

OF ABSENT FRIENDS

Don Bunce: A standout in the Rose Bowl game while playing quarterback for Stanford, Mr Bunce passed away on April 14, 2003 at Santa Cruz, California at age 54. Born in Redwood City, Cal., he attended Woodside High where he starred in several sports before enrolling at Stanford. A backup signal-caller in 1969 and 1970 to Jim Plunkett, Bunce became the starting quarterback for the Indians in 1971 and paced Stanford to a PAC-8 championship. That year he passed for 2,265 yards and 13 touchdowns, and was named all-conference quarterback. Then in the 1972 Rose Bowl game Bunce completed 24 of 44 passes for 290 yards to lead Stanford to a 13-12 upset win over undefeated Michigan, and he was voted the game's most valuable player. After graduation he played one season for the British Columbia Lions of the Canadian Football league to help pay for medical school, and he eventually became an orthopedic surgeon. Bunce served as Stanford's football team doctor from 1982 to 1992.

Joseph Marhefka: The last remaining member of Lafayette College's great 1921 team, Mr Marhefka passed away on June 30, 2003 at Easton, Pennsylvania at age 101. Born in Phillipsburg, Pa., Marhefka attended St Procopius Prep School before enrolling at Lafayette in 1920. He was a reserve halfback for the undefeated 1921 team and appeared in the Rutgers and Delaware games. That season, Lafayette, under legendary coach Jock Sutherland, was regarded by many as the mythical national champion. The speedy Marhefka also played for Lafayette in 1922 and 1923. After graduation he played pro football briefly with Pottsville and the Philadelphia Quakers, and then taught at a middle school in Easton for the next 40 years until his retirement in 1968. Marhefka also served as a college football official from the 1930s into the 1950s.

Lou Gambino: A standout running back for Maryland, Mr Gambino passed away on July 16, 2003 at Maywood, Illinois at age 79. Gambino was born in Berwyn, Illinois, and attended Morton High School where he was a standout in football and track. Enrolling at Indiana in 1941, he played one season for the Hoosiers in 1942 before entering the Army Air Force for World War II. Discharged in 1946, Gambino enrolled at the University of Maryland in order to be near his mother who lived in Baltimore. After seeing limited time for a dismal Terrapins team in 1946, he became the starting halfback in 1947 under new coach, Jim Tatum. Gambino had a marvelous season in 1947, as he rushed for 904 yards on 125 carries and scored 96 points (16 touchdowns) to lead the nation in scoring. During the season Gambino racked up three touchdown games against West Virginia, Duquesne, and Delaware, along with scoring two TDs and passing for another in a major win over Vanderbilt. He capped off the season with three touchdowns in a 20-20 tie with Georgia at the Gator Bowl. For 1947 Gambino was named to the All-Southern Conference team and was an Honorable Mention All-America. He played pro football with the Baltimore Colts in 1948 and 1949, before a war-time knee injury ended his playing days.

Ron Burton: An outstanding halfback for Northwestern, Mr Burton passed away on September 13, 2003 at Boston at age 67. From Springfield, Ohio, Burton played at Northwestern from 1957-59, the last two teams under Coach Ara Parseghian among the best in school history. After going winless in 1957, the Wildcats were ranked among the nation's top teams the next two seasons until late season collapses ruined both years. In 1958 Burton received some All-America mention after scoring three touchdowns in a 55-24 win over Michigan -- one of the landmark games in Northwestern history -- along with two touchdowns each against Washington State, Stanford, and Illinois. In 1959 he scored two touchdowns each against Oklahoma and Indiana, but the best game of his season was against Wisconsin when he rushed for 169 yards, including a 69-yard scoring gallop, and passed for a TD in the Wildcats' 24-19 defeat. Despite missing two games with an ankle injury, Burton was named a consensus All-America halfback. He went on to play pro football with the Boston Patriots and was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1990.

Charlie Justice: One of college football's most colorful players while at North Carolina, Mr Justice passed away on October 17, 2003 at Cherryville, NC at age 79. Justice played tailback for the Tar Heels from 1946-49 while they piled up an overall regular season record of 32-6-3 that included three Top Ten rankings and three bowl game appearances. From Asheville, NC, Justice went right from Lee Edwards High School into the Navy where he played football for three seasons (1943-45), including two seasons with the prominent Bainbridge Navy team for which he rushed for 629 yards and scored 14 touchdowns in 1944. While playing four seasons at North Carolina, Justice scored 39 touchdowns, rushed for 2634 yards, and passed for 2237 yards and 25 TDs. His best season statistically was 1946, as he rushed for 943 yards, passed for 270, scored 12 touchdowns, and returned 28 kicks for 572 yards. Justice led the nation in punting in 1948 with a 44.0 average and was named consensus All-America halfback while North Carolina went 9-0-1 and finished with a #3 ranking. He received further All-America mention in 1949. After twice finishing second in the Heisman voting (1948-49) he played pro football for four seasons with the Washington Redskins, and was elected to the College Football Hall of Fame in 1961.