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Remembering Chuck Noll

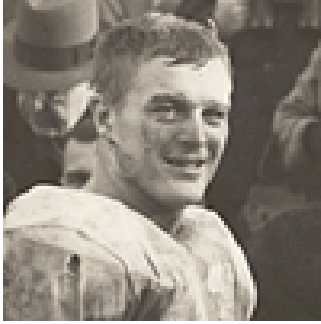
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Remembering Chuck Noll

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Chuck Noll, four-time Super Bowl-winning coach and 1953 UD alumnus, was a humble leader who never forgot his roots. He died Friday, June 13, at the age of 82.

Noll was 17 when he enrolled at UD in 1949, recruited by Flyer coach Joe Gavin from Cleveland Benedictine High School. Noll, who played offensive guard and linebacker, was known by teammates as "The Pope" for his infallible judgment, reported Ritter Collett in a 1991 *Dayton Daily News* story. Noll was co-captain and a starter on the only UD Division I team to play in the postseason. As a senior, Noll's team went 7-3 and played in the 1952 Salad Bowl in Phoenix, the forerunner of today's Fiesta Bowl.

Noll is a charter member of the UD Athletic Hall of Fame, inducted in 1962, and was the last living member of that charter class.

He was drafted his senior year by the Cleveland Browns and went on to play seven seasons in the NFL before retiring as a player to coach. He was offered a coaching position at UD, but before he could accept it was scooped up by the Los Angeles Chargers, where he was assistant coach for nine years. In 1969, he was hired by the Pittsburgh Steelers.

As head coach, Noll would turn around the team, recruiting greats like Terry Bradshaw and "Mean" Joe Greene, a member of the famed "Steel Curtain" defense. His 23-year record with the Steelers includes 209 wins, 156 losses, one tie and Super Bowl titles in 1974, 1975, 1978 and 1979. He coached at Pittsburgh until 1992. Noll was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1995.

That year, he returned to UD for commencement ceremonies, where he was awarded a Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree. Looking back on his own graduation day, he told *Dayton Daily News* reporter Bucky Albers '68, "I was concerned, when I graduated, about losing the security of going to school and having to earn a living."

He earned a living, and a reputation as a leader, through football, where his catch phrase was "Whatever it takes." He contributed his leadership to the University of Dayton as honorary co-chair of the \$150 million Call to Lead Campaign. "As a student, I thought the charm of the University was the people, and that hasn't gone away," he said. "Now you have facilities that are unmatched that project the image we're after. I think that's a source of pride for graduates, and that's something special for me."

Noll, a recipient of the Distinguished Alumnus Award from the UD Alumni Association, continued to give back to the University, returning in 2003 for a football fundraising dinner along with UD's other Super Bowl-winning coach, Jon Gruden '85. At the time, Flyers football coach Mike Kelly commented on the fact that neither man wore his diamond-encrusted Super Bowl ring. "They're not those kind of guys," he told the *Dayton Daily News*.

In 2013, UD dedicated the The Chuck Noll-Jon Gruden Championship Room as part of a \$70,000 renovation to the football program's office spaces, supported entirely by alumni donations.

Contact Michelle Tedford at mtedford1@udayton.edu.