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Vision Statement

The St. Francis Community Foundation makes grants to improve the quality of life in St. Francis County and partners with individuals, families and organizations to build our local community through philanthropy. You can be a part of our family of philanthropists working for good, for St. Francis County, for ever.

Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame

September 27, 2019

The 20th Annual Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame induction ceremony will honor seven new members. The honorees are chosen from three areas: Lincoln High School, Forrest City High School before 1970 and Forrest City High School after 1970.

This year's honorees include: Russell Randle '70, Lillian White Ross '64 from Lincoln; Billy

Lieblong '60 and the '57 Undefeated Mustang Football Team from before 1970; and Verdo Roebuck '76, Carroll Astin, Jr. '79, Aundra Bohannon '85, and Denishio Blanchett '95 from Forrest City after 1970.

The induction ceremony will be held September 27, 2019 at the Performing Arts Center at East

Arkansas Community College at 5:00 pm. Tickets are \$15 each and can be purchased at Delta OfficeWorks, Forrest City High School or the Forrest City Area Chamber of Commerce.

For more information on the Hall of Fame or to purchase your tickets, please call Dr. Rodney Echols at 870-817-8381.



CARROLL ASTIN, JR. is a 1979 graduate of Forrest City High School. He was a football and tennis letterman for the Mustangs. In football, Carroll was a two-time All-State and All-Conference player and was selected to play in the 1979 Arkansas Activities Association All-Star game. As a Mustang tennis player, he was a two-time All-State tennis player. Carroll played second seed tennis player as sophomore and first seed as a junior and senior. As senior, he made it to the finals of the conference finals and semifinals of the state tournament. Carroll was a singles player at the University of Arkansas at Monticello and made it to the semifinals of the AIC conference tournament. He is Director of Senior Health Insurance for the state of Arkansas Insurance Department.



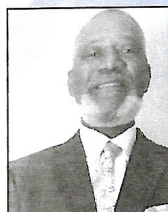
LILLIAN WHITE ROSS is a 1964 graduate of Lincoln High School. She was a Lady Tiger letterman in basketball. Lillian was an All-Conference and All-State basketball player her sophomore, junior, and senior seasons. She was a member of the 1962 and 1964 Lady Tiger 3-A Conference Championship basketball teams. Lillian was always selected to guard the other team's best offensive player. She is a graduate of Philander Smith College and is a tenured professor at Philander Smith. Lillian serves as associate professor and Chairperson of the English Language and Letters Department in the Division of Arts and Humanities.



AUNDRA BOHANNON is a 1985 graduate of Forrest City High School. He was a three-year letterman in football and track for the Mustangs. In football, he was an All-State receiver and defensive back. Aundra was selected as St. Francis County Player of the Year and played in the 1985 Arkansas Activities Association All-Star game. In track, Aundra was a hurdler and state qualifier. He accepted a scholarship offer to play football for the University of Central Arkansas. At UCA, Aundra was a three-time All-Conference player (Led League in Interceptions), Honorable Mention NAIA All-American, All-Conference punt returner, First Team All-American Cornerback, and 2014 UCA Hall of Fame Inductee. At UCA, Aundra played on two conference championship teams and one national championship team.



VERDO ROEBUCK (deceased) was a 1976 graduate of Forrest City High School. He was a three-year letterman in football and track for the Mustangs. In football, Verdo was an All-Conference and All-State lineman. In track, he was an All-Conference shot and discus thrower. Verdo accepted a scholarship offer from the University of Arkansas-Pine Bluff to play football and was a starter his freshman and sophomore years. Pro football scouts evaluated Verdo for professional play.



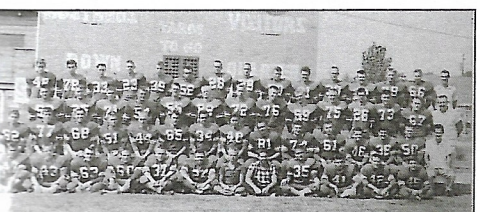
RUSSELL RANDLE is a 1970 graduate of Lincoln High School. He lettered in football and played defensive end on the Tiger football team. As a sophomore, Russell was named to the All-Region defensive team at the defensive end position and was a three-time All State Region player. Russell played defensive end on Coach Rook's 1968 undefeated Tiger football team. He played defensive end on Tiger football teams that posted a 28-3 record.



