

FOOTBALL IN THE ATHLETICS ALUMNI HALL OF FAME

Anthony Mortali '76 - Inducted 1987

Tony Mortali was the type of player that every coach would want on his squad. He was hard working willing and able to give the team his all. An integral part of the football team's first ever varsity win, 13-7 in 1975 vs. Curry College, the linebacker/offensive guard was one of the unsung heroes of the sports first few years of varsity status. His efforts on the gridiron were rewarded though, as he captained the team for two seasons, including the year the UNH team notched its first victory. That same season, Tony was named All New England Football Conference team.

Miles McPherson '81 - Inducted 1989

One of the finest defensive backs to play at New Haven, Miles McPherson recorded impressive numbers during his four year career. At one time he held 15 school records and still holds all the interception records - in a game (4), in a season (7), which he accomplished twice, and in a career (22). He was named to the All New England Conference First Team, New England Football Writers' Association Division II-III team, Boston Herald III team. McPherson became the first Charger to be drafted into the National Football League. He was taken as a 10th round pick by the Los Angeles Rams. He signed with the San Diego Chargers where he played from 1982 to 1985.

Rick Racioppi '84 - Inducted 1992

Rick Racioppi is considered to be one of the finest linebackers to wear a Charger uniform. The linebacker averaged 12.3 tackles per game during his sophomore season and 9.5 tackles per contest over his career. He surpassed 100 tackles in three different seasons, highlighted by a career-high 123 stops in 1982. Racioppi never missed a game during his four-year stay, playing in all 40 UNH contests. When he graduated, Racioppi held the single season and career records for both recovered fumbles and total tackles. He was named to the All-New England team in 1983, one of only three Chargers to earn those honors that season. He ended his career with 379 total tackles, including 210 solo stops, and four sacks.

Erik Lesinski '87 - Inducted 1992

Erik Lesinski can be rated as one of the best all-around players in New Haven football history. His career totals are among the best in school history, including 422 total tackles, 242 solo tackles and seven sacks. He was named to the All-New England and All-Eastern College Athletic Conference teams in 1986 and 1987. The linebacker became the third UNH football player to receive a Kodak All-America berth, earning the honor in his senior season, and was also a All-America honorable mention as a junior. In 1987, Lesinski registered 10 or more tackles in every contest with his best game of 21 tackles coming against Springfield.

Paul Bowman '78 - Inducted 1993

Paul Bowman played an instrumental part in the Chargers early success. He was elected a tri-captain of the 1978 team which posted a 6-3 record, the first winning record in the school's young history. Bowman's playing style and skills grabbed the attention of both players and coaches despite playing a position which rarely received recognition. His play on the offensive line helped the offense score 188 points, the highest production in school history to that point which allowed the squad to post a 5-0 start. During his career, Bowman played a major role in the Charger's success as the team won 12 games, scored 362 points and gained over 7,800 total yards, statistics no other class could claim.

Stephen DiMugno '74 - Inducted 1993

Stephen DiMugno was a true pioneer for the University of New Haven football program. He joined the team before football was a varsity sport and earned All-Eastern Collegiate Club Football Conference honors as a defensive back. The 1973 roster listed DiMugno as a defensive back but he also spent time as a running back and as a punt returner. He gained 75 yards on 24 carries in his first start as a running back, the school's best single game performance at the time. He finished second in scoring, third in rushing and was considered to be one of the best defensive players for the 1973 season. In 1974, DiMugno received a second term as captain and led the team in both interceptions and punt returns.

Harry Boatswain '90 - Inducted 1995

Harry Boatswain, of the former XFL, helped his team post a 30-10 overall record and accumulate more than 13,000 total yards and more than 1,200 points during his career. He earned All-New England first team honors in 1989 and 1990 as well as receiving All-ECAC honors as a senior. Boatswain capped his collegiate career with a spot on the Associated Press Small College All-America team. Boatswain became the highest draft pick from the University of New Haven when the San Francisco 49ers selected him in the fifth round of the 1991 NFL Draft. Boatswain was a member of the 1994 Super Bowl Championship team before signing with the Carolina Panthers.

