

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME LUNCHEON

THE INDUCTION OF THE INAUGURAL CLASS

Saturday, January 18, 1997

Noon

MAGNOLIA ROOM
UNIVERSITY CENTER

TODAY'S PROGRAM

Welcome Herb Reinhard, Athletic Director

Invocation Steve Roberts, Sports Information Director

LUNCH

President's Remarks Dr. Hugh C. Bailey

Presentation of Inaugural Class Herb Reinhard

Formal Induction Dr. Hugh C. Bailey

Inductees' Remarks 1997 Class

Closing Remarks Herb Reinhard

HALL OF FAME SELECTION COMMITTEE

*Dr. Hugh C. Bailey, Herb Reinhard, Jane Williamson,
Tom Odom, Steve Roberts*

THE INAUGURAL HALL OF FAME CLASS

ERIC ANDERSON, TENNIS

Eric Anderson was a four-year standout for Valdosta State men's tennis, receiving all-conference honors each year and advancing to national tournament play all four years. A two-time all-America, Anderson capped a sensational senior season by winning the conference's No. 1 singles championship and advancing to the quarterfinals of the NCAA national tourney. He was named conference player of the year, senior of the year and sportsman of the year and won the league's academic award. He also won the sportsmanship award at the national tournament his senior year.

SAM BOWEN, BASEBALL

Sam Bowen was the center piece of arguably the best outfield in Valdosta State's proud baseball history in the two seasons of 1973 and 1974. During those two memorable years in no small part because of Bowen, the Blazers won 81 games, a conference championship, a district championship, two regional titles and finished third in a national tournament. He led both those teams in home runs and RBI each year, and led the 1973 pitching staff with a 1.10 ERA as a spot starter. After earning all-America honors in 1974, Bowen signed as a free agent with the Boston Red Sox and eventually made the Major League club, becoming the only VSU player to ever play in the "big".

EDDIE BROWN, BASKETBALL

Eddie Brown showcased tremendous offensive talent as a four-year starter for Valdosta State men's basketball teams from 1977-81. A pure shooter, the 6-2 guard led Blazer teams in scoring his last three years, scoring a school record 742 points his sophomore season. He finished his brilliant career as the school's only member of the 2000 Point Club, scoring 2502 points for a career average of 23.4 points in 107 games. His consistency is further magnified by his career shooting numbers — 51 percent from the field (1009-1978) and 83 percent from the free throw line (484-587). His name is prominent in the record book of Valdosta State's oldest sport, holding nine game, season and career statistical marks. Brown led the Blazers to three straight conference championships from 1979-81, earning all-America honors twice.

CHAN DIXON, TENNIS

Chan Dixon earned her place as the elite player in Valdosta State women's tennis history as a four-year all-conference performer from 1988-91. Dixon capped her brilliant career by advancing to the singles finals of the 1991 national tournament. She played in four NCAA national tourneys, reaching the quarterfinals on two other occasions. A three-time conference singles champion, Dixon earned all-America honors in 1990 and 1991, and in her senior season won every conference honor including player of the year.

JOE GERMANO, CROSS COUNTRY

Joe Germano was instrumental in taking Valdosta State men's cross country to national prominence. He was the top runner on VSU teams which recorded eighth place finishes in the national meet in 1977 and 1978. Germano earned all-America honors both years and led the Blazers to two conference titles and one Georgia Collegiate championship, winning individual titles in those meets two consecutive years. Valdosta State teams finished 45-9 in 1976 and 43-19 in 1977. His 10,000-meter times are the best in Valdosta State history.

BILLY GRANT, COACH/ADMINISTRATOR

Billy Grant was a part of Valdosta State athletics for 25 years from 1959 until his retirement in 1984. He coached golf, tennis and baseball, winning conference championships in golf and baseball, before becoming the school's first athletic director in 1970. In that capacity, he led the expansion of Valdosta State athletics from two to 10 sports and oversaw the institution of intercollegiate athletics for women. During his tenure, Valdosta State won one national, 20 regional and 40 conference championships. Grant designed and built the first baseball field at Valdosta State on the site of the current facility which bears his name. He died in the summer of 1987.

SUSAN TAYLOR, BASKETBALL

Susan Taylor is the most prolific scorer in the history of men's and women's basketball at Valdosta State. She is the school's only member of the 3000 Point Club, scoring 3018 points as a four-year starter from 1976-80. She had a career average of 23.6 points per game, setting school records for field goals in a season (350), field goals in a career (1249), most rebounds in a season (403) and most games started (128). Taylor is also the school's only two-time all-America at the Division I level (before the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women was absorbed by the NCAA), earning the honor in 1978 and 1979. Valdosta State teams won 94 games, two state championships and one regional championship during her stellar career.

JESSIE TUGGLE, FOOTBALL

Jessie Tuggle was a four-year letterman and three-year starter for Valdosta State football teams from 1983-86. He played defensive end for two years before finding a home at middle linebacker his junior season, becoming the premier defensive player in the Gulf South Conference. His senior season he led the Blazers to a then best ever record of 9-2 and was named the conference's defensive player of the year. He holds the VSU record for total tackles in a career, was a two-time all-conference selection and was a first team all-America choice following his senior campaign. Tuggle signed as a free agent with the Atlanta Falcons in 1987 and has reached the top of his profession at that level, earning all-pro honors on several occasions.