



# NATIONAL FOOTBALL FOUNDATION

COLLEGE FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

## 2017 College Football Hall of Fame Press Conference Transcript Presented By:



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**HOLLY ROWE:** We'd like to thank everyone who is watching on ESPN3 and via the live satellite feed provided by CBS Newspath. 5.26 million people have played college football since the first game in 1869. And only 987 players, 214 coaches have been inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. That's less than .02 of a percent. And today the 2017 class will officially be inducted and receive their Hall of Fame ring designed by Herff Jones.

But before we hear from all the Hall of Famers, we'd like to thank all of the sports information directors across America. So many of you are here today, some of my old, long-time dear friends: Bill Little, Langston Rogers, all of these great, wonderful people who are here that play such a role in today's events.

For our first inductee, from 1978 to 1981, Notre Dame linebacker Bob Crable was a two-time First-Team All-American who owns the school record for career tackles with 521.

There were so many great defensive players to wear a Notre Dame jersey, Bob, how does it feel to still to this day own so many of the Irish tackling records?

**BOB CRABLE:** Well, the game has changed so much that, you know, it's a wonderful feeling. But with the game changing, it's going to be challenging for people to approach it these days.

**HOLLY ROWE:** As you look back on what was able to make you so successful, what were some of the keys you'd point to as "I was good at this and that's what I'm proud of"?

**BOB CRABLE:** I was good at being angry. (laughter)

I had -- at that time in history, I had some speed and that's always a big deal. But when you play with a chip on your shoulder, I think it's a good thing in that sport.

**HOLLY ROWE:** As you say "chip on your shoulder," you always probably have something to prove. What is it that now being inducted into the Hall of Fame you still feel like you have proven now to the college football world?

**BOB CRABLE:** Golly, I don't know. What do you prove? You prove you're on the field, you're a good teammate. You prove that you can compete at that level. And the level from high school to college and college to pros I think is the speed and the guys involved who are good players. It just continues to get greater and greater. I feel honored to be part of this group. There are great competitors in this group.

**HOLLY ROWE:** There really are. One of those I was fortunate to cover when I was a young reporter starting out. In 1991 to 1993, nobody was better than San Diego State running back Marshall Faulk. He was three-time First-Team All-American, a three-time Heisman finalist and twice he led the nation in rushing. Although, San Diego State lately is making that look like a really simple thing. It was not simple during Marshall's time.



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Marshall was overlooked by a lot of coaches. And you have said you did not choose San Diego State as much as they chose you. What was it that stood out that San Diego State was able to see and find in you?

**MARSHALL FAULK:** First of all, just the opportunity coming out of high school. This was the time before they had a position called an athlete playing multiple positions, making it hard for the scouts to decide what I was, whether it was a cornerback or a safety or a receiver, running back or quarterback. It was difficult.

Now you have the position of "athlete." You just put him on your team, play him anywhere, both sides of the ball, it didn't matter. They saw in me what I saw and believed in myself, which was that regardless of what position I played, when the ball was in my hand, it was -- I was pretty darn good with it.

So with that, I wanted to play running back because I felt like aside from quarterback, you got to do a lot with the football. I think for me if you've been to San Diego and you are laying there, you drive down the 163 onto the 8 and you go on this beautiful campus, it starts to explain why the marriage between myself and San Diego State still exists.

**HOLLY ROWE:** You were able to break the NCAA record in just your second collegiate game. And you had so much success earlier in your career, but it was really before the Internet and all this drama and all the social media stuff.

How do you feel like you were kind of able to capture that attention and that lightning for the

national media playing at a smaller place like San Diego State at that time?

**MARSHALL FAULK:** First of all, I think what helped for us was playing on Thursday nights. That was the birth of Thursday Night Football in a sense. And our games coming on late on Saturday when we did play. Most of the time when you play early on Saturday, you're competing with big conferences. And our night games really got a lot of attention. And with ESPN really starting to ramp up their coverage with college football. The exposure at night to catch a game that was still going on when they were doing Sportscenter, it was always fun that they were tracking my yards and touchdowns and stuff like that. It got a lot of exposure for the Western Athletic Conference at the time.