Brian Nugent '79 - Inducted 1996

Brian Nugent was a four-year starter for the Chargers, spending all four seasons as a linebacker. Nugent played both on offense and defense as a rookie before settling in as a full-time linebacker during his final three years. Nugent earned All-New England Football Conference honors three times and received a spot on the United Press International's College Division All-New England Football team as a senior. In his senior season, Nugent was one of the football team's tri-captains. Nugent's teammates realized his contribution to the team by giving the linebacker back-to-back most valuable player honors. The Charger Bulletin, the student newspaper, selected Nugent as the school's Male Athlete of the Year.

Lionel Drew Maull '86 - Inducted 1997

Maull received All-New England honors in each of his final three years with the Chargers program. The sprinter was a member of the 1600 meter relay team which participated in the 1985 NCAA indoor track and field championships. He was also a finalist in the 55 meters during the 1986 IC4A championships. Maull earned the University's Track and Field most valuable athlete award in 1985 and 1986 in addition to his selection as the University's athlete of the year in his senior season. Maull also played football during his four-year stay, earning the New Haven Gridiron Club's most outstanding player award in 1983. Maull was later drafted by the Montreal Alouettes of the CFL.

Chris Palmer - Inducted 1997

Currently the offensive coordinator of the Houston Texans. Palmer was the former head coach of the Cleveland Browns. Palmer spent two seasons (1986-87) at the University of New Haven. He helped the program gain its first ever national ranking finishing the 1986 campaign with an 8-2 record and a No. 18 placement in the national poll. Palmer watched the Blue and Gold improve on that ranking by concluding the 1987 season with an 8-2 slate and a No. 16 national placement. Palmer left the University of New Haven following the 1987 campaign to accept the head coaching position

at Boston University. Palmer returned to the professional ranks as a coach with the Houston Oilers and New England Patriots. He was a member of the 1997 New England Patriots which captured the American Football Conference title and advanced to the Super Bowl.

Tony Sparano '81 - Inducted 1999

Tony Sparano enters the Hall of Fame both as a player and as one of the most successful head coaches in school history. He was a member of the 1979 team that posted the first undefeated record in school history (8-0-1). As a head coach, Sparano posted a 41-14-1 record in five seasons (1994-1998) at the helm of the Chargers. The highlight of Sparano's five seasons was a 12-2 record in 1997 and a trip to the 1997 National Championship game in Florence, Alabama. Sparano posted a 4-2 record in NCAA Playoff competition. Sparano's .732 winning percentage is third all-time among New Haven head coaches.

Roger Graham '94 - Inducted 2000

Graham captured the 1993 Harlon Hill Trophy. He was a three-time All-American and a two-time Eastern College Athletic Conference Player of the Year. Named the Sports Illustrated College Player of the Week seven times during his career. He was a three-team First-Team All-New England, capturing the All-New England Rookie of the Year honor in 1991. Graham holds New Haven's game, season and career record for most points and offensive touchdowns. The NCAA individual statistical champion in scoring (13.8 pts/game) and rushing (171.1 yds/game).

Dave Haubner '85 - Inducted 2002

Dave Haubner starred as a four-year offensive guard at UNH, helping the team post its first winning season as a Division II program in 1985. He became the first New Haven football player to earn Kodak All-America honors and was also the first to garner a spot on two All-America teams in the same season. He received Kodak and Associated Press Small College All-America honors as a senior. In addition to those honors, Haubner was also an All-ECAC and All-New England lineman in both 1984 and 1985. Behind his play, the New Haven offense gained better than 10,000 yards and scored more than 625 points. Haubner protected a quarterback, Paul Kelly, who threw for 4,732 career yards, placing fifth in school history.

Mario DiDino '97 - Inducted 2004

In the storied tradition of the University of New Haven's football program, Mario DiDino's name is remembered as one of the all time great offensive linemen to wear a Charger uniform. During his four year career in which he started every game but two, the Chargers had a 36-9-1 record, highlighted by playing in the national championship game in 1997. The offense averaged 3,900 yards per season during his four year career and was ranked the number one offense in Division II in 1997 when it averaged 43.3 points per game. Among his numerous honors, DiDino was a two-time First-Team All-ECAC selection in 1996 and 1997, an AFCA All-American in 1997 and a Daktronics All-American in 1997.

Bill Gambardella '85 - Inducted 2006

A true workhorse in the backfield, Bill Gambardella held every school record for rushing yardage after his senior season in 1985, and he saw those records stand for seven seasons. A West Haven native, Gambardella joined the Charger football program in 1982 when UNH moved to the