

Article About Joe Clemens in the HUNTSVILLE ITEM NEWSPAPER

April 17, 2010

Congratulations Coach Clements

By Tom Waddill Sports Editor

HUNTSVILLE — It won't be long now. Joe Clements will be inducted into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame in a few more weeks.

A two-time state champion during his playing and coaching career at Huntsville High School, Clements will join the likes of Earl Campbell, Tom Landry and Ray Childress in the Texas High School Football wing of the Waco museum on May 8.

For his work as the Hornets' quarterback back in the early 1950s, Clements was voted into the hall last year by a statewide committee made up of sportswriters, high school football coaches and members of the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame Board of Trustees.

Clements said earlier this year that he plans on making the induction ceremony a huge family affair. A large group of former players, coaches and avid Huntsville football fans are planning on helping the Clements family celebrate.

The Huntsville Item sports team is planning some special stories for the occasion, and we're inviting everyone to participate. If you'd like to congratulate Coach Clements, tell a short story and wish him well, send us a note and we'll publish it prior to the induction day.

You can e-mail the notes to sports@itemonline.com, mail them to The Huntsville Item sports department, P.O. Box 539, Huntsville, TX 77342, or bring them by the Item office at 1409 10th St., across from the downtown post office.

One of Clements' former assistant coaches has already sent a few of his thoughts about his former boss. Hoping to kick off a flood of letters, here is what Randy Shelly said in a letter he sent us this weekend:

Twenty-five years ago, Joe Clements gave a 35-year-old, first year coach the opportunity of a lifetime. He gave me a job as a Hornet football coach.

I didn't get into coaching at the same age as most coaches do, and for some reason, Coach Clements took a chance on an older guy that didn't know much of anything about how to coach. For that I will be ever thankful.

Over the next 12 years I was fortunate in that Coach Clements moved me up the ladder of coaching every couple of years. During that time I learned most of what I know by listening to him, by watching him and by him taking the time to answer my questions.

There is no doubt in my mind that I was learning from the greatest football mind in high school football in Texas. I not only learned how to coach but I also learned how to treat people, how to respect others' differences and how to get the most out of players by treating them with respect and yet still be demanding of them. He was a master at getting athletes to give their utmost effort.

I have so many great memories from those playoff runs and games in Texas Stadium, those tough dummy-cutting workouts after losses and the way he used to "pace" on Fridays before games, then on the sidelines on Friday night when the defense was on the field. His mind was always analyzing what the opponent's defense was doing to try to stop the Hornets, and more often than not, he was always one step ahead of what the opposing defensive coordinator was trying to do.

The greatest memory I have, however, happened in his office the day I went in from the junior high and talked to him about moving to the high school. He said something to me that day that I will always cherish and never forget. He told me that he respected me for making a career change and getting into coaching.

To be respected by someone like Joe Clements for what I was trying to do with my life gave me more confidence, more drive to succeed than I had ever known. That has stayed with me through my 25th year in the most noble profession I could ever be in ... coaching.

I will be forever grateful to Coach Clements for giving me a chance to spend my life being a part of the lives of so many young men through coaching Texas high school football.

In Huntsville, it is always said, "Once a Hornet, always a Hornet." Though I no longer coach in Huntsville, I have to admit that if you cut me deep enough, there are still a few drops of green blood in my veins.

Coach Clements, I am proud to say that I coached for you and congratulations for the honor of being inducted into the Texas Sports Hall of Fame. The honor is well deserved and I thank you for giving me the chance of a lifetime.

Randy Shelly
Assistant head football coach
Montgomery High School

Congratulations Joe

Maybe you saw Joe Clements play in the 1953 state championship game. Many of you played for Coach Clements, some coached alongside him on Friday nights and others watched him from the stands at Pritchett Field and Bowers Stadium.

Send us your memories of Joe Clements or write a short note saying congratulations. The Item will publish the letters before the induction dinner on May 8 in Waco.

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Texas High School Football Hall of Fame

What: The Texas High School Football Hall of Fame induction banquet for the class of 2010.

When: May 8 at 6 p.m.

Where: Baylor University’s Ferrell Center in Waco.

Tickets: \$40 for adults and \$10 for students. To order tickets, contact Tiffany Wilkins at (254) 829-1556.

Class of 2010: Sammy Baugh, Sweetwater High School, pre-1949; Joe Clements, Huntsville, 1950s; Bert Gravitt, Denver City, 1960s; Bill Gravitt, Denver City, 1960s; Thomas Lott, San Antonio Jay, 1970s; Peter A. Gardere, Houston Lee, 1980s; Koy Detmer, Mission, 1990s; Dr. Mark Bing, special contributor to Texas high school football, Katy team doctor; Theo C. “Cotton” Miles, White Oak, Dallas Wilson and Dallas Skyline coach

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Former Huntsville High School football coach Joe Clements poses with the state championship trophy from the 1980 football season. Clements was the Hornets’ head coach that year. Back in 1953, Clements quarterbacked the Hornets to a Class 2A state championship. For his work on field as a player from 1951-53, Clements will be inducted into the Texas High School Football Hall of Fame in Waco on May 8. Tickets for the induction banquet are still on sale. Cost is \$40 for adults and \$10 for students. Call Tiffany Watkins at (254) 829-1556 to order tickets. Item file photo