**HOLLY ROWE:** When you look back on your career -- you're not that far removed from it --

**MARSHALL FAULK:** Thank you.

**HOLLY ROWE:** -- you had such an distinguished NFL career. And of all the things that you've been able to do, what is it as you go into the College Football Hall of Fame that stands out to you that you really appreciate about yourself?

**MARSHALL FAULK:** Probably, first of all, the decision I made. It's a tough decision deciding what college to go to. You want to make sure you make the right decision and that decision is the best one for you. I feel like the decision to go to San Diego State was the best decision I could have made.



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It was not the school that a lot of people would have chosen for me. But you sit in the pro locker room and you talk about your university and what's going on, and I'm proud of what we had done at San Diego State because you can go to a school and allow the history of the school to make you or you can go to the school and make history. And I believe that I did that.

**HOLLY ROWE:** He was just so beautiful to watch, if you didn't get to see him. I got to be there. I feel so lucky.

From 1975-1978 Michigan State wide receiver Kirk Gibson was pretty good. He was a First-Team All-American and a three-time All-Big Ten receiver.

I feel like I'm not the only one but I think probably a lot of people in America remember you from one of your most iconic moments in sports history in baseball. What are you proud of that maybe we don't know about or the general population forgets about how good you were in college football?

**KIRK GIBSON:** Well, actually I think football was my favorite sport because I've had great mentors over the years. One of them was Darryl Rogers who was my head coach at Michigan State. He asked me if I wanted to be a top five pick in the NFL. I said "Yeah, it would be great". And he said, "Go out for baseball." (laughter)

That was in the spring of my junior year. I did. I went out And by the end of that year, I was the Number 1 pick of the Detroit Tigers. And I went and played professional baseball that summer for 52 games in Lakeland, Florida.

Then I got to come back and play my senior year of football with my teammates. We won the Big Ten. Unfortunately, we were on probation so we couldn't go to the Rose Bowl. And the rest is kind of history for me.

I came to Michigan State University as really the last guy in. I wasn't a guy who was highly touted. I think my credentials going in was "honorable mention Oakland County." (laughter) But I had a plan. And, again, I've had great teammates and great mentors along the way to encourage me to see how good I could be in my beliefs. Michigan State University and the people I became associated with, they were the right people.

**HOLLY ROWE:** As you move into this Hall of Fame, what does it mean to you to have ties in two very different, very prestigious sports, in World Series and now college football? You touched so many different areas.

**KIRK GIBSON:** Well, I think the football is my foundation, Bob was talking about how he played with a chip on his shoulder. One of the hardest things for me to deal with when I was a baseball player, in football, you do have that chip on your shoulder. If you get frustrated, for whatever reason, I could go out and hit somebody and felt better immediately.

In baseball, when you strike out, you get to go work on the weakest part of your game. That was for me to play defense. So, it was very tough.



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And you're encouraged to play with that chip on your shoulder. Yet, when you get out in public and off the field, you're supposed to not be like that. I struggled with that. It took me some time, and baseball was the perfect match for me.

And for me to be in the College Football Hall of Fame, it's significant in that the things that I accomplished in my life and the way I started to give back and learn that process is all because of my college football career.

**HOLLY ROWE:** From All-Oakland County to the Hall of Fame, pretty good career for this young man.

From 2003 to 2005, at USC, quarterback Matt Leinart was fantastic. He was the 2004 Heisman Trophy winner, a two-time First-Team All-American and led USC to consecutive AP national championships. I remember covering Matt during his Heisman run. And at the Heisman Trophy ceremony, we did this great feature of him as a little boy with these big, thick Coke-bottle glasses and just nerd city, total nerd city, by your own description.

What does it mean for you, as you look back, the older you get as you look back on from what you were to what you became, what is so special about that journey.?

**MATT LEINART:** God, it was a pretty crazy journey. I was born cross-eyed. I was a heavy, very heavy, as a kid. So you can imagine bullying was a real issue. I was bullied when I was little.

