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Former Bronco, now Executive Director of Roady’s Humanitarian Bowl

A native Idahoan, Kevin McDonald attended Boise State University and graduated with a degree in marketing in 1981. Kevin played football at Boise State and was a member of the 1980 Division 1-AA National Championship Football team.

Before joining to the Roady’s Humanitarian Bowl as executive director, Kevin ran a real estate and financial investment business. The company specialized in residential real estate development and stock portfolios. For 17 years Kevin worked in the television industry where he was with Fisher Broadcasting as the General Sales Manager for the CBS television affiliate in Boise and Idaho Falls.

Kevin also held positions of account executive and local sales manager in the broadcasting industry. His marketing experience and leadership will add up to a winning combination and help the Roady’s Humanitarian Bowl become one of the premier non BCS college football bowls in the United States. Kevin is working hard to make this year’s December 31st Roady’s Humanitarian Bowl a resounding success.

Kevin has been married for eighteen years to his wife Debbie. He has four children and one grandson.

Kevin can be reached by email: Kevin@HumanitarianBowl.org

Recently, a Varsity B member mentioned that the Varsity B club has been a great addition because it helps all the former Broncos who have competed for the Blue and Orange feel like one big family. This fall, we have connected with many different groups that have provided associations with the old and the new covering many different eras.

The involvement of former Broncos in the Varsity B club is critical to keep the program growing, and help establish that family atmosphere. We are products of the Bronco environment; we had a lot of fun and have made some great friends during our time at Boise State, and the Varsity B is helping us stay connected as we watch and enjoy our University grow to one of the most respected institutions in the United States. I hope you enjoy the Fall 2007 Varsity B newsletter, please help us keep the momentum going and reach out to your teammates to join the Varsity B!
It has come to the attention of this staff that all of Boise Junior College’s success in football is not due to the power in the line and the swivel-hipped running of the backs. Many of our opponent coaches seem to think that there is no little magic connected with the no-loss brand of ball that BJC has become famous for. After observing a little and putting two and two together we are seconding the motion.

Our curiosity was first aroused when Ben Jayne tried to get Lyle Smith to buy himself a new hat on the trip to Ogden this year. Smith became quite shocked and proudly held up his old, blue fedora that looked much worse for wear, and proclaimed, “I’ll never discard this fine specimen. It’s got touchdowns in it!”

Then we got to checking around and found that old hat had been at every one of the last 14 victories and has played 60 minutes of every one of them. It started off against Ricks College in the season of 1947. Although it was rainy and cold, it produced five touchdowns to defeat Ricks, 30 to 0. From then on, Lyle’s blue hat gave forth with a liberal amount of touchdowns and the Broncos were undefeated for the year of ’47. In one game in 1947, that hat worked through rain, sleet, hail, snow and even a little sunshine; that was at La Grande against the Eastern Oregon college of Education, but still the touchdowns came out of the wet refuge from the garbage can, that Lyle stubbornly calls his HAT.

If this old pile of rain-washed felt could talk, its main topic of conversation would undoubtedly be about all the white hairs that it has seen appearing on its master’s head, since the unbeaten, untied string of victories started to mount for old BJC.

Up until last Friday night, the touchdowns seemed to be coming out of the battered old hat as smoothly as ever. But Lyle lost patience last Friday when in the third quarter, the U of I frosh tied the score. The hat hit the ground and Lyle gave it a couple of resounding kicks and placed it on his head after a short and brief talking-to. Now, we don’t believe in fairies and magic and all that stuff, any more than the next guy, but if you will recall, no sooner was that hat on Lyle’s head than BJC was moving down the field in a determined manner and did not stop until they had racked up two more touchdowns.

When, and if, BJC ever has a trophy case, we recommend that the first article entered is Lyle Smith’s faithful, old, blue fedora.—vb

Interview with…

Boo Heffner
SPORTS MEDICINE 1982-1987

HOMETOWN: Grew up in Boise, now living in Seattle.

DEGREES: BS, MBA

FAMILY: Wife and three children. Married 21 years

JOB: President – West Emergency Services Group

FONDEST MEMORY AS A STUDENT: Being in the SUB in the SAGA line when a significant earthquake hit.

