



Craig Howard **1970** Inducted in 2021

Craig Howard was born (1952) and raised in Grants Pass. As a Caveman, although Craig participated in football, wrestling, and baseball - football was his passion. In his senior season, as a defensive linebacker, Craig earned Caveman of the Week against Roseburg and had 35 tackles in a game against Medford. Craig's positive attitude and grit earned him a 3-year linebacker starting position, helping his team to district, conference, and state championships. His senior season for the Cavemen, Craig was named the Most Inspirational Player. Craig went on to play linebacker at Linfield College, where he earned the respect of his coaches and teammates,

earning Rookie of the Year and then again being named Most Inspirational Player not once, or twice, but three years at Linfield!

Throughout his coaching career, Craig was known for his "love-em-up" coaching style which won over players, parents, administrators, and fans. He dedicated his life to building men of character, strength, and honor.

Craig coached in a variety of schools before settling in at Southern Oregon University. He began his coaching career as an assistant at Roseburg High School, followed by stints at OIT, Portland State, Baylor University, Livingstone University, University of Oregon, Jesuit High School, Allen D. Nease High School in Florida, and Columbia High School also in Florida. Wherever he went, Craig was known as being passionate, and a great motivator whose strength was inspiring young men on and off the field.

The highlights of Craig's high school coaching career include his Columbia teams breaking 30 school records and at Nease High School, leading his teams to 3 state title games, winning the Florida State Championship in 2005. While coaching at Nease High School, Craig coached Tim Tebow who went on to win the Heisman Trophy. During one 5-year stretch at Nease high school, Craig coached not only Tim Tebow, but a total of 45 players that went on to play Division 1 football.

The highlight of Craig's collegiate coaching career was when he led the Southern Oregon University Raiders to the NAIA National Championship in 2014. Craig and his 2014 team will be inducted into the SOU Hall of Fame in September 2021.

Before being hired at Southern Oregon University, Craig wrote a book, made up of his coaching thoughts, titled "The Plan". He presented "The Plan" as part of the interview process when applying for the head football job at SOU. He was hired for the SOU job in February 2011 and promised a national championship. Coach Howard came through on that promise in less than 4 years. Previous to 2014, SOU had not been to the post season in 10 years and had never advanced past the quarterfinals. For his efforts and success in turning around the SOU program, in 2014 Craig was named the Rawlings NAIA Coach of the year. While at SOU, Coach Howard compiled a record of 50-23 with the Raiders, giving him the best win percentage (.685) in school history.

Craig Howard epitomized the "Never Surrender" attitude acquired during his time as a Caveman.

Craig had a gift of inspiring others that led him to success in his lifelong passion - teaching valuable life lessons to young players and coaches - through the game of football. His unique methods are currently being used to motivate players throughout the world