And, fortunately, my mom always believed in me, said, "One day you're going to be like the

ugly duckling to the swan." She always said that, my mom.

Sports was always kind of my outlet. I was always pretty good in sports, whether it was baseball, basketball or football. And to be able to sit up here today just going through that just extremely fortunate and blessed to have a great family that supported me along the way.

My dad is here, and my family is here. And, obviously, just -- it's pretty crazy. When I was little I never thought -- I thought I was growing up watching him with iconic moments. Are you kidding me? I was 5 on my dad's couch watching you hit the homerun. I know, I'm younger. I'm younger. (laughter) Sorry.

**HOLLY ROWE:** We don't age bully at this event.

**MATT LEINART:** Anyway, it's just incredible to be here. And for USC and my time there, the teammates, the coaches that really helped me, I would not be up here today if it weren't for them clearly. Just honored to be here.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Thank you, Matt. I know your dad has got to be proud. He was here for the Heisman, and now he's here as you go into the Hall of Fame. Just a really special moment for you and your family. I know your son Cole -- is he 11 years old now? He's showing signs of being a player himself. So I want to put you in a situation. As a dad, what are you kind of trying to teach your son about overcoming adversity and lessons you learned as an athlete?



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**MATT LEINART:** That's a great question. I think as parents we all -- he's getting to that age where it's difficult for me now because I have to have those conversations, just sports and life and dealing with kids. He's the biggest kid in his school. He's massive. So he deals with a little bit of the other kids as well.

But my dad was so great because in sports, it was always a part of our life but he didn't push it on us. He just wanted us to play, be part of a team, learn, have fun, all those things. And that's kind of what -- I love coaching my son; but that's kind of what I'm just trying to teach him: Work hard, be a great teammate and just really enjoy all the things that are coming to him as far as football, basketball, baseball.

And just humility. And he's 11 so he gets it. I'm just really proud of him. He just got -- I'm going to talk him up a little bit. He just got Citizen of the Year award for school. And he's fifth grade, which to me was like my proudest moment because the kindness, the character. That's what it was for. So I was just really proud of that. So I'm just really proud of the young man he's becoming. And he loves sports like his dad, so it's been fun to watch him grow up.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Cool dad. Citizen of the Year, I love it.

Tennessee quarterback from 1994 to 1997 was a guy you may have heard of: Peyton Manning. He was a consensus First-Team All-American and recipient of the NFF's Campbell Trophy. He also won the Maxwell, the Davey O'Brien. Just pretty much every award, you just gave it to Payton. There are only 35 players all-time who have been both

an NFF national scholar-athlete and a Hall of Fame inductee. You're also only the second Campbell Trophy winner, which means you were the best academian and the best college football player, you and Danny Wuerffel.

What does it mean to you that you were able to excel and achieve in both of those fields on the field and in the classroom?

**PEYTON MANNING:** It was a great honor to win the Campbell Award 20 years ago -- it's hard to believe -- at this banquet. Obviously all of us went to college to get an education and truly took the role of being a student-athlete, took that very seriously. Had a great experience during my four years in Knoxville.

But I remember being amongst the other student-athletes in that banquet 20 years ago, met some great guys. And I've been to this banquet a couple different times. And it's always one of the highlights getting to see these 22-year-olds. These are the leaders of tomorrow. And I was honored to be a part of that group.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I feel like you've achieved such fame. And you're so well-known. But if you can take us back to 20 years ago, that kid in the locker room in those moments, what was special that you were able to grab onto as a college football player?

**PEYTON MANNING:** Obviously, my dad playing college football. I really took a real interest in his college football experience. I used to listen to the old radio broadcasts of his games and just had a real passion for college football.



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So to be able to go play at the University of Tennessee, I was honored just to have the opportunity to play. I think the relationships with your teammates, I've enjoyed talking to all the guys up here. Everybody has expressed their greatest memory has been the relationships with their teammates, coaches, equipment staff, the trainers, the video directors, people that are behind the scenes on a football team but every bit as important as the star running back.

