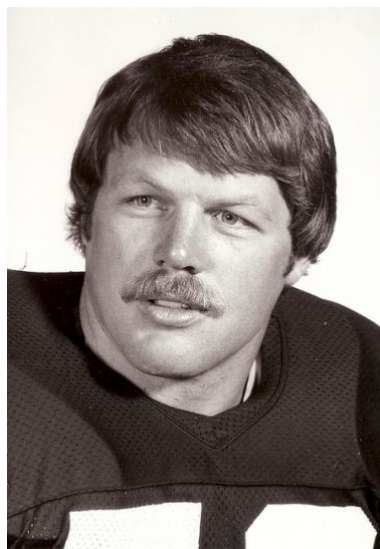


Jerry Sherk
1966
Inducted in 2019



A later bloomer in athletics at GPHS, Jerry Sherk wrestled JV until his senior year when he finally broke into the varsity lineup. Sherk ended up winning a district title and placing 3rd in the state at 191 pounds. Jerry didn't participate in football until his senior year, but was a strong contributor as a defensive end on a Caveman squad that went 9-1-1.

With no major college athletic team showing an interest, Jerry enrolled at Grays Harbor Junior College in Aberdeen, Washington, where his athletic career began to unfold. During his two years in Aberdeen, Jerry earned all-conference honors in football on offense and defense, and he was a two-time undefeated state champion in wrestling, pinning all but two opponents.

After Grays Harbor, the major colleges came knocking and Jerry decided to become an Oklahoma State Cowboy. During his senior year at OSU, Sherk was named All-Big 8 in football, and All-American as a wrestler. The NFL took notice of his two-sport success and in 1970 he was drafted in the second round by the Cleveland Browns. Jerry immediately became a starter at defensive tackle, and his first game was the first ever Monday Night Football Game.

Over his 12-year career as a Brown, Sherk was known by his opponents as a complete player in that he could play the run and the pass equally well. As a Cleveland Brown the honors began to roll in, including: Cleveland Browns Defensive MVP (three years), four Pro Bowls, first team All-Pro, 1976 NFL Defensive Lineman of the Year, and 1976 NFL Defensive Player of the Year. Jerry still owns the Cleveland Browns record for most quarterback sacks in a game (4), and is second all-time in total sacks (69). In 2005 Sherk was named a "Cleveland Browns Legend" by the team.

Other honors include Mark Brandt Wall of Fame, Grays Harbor College Hall of Fame, and Oklahoma State University Hall of Honor.

Jerry attributes much of his athletic achievement to his beginnings as a Caveman. "I watched my first football game when I was five; my uncle Ivan was a lineman for GPHS, and the blue and white and the Caveman fight song became part of my DNA. Growing up, I always yearned to become a varsity athlete and when it finally happened, it was a dream come true. Being around the Caveman tradition, including excellent coaches and teammates, put me on a path to what I was to become as a professional athlete."

After football, Jerry earned a masters degree in psychology, and he began working in the field of youth mentoring. Jerry owns a consulting business called Mentor Management Systems and he also consults for the California Mentoring Partnership and the National Mentoring Resource Center. Jerry is past Chair of the Mentoring Coalition of San Diego County, and past president of the National Football League Retired Players Association, San Diego. Jerry lives in Encinitas, California with his wife, Annie.