FONDEST MEMORY AS A BOISE STATE STUDENT-ATHLETE: Road trips and friendships.

FAVORITE PLACE ON CAMPUS: Probably the SUB because it had food and heat.

THOUGHTS ON COACHES: Lyle Setencich was the best, Bill Dutton, I’m still trying to figure out. Gary Craner was awesome!

HOW HAS THE UNIVERSITY AND ATHLETICS CHANGED SINCE YOU LEFT? No question BSU had a major impact on my life, the friendships that I had and continue to have are a major part of my life.

WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU MOST ENJOY WATCHING? NASCAR and football are it.

LIFE AFTER BOISE STATE?: Busy and challenging, whose isn’t? I am having a great time and have been in my career for 21 years now. We have lived in 5 states and have settled in beautiful Seattle.

WHAT STANDS OUT THE MOST ABOUT BOISE STATE?: The commitment of the fans and the community is unbelievable. During my 5 years, we never beat the Vandals. I am loving it now!!!!

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE VARSITY B CLUB?: What a great venue for ongoing communication, support and well being in general. A significant part of our lives centered around our friends and teammates at BSU and Varsity B acts as a conduit for continuance.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A BOISE STATE BRONCO?: I am very proud to be a Bronco and as I travel throughout the world I am frequently asked “Where did you go to school?” I always answer with a smile.
Gerald DesPres helped Boise State win a football game Saturday night. Three hundred years from now that won’t mean anything, but Saturday night it meant everything to him, and not just because it made him look good in the eyes of the fans, his coaches or his teammates. Thursday his mother died. It was sudden. Theresa DesPres was 49 years old and in Montreal, 3,000 miles away from her son, when it happened. The coaches told him to do whatever he wanted to do; he could stay and play against Montana State or he could go home to Montreal. Gerald talked with his family and they all agreed he should stay in Boise and play the football game. Today, he left for Montreal and Monday’s funeral.

In the space of a week, Gerald DesPres witnessed the highs and lows of life. A week ago in Montana, he came off the bench to lead the Broncos to a 27-13 win. Five days later, the phone rang delivering the heart-wrenching news from Montreal. Gerald’s emotional revival was brought about by his teammates at Boise State and that 20-10 victory over Montana State. He faced the pressure of playing his first game in Bronco Stadium before 18,000 people who had no idea of the emotional turmoil he was going through. While he may have thought of it, DesPres did not let it cripple him mentally. “Because, you know, I play for my mother,” said DesPres, holding back the tears. “My family over there (in Montreal), they tell me to stay in Boise and play a great football game for my mother. I am sure every Bronco here, these big guys, played just for my mother.”

DesPres was 13-for-22 passing for 197 yards and two touchdowns. It was his first full game at Boise State and, when you consider that he’s still not that schooled in Boise State’s offense or reading defenses or a dozen other things that make being a starting quarterback as a freshman such a hardship, the game he played was remarkable.

When you consider the team he did it against – Montana State, perhaps consistently the most physical team in the Big Sky – then that makes it all the more dramatic that he could go on the field and not turn into silly putty emotionally.

Defensive tackle Michel Bourgeau, Boise State’s other French Canadian football player, may have felt his friend’s sadness only slightly less. When Bourgeau wasn’t on the field trying to control Montana State’s Tony Boddie, he was on the sidelines urging his friend on.

Bourgeau’s duel with Montana State center Larry Rubens, considered the best in the Big Sky, fizzled when Rubens came up injured and only centered on long snaps. But Bourgeau’s challenge was still there, and he ended the game with 10 tackles and the victory he wanted for his friend.

When it was all over and the 6-foot-5, 243-pound Bourgeau sat in the BSU interview room and talked about DesPres, the emotion of the moment overwhelmed him. “He was an inspiration for the team; he’s such a tough individual. He got the team together. He got us going,” said Bourgeau, his voice choking to a whisper. “I tell you, I’ve never been around a guy like that. He’s all heart. He compensates for whatever he lacks in athletic ability – although he’s a tremendous athlete – by just going out and playing his heart out and he did just that tonight. I know what he’s going through right now and I just hope the game takes a little bit of that sorrow away from him. He’s one hell of a guy, on and off the field.”