So I cherish those relationships. Fortunately still have them today, even though I don't play. That's my greatest take-away of my years of playing football, has been the relationships.

**HOLLY ROWE:** You have made some history today as you will be inducted later tonight as you join your father in the College Football Hall of Fame becoming the first father and son in history to be inducted as players.

**PEYTON MANNING:** I was 13 years old. My mom let us -- let me and my two brothers miss school to come up here and witness our dad going to the Hall of Fame. First time wearing a tuxedo; first time being in New York. So that was a big deal.

But I can remember what a big deal it was to my dad, that honor. A lot of Ole Miss people were here. So it's kind of surreal thinking I'm going to experience that same moment tonight. So I am honored to be selected into the College Football Hall of Fame especially with all these great players and coaches. But to join my dad, it's quite a unique honor. I'm very humbled by it.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Did you let your kids skip

school? Are they going to be here?

**PEYTON MANNING:** They are. I thought that was appropriate.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Got to build those memories, right? Congratulations.

From 1968 -- excuse me. Texas offensive tackle Bob McKay in 1969 was the consensus First-Team All-American to lead the Longhorns to the 1969 national championship and two Southwest Conference titles. Bob was one the first players from that championship team -- he is the first player from that championship team to enter the Hall of Fame.

What does that mean to you and to the rest of your teammates, that that was a very special moment that you guys were able to grab?

**BOB MCKAY:** Holly, I'm still trying to figure out how they reached down in the huddle and pulled one out. I'm happy it was me, thrilled to death.

We had a good team. We got off the bus, we weren't real pretty but we could play.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I love it that you're an offensive tackle being inducted into the Hall of Fame because I have a secret belief that no football happens without the offensive line and you don't get enough credit.

As you look back as the guys up front who have to control everything, what do you feel like you did to make a statement and really help your team?

**BOB MCKAY:** Did my



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job. I knew the other ten people were going to do their job and I didn't want to be the one to mess it up. In our offense, if you hit a stalemate, it hurt because the back was coming whether you were ready or not. It was an incentive to get the hell out of the way.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Spoken like a true offensive lineman. He's in the Hall of Fame and all he did was "I just did my job." That is so perfect.

From 1995 to 1998 at Texas A&M, Dat Nguyen was a linebacker who just captured the imagination of America. I can remember like it was yesterday, just how beloved I was. He was a 1998 unanimous First-Team All-American who won the Bednarik and Lombardi Trophy and he holds the Texas A&M record with career tackles with 517. I would say that is definitely "gig 'em."

Dat, when you look back on your prestigious career and what you were able to accomplish at A&M in that era, which was a great defense and you stood out, what do you remember that you're proud of?

**DAT NGUYEN:** I think most of all, just to represent the school. We had great players at all positions. As we know, you have the linebacker, you're only as good as those guys up front and the guys next to you. I was fortunate to be in the position I was in. It was an outstanding offensive line. As a linebacker, it really helped me to perform the way I did.

My journey wasn't as easy as most. I remember that time. I showed up on campus. I was one of five linebackers assigned that year. And we had a famous three-four defense. I did the math and said, There's four

linebackers and five on the side. One is going to be odd man out. I was odd man out.

I can remember the hard work and dedication, commitment coming back. I didn't want to redshirt that year. I think that's a lot of it. It's what I put into it. 6:00 in the morning working out, in class at 8:00 and being back at noon in the weight room and coming back again 4:00 with the team. For the whole year it's a chance and an opportunity.

**HOLLY ROWE:** You bring up a great point. This is an elite group of competitors. I think that's something we forget. There was something special in each and every one of you sitting up here that made you compete at the very highest level. Why were you so competitive and able to get that job and grab that opportunity when it arose?

