



VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY.
ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME LUNCHEON

THE FORMAL INDUCTION CEREMONY

Saturday, January 24, 1998

Noon

MAGNOLIA ROOM
UNIVERSITY CENTER



TODAY'S PROGRAM

WELCOME Herb Reinhard, Athletic Director

INVOCATION Steve Roberts, Sports Information Director

LUNCH 30

12:45
PRESIDENT'S REMARKS Dr. Hugh C. Bailey

PRESENTATION OF THE SECOND CLASS Herb Reinhard

FORMAL INDUCTION Dr. Hugh C. Bailey

INDUCTEES' REMARKS 1998 Class

CLOSING REMARKS Herb Reinhard

HALL OF FAME SELECTION COMMITTEE

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

*Brown Grad
Susan Taylor
LAST YEAR!
Inductees
Hall introduction*

class team

*former athletes
photos*

THE 1998 HALL OF FAME CLASS

GARY COLSON, COACH

GARY COLSON put Valdosta State men's basketball on the map in a big way when he took charge of the program in 1958. In the decade that followed, his teams won 174 of 243 games, including three consecutive 20-plus win seasons from 1966-68. His impressive Valdosta State tenure included seven Georgia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference championships, and he took his last two teams to the 32-team NAIA national tournament, reaching the quarterfinal round both years. Colson coached one all-American, Bobby Ritch (also being inducted today) and numerous all-conference and all-district players. After compiling his outstanding 10-year record at Valdosta State, Colson moved on to the Division I level where he has enjoyed a distinguished coaching career.

GENE FELTS, BASEBALL

GENE FELTS came out of tiny Lanier County High School and took Valdosta State baseball by storm, immediately becoming a fixture in left field where he started for four seasons from 1971-74. A right-handed power hitter with outstanding speed, Felts started 195 games in his superlative career, finishing with a career batting average of .326. Seventy-one of his 238 hits went for extra bases, and his 18 career triples remain a VSU record. He slammed 19 career home runs, 13 in his sophomore season when he hit .363, scored 54 runs and drove in 50 more. His junior and senior seasons he was part of arguably the best outfield in Valdosta State history, earning first team all-America honors and leading the team to national tournaments both years. During his career, Valdosta State won three conference titles and four regional crowns.

BOBBY RITCH, BASKETBALL

BOBBY RITCH earned a starting spot as a freshman for Coach Gary Colson and became a fixture in Valdosta State starting fives for four years. At 6-1, he played forward and lined up against and dominated taller opponents throughout his career. According to newspaper accounts from those years (1962-66), Ritch became a great player because of his work ethic and love for the game. He led Valdosta State to three conference championships and was named all-conference in the Georgia Intercollegiate Athletic Conference three times. He led the league in scoring as a junior and senior when Valdosta State won 40 of 49 games. He led his team in scoring three straight years, including a 25.2 points-per-game average as a senior. Ritch was the first Valdosta State player to earn all-America honors, and he did it as a junior and senior.

SHANNON WILLIAMS, BASKETBALL

SHANNON WILLIAMS totally dominated her sport as a four-year starter for Valdosta State basketball teams from 1986-90. She is the only VSU athlete to be named a first team all-America three times following her sophomore, junior and senior seasons. She led the Lady Blazers in scoring all four years, scoring 2636 points in her 105-game career (second all-time to 1997 inductee Susan Taylor). Her 25.1 points-per-game career average is the best in Valdosta State basketball history. Williams's name remains prominent in both school and Gulf South Conference record books. She was named GSC player of the year three times, leading the nation in scoring (26.8) her junior season and finishing second (26.3) her senior campaign. A complete player, Williams led the team in rebounding three of four years, averaging 11.6 rebounds a game in her career.



VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY®

ATHLETIC HALL OF FAME



A year ago, Valdosta State University inducted its inaugural class into the Athletic Hall of Fame, an honorary society initiated to further enhance the sparkling reputation of VSU athletics. Seven former student-athletes and one former coach/administrator composed the first class. Those inductees, in alphabetical order, are: Eric Anderson (tennis), Sam Bowen (baseball), Eddie Brown (basketball), Chan Dixon (tennis), Joe Germano (cross country), Billy Grant (coach/administrator), Susan Taylor (basketball), and Jessie Tuggle (football). This year's four-member class is no less outstanding. All made tremendous contributions to their sport and brought honor to their institution. This year's inductees, also listed alphabetically, are: Gary Colson (coach), Gene Felts (baseball), Bobby Ritch (basketball), and Shannon Williams (basketball).

HALL OF FAME NOMINATIONS WELCOME

All Valdosta State supporters are urged to spread the word about this annual event to alumni, family and friends. Receiving the university's highest athletic honor is an honor these former athletes and coaches will remember and cherish forever. Many other athletes and coaches deserve consideration for possible induction into the Hall. Nominations are always being sought for future induction ceremonies and may come from any source. All former athletes, coaches, administrators or support personnel who made significant contributions to the university's athletic programs, either through their participation in athletics as undergraduates or their subsequent association with athletics are eligible for nomination. Athletes and staff members are eligible for nomination five years after their separation from the university. Nominees shall have demonstrated extremely high achievement, including school, conference or national records, multiple all-conference honors, all-region and all-America mention and leadership roles on their teams. Coaches under consideration should have high honors such as multiple conference championships and bids to post-season play. All nominees must have displayed positive morals and high character. All nominations will remain active for three selection cycles. Nominations should be made to the Hall of Fame Selection Committee in care of the university's athletic department. Congratulations to this year's inductees.