991, his junior (and last) season with the Wolverines, Howard led the nation in scoring (19 touchdown catches) and kickoff returns. He holds the Big Ten career record for receiving touchdowns (32) to this



day.

Chet Moeller
Defensive back
Navy (1973-75)



Navy's Chet Moeller not only proved himself to be one of the best defensive backs in the nation during his career (1973-75); he did so while becoming a second-team Academic All-American and getting an Annapolis education. In three seasons, Moeller averaged 92 tackles per season from the secondary. He also co-captained the 1975 team that went 7-4 under third-year (and future Hall of Fame) coach George Welsh. That Navy team won more games than any Midshipmen squad since the 1963 team that played for the national championship -- and was also the first Navy team to beat Army three years running since the '63 team.

Jerry Stovall
Halfback
LSU (1960-62)



When a recruit backed out of a scholarship offer from national champion LSU before the 1959 season, coach Paul Dietzel gave it to undersized Jerry Stovall. Smart coach, Dietzel. Stovall would become a two-time All-SEC player and an All-American in 1962, his senior season. Leading a team playing for first-year head coach Charlie McClendon, Stovall did, well, just about everything in '62. He played halfback, defensive back, kick returner and punter, won the Walter Camp Award, finished second in Heisman voting and led No. 7 LSU to a 9-1-1 record.

Pat Tillman
Linebacker
Arizona State (1994-97)



In 2006, the National Football Foundation honored the late Pat Tillman with its Distinguished American Award after he lost his life as an Army Ranger in Afghanistan. This year, the Foundation's Hall of Fame reminds everyone that Tillman played exceptional football as linebacker on the best Arizona State teams of the past 25 years (11-1 in 1996, 9-3 in 1997). Tillman substituted speed and brains for size to terrific effect. In 1997, he won the Pac-10 Defensive Player of the Year Award, and also made All-American and Academic All-American teams.

Alfred Williams
Linebacker
Colorado (1987-90)



Colorado would not have revived its football program and won the 1990 national championship without linebacker Alfred Williams. It's as simple as that. Williams served as a defensive stalwart, with 59 career tackles for loss and two Big Eight Defensive Player of the Year awards. He became a two-time All-American and the winner of the 1990 Butkus Award. Williams made earned an honorable mention on the school's 100-year team 1½ years before he finished his eligibility. He also served as a prime example of the talent exodus from Texas after scandal rocked the Southwest Conference in the 1980s.

Barry Alvarez
Coach
Wisconsin (1990-2005)

Barry Alvarez didn't just revive University of Wisconsin football; he brought the sport back to life throughout the state. When the coach arrived in Madison in 1990, the Badgers had won nine games in four years. Alvarez's first team went 1-10. His second one went 5-6, breaking a 19-game Big Ten losing streak. His fourth team won the Rose Bowl, going 10-1-1. Alvarez's Badgers won three Big Ten titles and three Rose Bowls. His 8-3 record in bowl games indicated he knew how to win the tough ones. In 16 seasons, Alvarez coached a Heisman winner (Ron Dayne, 1999), a Jim Thorpe winner (Jamar Fletcher, 2000) and 20 first-team All-Americans.



Gene Stallings

Coach

Alabama (1990-96), Texas A&M (1965-71)

When Alabama hired Gene Stallings for the 1990 season, seven seasons and two head coaches had come and gone since the death of the legendary Paul Bryant. Stallings had been away from the college game for nearly 20 years. But having played and coached for Bryant, Stallings became the first post-Bear coach at Alabama who could live with the legend and even thrive in its shadow. After seven years of famine at Texas A&M (1965-71), Stallings feasted for seven years with the Crimson Tide. His teams won four SEC West titles and, in one of the biggest upsets of recent times, embarrassed Miami 34-13 in the Sugar Bowl to clinch the 1992 national championship.



Ivan Maisel is a senior writer for ESPN.com and hosts the ESPNU College Football podcast. Send your questions and comments to him at Ivan.Maisel@ESPN.com.

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Indoor Football League gives players second chances

written by: [Jeffrey Wolf](#) written by: [Adam Schrager](#)

12 hrs ago

LOVELAND - The Colorado Ice is full of players and coaches who cannot put their football dreams on ice. The Indoor Football League offers the team members a chance to stay in a game they all refer to as a "fraternity."

"It's an opportunity to play this great game again," said Mike Godsil, an offensive lineman, who played at Liberty University before serving as a graduate assistant coach last year. "Hopefully, I prove enough through the way I play and the leadership that I exhibit to get a shot at that next level."

Godsil, who moved with his pregnant wife to Colorado to follow his dream, wants to end up where former University of Colorado football great Bobby Purify once played: in the NFL.

Purify, who once was with the San Francisco 49ers and Green Bay Packers and who has recently been [selling](#) homes in the Colorado Springs area, is now interested in a different kind of real estate. The more yards the tailback gains, the better chance his football career continues.

"It always just comes back to playing football," Purify said. "It's been a part of my life as far as I can remember. It's not even a choice; it's a way of life."

There's an opportunity for coaches in the league as well. Brian Arndt is the defensive coordinator at Longmont [High School](#) and convinced Head Coach Collins Sanders to let him hold the same position with the Ice.

"He gave me that opportunity," Arndt said. "In high [school](#), you're going to have two or three kids who are just your stellar athletes. They're quick, they're fast. Here, they're all that way."

Sanders calls the IFL a "league of opportunity." He

says the one thing the players and coaches all share is a love of football.

"Regardless of whether it's at the beginning of their career or the end of their careers, these guys are all very serious about what they're doing," he said. "We've got these players you may see on Sunday some day or you've already seen on Sunday."

"These guys truly love the game. They're ambassadors of the best fraternity in the world. Football is our common [bond](#)," Sanders said.

The Ice plays its home games at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland. For more information, visit <http://www.thecoloradoice.com/>.

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