BILLY LIEBLONG is a 1960 graduate of Forrest City High School. He was a football and basketball letterman. In football, Billy played on four undefeated teams. He played both ways on the 1959 undefeated Mustang team and was a member of the "Lucky Thirteen" who controlled most of the playing time. In basketball, Billy had the opportunity to play for two state titles. He also played American Legion baseball.



DENISHIO BLANCHETT is a 1995 graduate of Forrest City High School. He was a three year lettermen in football and track for the Mustangs. In football, Denishio was All-State, All-Conference, two-time KXJK-KFC "Player of the Week", Arkansas Press Super Team, Mustang Booster Club "Athlete of the Year", Arkansas-Democrate Gazette's Top "8" Quarterbacks, Jonesboro Sun's "Best Under the Sun", Who's Who among National High School Athletes, and played in the 1995 Arkansas Activities Association All-Star game. In track, he was All-State and All-Conference. Denishio accepted a scholarship offer to play football at Arkansas State University. He was a four-year lettermen and ASU "Iron Indian" for four years. In 1999, Denishio was an ASU "Warrior" Inductee. Denishio is a Network Administrator for Tenneco, Inc.



THE 1957 UNDEFEATED MUSTANG FOOTBALL TEAM was the first undefeated and untied football team in the history of Forrest City High School. Coaches James DeVazier, Max Graham, and Vance Sales led the team. The Mustangs finished the season with an 11-0-0 record and scored a total of 366 points to the opponent's 55 points. This Mustang team was responsible for three of five 2AA-Conference Championships. Of the five championship teams of this era, this team was number one in scoring. The team held the number one spot in the state AA rankings and was number two statewide only to the outstanding Little Rock Central National Championship Team.

- Player Accomplishments**
Eight All-District Players: Childress, Clegg, Dunn, Holmes, Kessinger, Lindsey, Wilford, & Wilford.
Three All-State Players: Childress, Holmes, Kessinger, & Lindsey.
Three All-American Players: Childress, Holmes, and Lindsey.
College Scholarship Players: Childress, Garrison, Holmes, Kessinger, Lindsey, Wilford, & Wilford.
Professional Sport Players: Childress, Kessinger, & Lindsey.
NCAA & NFL Officials: Holmes, Wilford, & Wilford.
High School & College Coach: Campbell, Gore, & Garrison.
Arkansas Sports Hall Of Fame: Campbell, Garrison, Kessinger, & Lindsey

History of the Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame

In the Winter of 2000, Bill Baxter, Forrest City businessman, who also served as athletic director of Forrest City Schools athletic program, contacted a half dozen individuals from the community and invited them to a meeting to discuss an idea. Attending the meeting were former athletes from Lincoln High School, Forrest City High School and members of the media who had covered the schools' athletic events throughout the years.

Bill informed those in attendance that he had long been amazed at the number of outstanding athletes who had come out of Forrest City. Many former Lincoln Tiger and Mustang athletes had gone on to star in colleges, universities, and professional sports. Bill said he thought it was time to put together a Hall of Fame to recognize those individuals. Every person agreed to help Bill make his dream become a reality.

The group of individuals in the room became the steering committee for the "Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame", and by the fall of 2000, nine athletes were being recognized in the initial induction. Since that first Forrest City Hall of Fame Ceremony, many family members and former teammates have attended Hall of Fame activities. Each year, we honor outstanding men and women who represented their school and community.

Bill was the Executive Director of the Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame until his death in 2013. Bill's idea had turned into such a positive event for Forrest City that everyone agreed it should continue.

Dr. Rodney Echols, an outstanding Lincoln athlete, former Mustang head basketball coach, deputy superintendent, and athletic director in the Forrest City schools agreed to take the executive director's position. The Forrest City Athletic Hall of Fame is still going strong today!

Contributors: Mr. Richard Benson and Dr. Rodney E. Echols



Bill Baxter

2019 Hall of Fame Donors

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