



## **Tom Blanchard**

**Athlete: 1966**

Inducted 2017

Tom Blanchard was born and raised in Grants Pass, attending Lincoln Elementary School, North Junior High and Grants Pass High School, graduating in 1966. In high school, he was Senior Class President and excelled in football, basketball and baseball, earning All-Conference honors in all 3 sports his senior year. As the quarterback for the Cavemen, Tom led his team to a State Championship his junior year and was named to the All-State Team in Football as a senior. He was named to the All-State Baseball Team both his junior and senior years, set the school record for hits in a season, and was selected to play in the North/South All Star Baseball Game and the North/South Shrine Football game. He was drafted by the New York Yankees after his senior year but decided instead to play

college football at the University of Oregon as a quarterback and punter. After a successful football career at the UofO, he was drafted by the New York Giants in 1971. He played 3 seasons with the New York Giants, 5 with the New Orleans Saints and 3 for the Tampa Bay Buccaneers as a punter.

Tom has been recognized for his athletic achievements throughout his career through induction into the Grants Pass High School Hall of Fame and the Mark Brandt Athletic Wall of Fame. His athletic achievements alone warrant his induction to the Caveman Athletic Hall of Fame. However, his contributions did not stop there. After his NFL career, Tom returned to Grants Pass and purchased a health club which he ran with his wife for 8 years. In 1986, he was asked to become the Head Coach of the GPHS Caveman Football team. He started teaching Health Education and coaching and after 2 years in the classroom, Tom became the Athletic Director until he retired in 2010. Throughout his 25-year career at GPHS, Tom coached football (18 years), boys basketball and softball, leading his softball team to State Championships in 2008 and 2010, years in which he also earned Coach of the Year accolades. After retiring from GPHS, he joined the GPHS Athletic Booster Club Board and served as President of the Board for many years.

During his tenure as Athletic Director, Tom had a vision to improve the athletic facilities at Grants Pass High School. He spearheaded the design, development and fund-raising effort for resurfacing Mel Ingram field with artificial turf, creating a state-of-the-art softball complex on the GPHS campus, complete with artificial turf, and improved drainage, installed irrigation, reseeded the practice field and resurfaced the track at Russ Werner Track and Field.

Tom retired from Grants Pass High School in 2010, but his commitment to developing quality facilities for Grants Pass High School and our community did not end there. He, along with the Booster Club Board Members, were instrumental in the installation of artificial turf on Russ Werner field in 2016 and helped purchase a new sound system for Heater-Newman gymnasium. Tom continues to provide leadership within community organizations that improve athletic opportunities for the youth in our area. He is still active as a Director on the GPHS Athletic Booster Club Board and is also involved in the community's local soccer program as the President of the Oregon Futbol Academy. The results of Tom's dedication as a teacher, coach, Athletic Director and contributor will continue to have a positive impact on athletic programs in our community for many years to come.

Tom is married to Pam (Manchel) Blanchard, a 1966 GPHS graduate. They have three children, Tommy, Kelley and Jimmy, all GPHS graduates. They have been blessed with nine grandchildren, 7 girls and 2 boys.