

Bob Toftey elected to UND Hall of Fame



Photo submitted by Bob Toftey

Bob Toftey, now 73, was recently honored with enshrinement in the University North Dakota Athletic Hall of Fame for his exploits on the football field.

Brian Larsen

One of Cook County's finest high school athletes, Bob Toftey, the son of Norman and Evelyn Toftey, was recently enshrined in the University of North Dakota Hall of Fame for his exploits on the football field.

Bob was a standout football, basketball, and track athlete while he was at Cook County High School (then called Grand Marais High School). He graduated in 1964 and was awarded a scholarship to play football at North Dakota State University.

The 45th annual athletics Hall of Fame event

took place with a dinner and induction ceremony on Friday, October 4. Along with the 1998-99 women's basketball team, Bob and four other individual athletes in swimming, track & field, and basketball were recognized during halftime of the UND's Homecoming football game against UC Davis at the Alerus Center.

"It was exciting," Bob said of the evening. "Twenty-eight teammates and one of my coaches on defense attended, as well as some of my friends and family."

This year's five inductees brought the total number of individuals elected to UND's Hall of Fame to 260,

while the 1998-99 women's basketball team was the 40th team to be recognized.

Standing a shade over six feet and weighing 175 to 180 pounds, Bob was a defensive back for the North Dakota Fighting Hawks from 1965-67, earning three varsity letters. "I returned punts my first year, and on kick-offs, I was the last man back to make a tackle if the punt returner got by everyone else."

He ran track his freshman year, but "It was too much with spring football," he said.

Bob was voted captain of the 1967 team. According to the information provided by the school, Bob helped lead UND to the 1965 Mineral Water Bowl win and a 1966 Pecan Bowl title. He was part of 21 wins in his three seasons, including a 15-3 NCC record.

Four players from the 1966 football team would go on to sign NFL contracts, but Bob said that six of his teammates were drafted during his tenure at NDS.

In 1966 and 1967, Bob was voted all-NCC as a defensive back. He was named to the All-Century UND football team in 1994. The 1966 UND defensive unit gave up a paltry 102 yards passing per game and a total of eight touchdowns for the season.

Today Bob lives in Duluth with his wife, Gail. The couple has three sons, Andrew, 42, John, 40, and Peter, 38. All of the boys were active in sports, but none played football. John, now 40, played hockey for West Point following his

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graduation from Duluth East.

As for Gail, “She graduated from Denfeld High School, but her par-

ents owned a resort on Seagull Lake,” Bob said. “They owned the original Windigo Lodge. They were bought out by the Forest Service and moved the cabins down to Poplar Lake. I met Gail when she worked at Shoreline, but

we didn’t start dating until I was in law school.”

Bob graduated from UND with a Bachelor of Science in 1968 and then attended law school at the University of Minnesota, earning his law degree in 1971. He worked “two to

three months” as a lawyer and then spent two years in the Air Force, coming back to Duluth to work as an attorney with the firm of Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick, P.A., where he still works to this day.