DesPres delivered a lot to himself, his teammates, the coaches and it gave the fans – a lot of them sitting through a second-half drizzle till the end – a win.

After all, they were all there to see if Boise State – freshman quarterback and all – could really hack it in the Big Sky Conference this fall. Montana State was the first big test of a rugged second-half schedule, and the Broncos passed it with an A-plus.

Boise State coach Jim Criner said he felt this was perhaps Boise State’s best defensive effort ever at Bronco Stadium. “And there’s been some good ones in here,” Criner said.
Interview with...

Deanna (Dutton) Graves
MANELINE DANCER 1983-1984

FONDEST MEMORY AS A BOISE STATE STUDENT-ATHLETE: Having the opportunity to be inspired by Julie Stevens.

FAVORITE PLACE ON CAMPUS: Student Union

THOUGHTS ON COACHES: I loved Julie’s creative dance choreography and her tireless energy. Julie was and is a tremendous role model for all the young women who have had the opportunity to dance in her program.

HOW HAS THE UNIVERSITY AND ATHLETICS CHANGED SINCE YOU LEFT? BSU is obviously a much bigger place, both on a local scale as well as the national recognition it has gained through the football program. I still do however, enjoy the hometown atmosphere of BSU.

LIFE AFTER BOISE STATE? My kids, my husband and my dogs continue to be the most important things in my life.

WHAT STANDS OUT THE MOST ABOUT BOISE STATE? The local support and pride for the school and the Athletic Department.

WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU MOST ENJOY WATCHING? Since I grew up with a football coach as a father, I obviously love to watch football. I also really enjoy track and field.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE VARSITY B CLUB? I think it is a great program and Michel brings a lot of enthusiasm and persistence to the club. I still can’t understand why he thinks my life might be interesting to other people even though I’ve tried to tell him otherwise.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A BOISE STATE BRONCO? Since my husband is a Vandal, it brings out the competitive spirit in our marriage and he certainly doesn’t have much to say lately. Go Broncos!

Cross Country 101: Fall 1996

By Jose Uribe, Boise State University Hall of Fame inductee, class of 2004. Jose is currently married and lives in New York City. He is employed by a real estate company where he is the Chief of Operations.

I could be really technical about this topic, but what does it matter? This sport is still the most uncivilized sport in the NCAA. Who ever gets to the finish line first, simply wins.

That is the philosophy that Coach Mike Dilley taught us back in 1994 during our years running for him at Boise State.

No matter which color the uniform was, or how great their sponsors were, and how huge their universities and budgets were, we had still had to run the course, either 8km (five miles) or 10km (6.2 miles).

Cross country was a great experience because I got to run against tons of other runners from other events, such as milers, 5k and 10k, plus the steeplechase.

For me it has been one of the greatest stories to tell how the Boise State Cross Country team qualified for Nationals. There is no way to write that feeling. And there is no way to describe how we then finished 8th in the nation.

On paper, we were 19th in the NCAA rankings. But it was just an estimate; the race still had to be run. In Tucson, Arizona in the fall of 1996, twenty some odd teams of 7 runners each, plus 45 other individuals started the race on a very difficult and technical course.

Our team was very strong, so were the other teams. It was warm and the altitude played a very important role. The nervous feeling of racing among the best college runners before the race was translated into adrenaline once the race started. My objective was to become an All-American for the second time. In doing that I could help my team to be the best.

We finished 8th beating teams that in the past months we did not beat. We gained respect and admiration with only two years working together with Coach Dilley’s program for Boise State.

I became an All-American with a 12th place finish, 33 places better than the year before and 37 better than 1994’s Nationals.

I have great memories from my time as a distance runner for Coach Dilley and the Boise State program. —VB
In the middle of the championship sandwich

There is one Boise State football championship that sometimes goes forgotten. This is for a number of reasons. The 1977 Big Sky title was on an island between the three consecutive conference crowns in the early 70’s and the Division I-AA national championship of 1980. There was also no postseason appearance to go with it, as Boise State’s game with Idaho had years before been scheduled on Thanksgiving weekend, the same time the NCAA Division II Playoffs started.