**DAT NGUYEN:** I was in a unique position just because I was Asian and they had never seen a linebacker play the position or any -- within the game of football. And I think that's been the thing that I carried on my shoulder, was that I'm not just representing the Asian community when I'm out there, also it's just that my -- if you guys know my story, my parents left Vietnam in the fall of Saigon in 1975. We came over. I was born in a refugee camp in Fort Chaffee, Arkansas. And my journey is a little bit different from a lot of people in that when I was playing, I knew when I wore the name on the back of my shoulder pads I was representing not just my community and my family at Texas A&M but also the country of Vietnam.

**HOLLY ROWE:** That makes me get choked up. It really is special.



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We talk about representation. When little kids see people in the media or see people who have accomplished something, what do you hope little kids that are Asian-American or different ethnicities that aren't typically associated with college football, what do you hope they see in you?

**DAT NGUYEN:** Just the opportunity. I think you live in a world that where we are now that we just want a chance, and that's what you hope for. We live in a world where things that I did and things that I accomplished it's not easy. We go through adversity. All of us went through some kind of adversity in our life, and we're still going to go through it and how do you overcome it. You take it one day at a time. You get better. You do all the right things. Bob said, "I did my job." You do your job. And when the opportunity shows up, seize the moment. I think that allows kids to realize a dream.

For me, when I was kid, I used to watch Walter Payton play and even saw Marshall Faulk run the ball up there at San Diego State. But I want to be Sweetness. I had a dream and never thought I would ever make it, but I did. I had that dream and I fulfilled that dream which is phenomenal. Have a dream, seize the moment, and have an opportunity. Just get the opportunity. That's what I want other kids to realize.

**HOLLY ROWE:** So very beautiful. Congratulations. What a very long way you've come to the College Football Hall of Fame.

The Georgia Southern running back from 1998 to 2001, Adrian Peterson was four-time First-Team All-American who led Georgia Southern to consecutive national

championships. He is the Adrian Peterson, and he's going into the College Hall of Fame today.

It's so special that you could be the NCAA Division I all-time leading rusher of all time. You talk about Walter Payton and some legendary records, 6,559 yards. How does it feel to have been the most productive player at your position in history?

**ADRIAN PETERSON:** It was great. As you know, I was fortunate enough to have great surrounding guys, tremendous teammates. The most thing that I remember is that we won. stats and all that is great. But we won a lot of games, and that's one thing I want to remember the most.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Somebody who rushed for that many yards, you have to have resilience and durability. What was it about you that allowed you to get up after every tackle and just keep running the ball again?

**ADRIAN PETERSON:** When I was a young kid, growing up in Alachua, Florida, my dad was my youth football coach. And he saw it in me at an early age. And his words was, "You should never let one person bring you down."

From the age of 6, that kind of stuck with me. And it feels one on one, I felt I like I was supposed to win that battle and just continued that week after week year after year and became pretty successful doing it.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Congratulations.

In 1982 to 1985, Boston College nose guard Mike Ruth was a



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consensus First-Team All-American and an Outland Trophy recipient.

Mike, you were known for your intensity even at practices. What kept you motivated and how did you help evolve into a team leader during those practices?

**MIKE RUTH:** Basically scared to death. You're playing Coach [Danny] Ford's team. BC at that time was like Santa's island of misfit toys. Odd collection of folks, so basically fear.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Fear, that's just so beautifully honest. We talk about sometimes offensive line not getting the credit that they deserve.

**MIKE RUTH:** They don't deserve any credit, ma'am.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I think they deserve all the credit.

But you talk about that special time period when you were in college and that kind of magic that your team captured. What were some of those moments like? What do you remember being on the field in those moments?

**MIKE RUTH:** It was like a Walt Disney movie. We had 22 guys. Not one of us got a major offer like USC or Notre Dame. We were so thankful that they were going to pay for our education and we might get on TV. Hadn't been to a bowl game in 40 years. It was that perfect storm of just overachievers and great guys. And the whole thing was a moment.

**HOLLY ROWE:** We talk about the chip on the shoulder, overachieving. What is it inside you

as a kid or someone in your life that taught you to be an overachiever and grab that?

**MIKE RUTH:** Unlike my handsome colleague back there, born as a baby, and ugly duckling cross-eyed, and now he's a GQ model, I was born slightly bald with a big fat belly and not much has changed in 50 years. (laughter)

**HOLLY ROWE:** There's something to be said for consistency in the trenches, right? Congratulations. We love having you here. Thank you, Mike.

In 1996 through 1999, these were the glory days of the old WAC. And I was so lucky sideline reporter for so many of these moments. And I remember in our final broadcast, I did the last college football game for this young man. And I looked up all the stats. And I did the biggest push ever on national TV on our broadcast for Brian Urlacher because I thought he was the best defensive college football player I had ever seen up to that time.

He was a 1999 consensus First-Team All-American and a Mountain West Player of the Year and he got it done. Just a beauty to watch on the field for New Mexico.

You were a linebacker -- you were one of the most versatile players in college football, and I don't know if everybody knew that: Safety, linebacker, receiver, return specialist. What was it that allowed you to be so versatile and make such an impact?

**BRIAN URLACHER:** The opportunity I was given by Coach [Rocky] Long, I think, to let me do all those things. He'd



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go, "You're mostly a one-position guy." This was before, like Marshall said, the "athlete" was kind of born. So you're kind of specialized into one position. And Coach Long didn't do that. He let me do everything. Plus, we didn't have a lot of guys who could return kicks. So I was the guy that got stuck back there doing that.

Just the opportunity to do all those things. It was a blast. I had a great time in college. And UNM was the only scholarship that I had -- opportunity I got to go to college. So it was a very easy decision to go there, but the opportunities were great when I got there.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I remember calling around to stores in your hometown. You were from a small town, right?

**BRIAN URLACHER:** Yes.

**HOLLY ROWE:** And trying to find out if people were proud of you. We did a little feature about who was proud of Brian Urlacher in his little tiny hometown. What does it mean to you to grow from such humble beginnings and be an overlooked kid in a tiny town to now being on stage with some of the most famous football players in America?

**BRIAN URLACHER:** You talk about the chip on your shoulder, I think everyone has got it in some sort of manner. I had that as well. I felt like I was overlooked in high school. I had one offer. Like I said, it was New Mexico and it worked out perfect. I couldn't have written it any better.

Coach [Dennis] Franchione was my first coach my first two years. He left for TCU. And then

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Coach Long came in. Just to get a chance to play college football -- I wasn't thinking about going anywhere beyond college, honestly. Just to get there and have a chance to get my school paid for and play four years of football was a huge opportunity for me. No one from my hometown really got that opportunity. So it was amazing for me to get a chance to go there. And then to have the success I did, never saw that coming.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I think a lot of people gave you a reputation when you moved on in the pros and stuff like that as being a tough guy. What was something you overcame when you were in college, a moment if you could take us back to, where you had to be tough and grab these opportunities that were ahead of you?

**BRIAN URLACHER:** Just scared to death as a freshman. Coming from a small town, I had 400 kids in my high school. And you go to training camp and there's 100 kids on your football team. It was a little different. Going in there, I was a tall, skinny freshman. I didn't have a position. I didn't really know what I was doing. Coaches were yelling at me for no reason, I thought. There were reasons, but I didn't think they were good reasons.

But just being scared to death. And then kind of going out -- once the ball was snapped, though, I knew what to do when that happened. I think that was to my benefit. Just go out there. I played hard. When I got the opportunity on the field, I took advantage of my opportunities.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Just quickly, you're the first Lobo player or coach to be inducted into the College Football Hall of





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Fame, all those great teams back in the day.  
What does it mean to represent them?

**BRIAN URLACHER:** It's a huge honor. Like I said, we've had some great players. People don't really know about the players we've had. We've had some really good players at UNM. To be the first guy to go in is a huge honor. And with this class, most of these guys I watched either when I was in college as a kid or even in NFL. I was a teammate of Adrian Peterson. I watched him in college tear it up. So when he got to the Bears, I was excited to have him. He's the real Adrian Peterson, in my opinion.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Congratulations. So neat.

Now, this gentleman coached at Clemson from 1978 to 1989 and was then at Arkansas from 1993 to '97. He led Clemson to the 1981 national championship, won five ACC championships, and led the Razorbacks to their first-ever SEC West title. He was the original leader of this Tiger program and really put Clemson on the map back in 1981, a very special, magical time, Danny Ford.

Coach, at age 33, you were the youngest head coach to win a national championship. Why do you think at such an early age you had the skills to be successful? And what were those?

**DANNY FORD:** Well, I'm not so sure I had the skills to do that. I believe if you're 33 years old and you get a head coaching job at 30 and you've never done it before and your first football game is on national TV against Woody Hayes, that ain't no fun. (laughter)

**HOLLY ROWE:** No pressure.

**DANNY FORD:** So I didn't learn that fast in two years, I assure you that. I think what caused that to happen is that we had some good, young men that were like a lot of these guys who were hungry and not highly recruited and overachieved and some really good players mixed in. And they got a little bit better every week.

We started with Wofford because Villanova had dropped football, and we had to pick up an interstate school. And Wofford was ahead of us at halftime. We weren't setting the woods on fire like we were going somewhere.

And then we just got a little bit better each week, and our players overcame our coaches. I believe they did.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I get to cover Clemson now. And one of the things that strikes me is it's a very special place. Clemson's fans and people, there is feeling, a very unified beautiful feeling. How were you able to really capture that magic, and what did you appreciate about that time in '81?

**DANNY FORD:** Well, we were a small school back in '81. We were -- our president back then, we had to stay under 12,000 students. And we played Ohio State. And the people in Ohio didn't know if Clemson was in Georgia, Tennessee, or North or South Carolina. They had a hard time placing it. We weren't very well-known. And Coach [Frank] Howard had been there for many, many years. And we were an agriculture school. And we developed a great family atmosphere there. It was really all we had, just us and our people in northwest part of South Carolina.



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So today it's grown, and I like to think that our players from back in that era and the people who played for Coach Howard and Coach [Jess] Neely, and all the other coaches, Coach [Ken] Hatfield all the way through Coach [Tommy] Bowden. They all helped to get to where Clemson is today. And today I think they can pretty much -- and I think they've proven -- that they can compete and play with anybody in the country. And that's coming a long way from where we came from, and that's what we're most proud of.

**HOLLY ROWE:** Congratulations.

This gentleman is to me maybe the best coach that's ever lived. I've gotten to cover him five national championships for Mount Union. He was the coach at Mount Union from 1986 to 2012, the winningest coach in college football history among every division of play. He lost only 24 games in 27 seasons at Mount Union.

If you'll allow me to share one brief story, the sign of a good coach is at Mount Union, they had to do many different jobs at different times, teach classes, coach other teams and Coach Kehres, who was the football coach, got thrown into being the swimming coach.

Well, sure enough, because he's so fantastic, he coached the swimming team that year to the conference championship. And he was terrified that the traditional celebration of throwing the coach in the pool would reveal that he doesn't actually know how to swim. Yet, he coached them to a championship. My great dear pleasure to introduce Larry Kehres, to me one of the best that's ever done it.

You had so many national championships, unbeaten seasons, highest winning percentage. I'm curious, why you think that you were a good coach?

**LARRY KEHRES:** Well, Holly, I think I had a good foundation in learning from a good coach who is in the audience today. And he taught us to plan and prepare thoroughly. And I served as an assistant for him for 11 years. And I think that foundation that makes you a good teacher in the classroom also makes you a good coach. You have to be prepared. You have to measure each day by the performance of players. In other words, have they learned what you were attempting to teach them? And I was taught that, and I have always benefitted it from it. And I think my Union players benefited from the foundation I received from him.

**HOLLY ROWE:** You talk about foundation, and there were some of your former players and some of your coaches that have gone on to great success. And the one Matt Campbell really stands out this year at Iowa State. What are you proud of that you feel like you taught those young people and the people who carry your legacy forward, that you're seeing show up on the field?

**LARRY KEHRES:** Well, I think all of you have seen Matt this year because his team has succeeded so much. And he talks about, you know, true human values being the key to the culture of a football program. And he's talked about it frequently. I think Matt has sort of embodied that. That's part of what Mount Union tried to teach to the young men. And I'm very proud of him and the others that are coaching in DI.



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**HOLLY ROWE:** I wondered, who is the coach that's in the audience? Do you mind introducing him. I've got to know who taught you.

**LARRY KEHRES:** My coach is sitting in the back. His name is Ken Wable. My friend Jeff Jukmedes (phonetic) brought him and right there he is, if you would give him a round of applause.

(Applause)

**HOLLY ROWE:** Congratulations. No one did it better than you at such a high level for such a long time. Just appreciate you so very much.

And now this guy. I just can't even -- the words fail me because he is so special to me. Steve Spurrier coached at Duke from 1987 to 1989 and then followed that with an incredible stint at Florida from 1990 to 2001. Then he helped turn around South Carolina to become more of a powerhouse in 2005 to 2015. He was the winningest coach in South Carolina and Florida history. Just think about being able to win at every level at every school despite the challenges. He won seven conference championships, led the Gators to the 1996 national championship.

Coach Spurrier is one of only four people all time inducted into the Hall of Fame as both a coach and a player. Coach, what was it that made you so successful as a player, as a coach, on every level you have been able to impact winning?

**STEVE SPURRIER:** Holly, I don't know exactly. Obviously, we had a lot of good

players at Florida. And I had the chance to be the quarterback and we won a bunch. We did not win a conference championship, though.

So, when I got into coaching, obviously, that was something I never experienced and that became a goal of our teams. And really my entire coaching career was sort of evolved out of Duke University football. If we were going to win there, we had to play really well. The offense had to play close to perfect just about every game. We couldn't play stupid and have touchdowns called back to have any chance to win.

We had outstanding offensive guys. Defense was a little light, but they played their hearts out. So whatever kind of coach I became, I think I learned it at Duke University.

And then obviously when I got to Florida, the talent level was way up there. I inherited a loaded team, and we were able to take off winning right away. So being at the right place at the right time, a lot of good players and developing sort of some leadership chemistry. Players loving each other, playing for each other, things like that, we all know is what championship teams do. We were fortunate to have a group of guys that did all that.

**HOLLY ROWE:** I think you were a uniquely driven person. I remember being in your office. And we conducted a coach's meeting and you left. And I, being a snoopy person, you had all these clippings on your bulletin board. And I remember looking at the clippings that were important to you right at your desk. And one of them was about you being fired. And I thought, He's the coach at Florida. He's just won national championships.



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And the main clipping on his bulletin board next to his desk was a failure. Why did that resonate with you to keep that there?

**STEVE SPURRIER:** I actually wasn't fired. I just wasn't retained. (laughter)

**HOLLY ROWE:** However you want to say it.

**STEVE SPURRIER:** But the newspaper put "fired." They put that in the headline.

But, yeah, I really appreciate going into the Hall of Fame. I'm able to join my college Coach Ray Graves who is in the Hall of Fame. And the coach that gave me my first coaching job, Coach Doug Dickey at Florida, gave me my first job, big quarterback coach there.

I kept that clipping there just to hopefully it would never happen again, but that we all can be replaced. And I was a sort of young coach there. And I wanted to make it in the coaching profession.

It beats working for a living. I think all of us coaches will say, Man, we're on a team. We get to compete, get to play a game the rest of our lives. It certainly beats having to get up and go to work somewhere.

I wanted to do that. So I tried to learn all I could about coaching and how to get the most out of the players and so forth and just really thankful and appreciative that Coach Dickey gave me a shot when I had no job. Coach Pepper Rodgers, I had no job. Coach Red Wilson at Duke, no job, and then a couple of athletic directors. I've been out of work a bunch.

When I got to Florida and South Carolina, fortunately, I didn't have to go too far to be winningest coach at either place. I was blessed to be at the right place at the right time.

**HOLLY ROWE:** We certainly appreciate you.