There also happened to be no offensive superstar on this exceptional team of 30 years ago. There were some future superstars, but this was a transitional year—Jim Criner’s second season as BSU head coach after a 5-5-1 record in 1976. The offense was evolving from the pass-happy days of Tony Knap to a tailback-oriented ground-pounder, and it turned out to be way ahead of schedule. The 1976 season had ended with resounding victories over Idaho State and Weber State, allowing the Broncos to avoid their first losing season as a four-year school. Criner maintained it was a sign of things to come.

The first sign of change came in the season opener at Weber, when true freshman Cedric Minter rushed for 74 yards on 14 carries and scored the first of his 43 career touchdowns to key a 19-9 victory. As the season progressed, another true freshman emerged. Terry Zahner broke out with the Broncos’ first-ever 200-yard rushing game in a 26-13 win over Northern Arizona that ended up deciding the Big Sky title. Zahner ran for 205 yards and Minter for 113—no two Bronco freshmen would notch 100-yard games on the same night for the next 30 years, until D.J. Harper and Jeremy Avery did it this fall at Fresno State.

It was an eventful and odd campaign. In the second game of the season, Fresno State clubbed BSU, 42-7, holding the Broncos to 69 yards of total offense—still the school record for futility. The very next week, they exploded for 629 yards in a 45-14 rout of UNLV, at the time the second-highest offensive total in school history. That game against the Rebels brought Knap home for the first time since leaving for Las Vegas, and was a particular feather in Criner’s cap. Montana State followed, coming into Bronco Stadium as Division II’s top-ranked team and defending national champion. The Broncos won that one, 26-0.

The Big Sky championship wasn’t decided until November 26, with the Broncos needing a win in the Kibbie Dome. They delivered with a 44-14 triumph, letting that game suffice as their own little “bowl game” in the absence of a playoff berth. Eight players were named first-team All-Big Sky, including three of the five offensive line starters, Harold Cotton, Mark Villano and Alva Liles. Joining them were cornerback Ken West, linebacker Willie Beamon, defensive tackle Chris Malmgren, wide receiver Terry Hutt, and Zahner. Cotton and Hutt were also tabbed as first team Division II All-Americans. Minter’s accolades would come in ensuing years as he went on to become BSU’s career rushing leader. And a number of freshmen 30 years ago would be celebrating with him again as seniors.

—VB
Our mission is to encourage and promote the heritage, traditions, success of Boise State student-athletes and Boise State athletics for all Broncos; to honor the legacy, and preserve the qualities that represent being a Boise State Bronco.

Send your photos and info to:
Michel Bourgeau
Varsity B Club Coordinator
Varsity B Club
1910 University Dr.
Boise, ID 83725-1020
michelbourne@boisestate.edu
208-426-5440
It’s amazing how a program can grow over the course of two decades—and how much it means to the people who were a part of it. At the Homecoming Game on September 15, Boise State welcomed back members of the Blue Thunder Marching Band from every year of its existence—all the way back to its debut performance in 1987.

Band alumni and their families gathered for a downtown reception and the pep rally on Friday night, then reconvened for a Hawaiian tailgate before the game. Many joined the current band for its pre-game performance, reliving the adrenaline rush of performing on the blue for an audience of 30,000. The national anthem was conducted by Peter Arashiro, one of the band’s first drum majors. At halftime the alumni were recognized on the field, and five were named to the Blue Thunder Hall of Fame. In attendance were benefactors Keith and Catherine Stein, whose 1986 endowment made the creation of Blue Thunder possible.

Perhaps the most poignant moment was when the full ensemble gathered before pre-game, under the trees in the same place they’ve gathered for the past twenty years. The alumni, gathered in the middle around Director David A. Wells, took a moment to honor those fallen and to reflect on the impact a season (or twelve) in Blue Thunder had on their lives. There were few dry eyes as the band linked arms—past to future—and turned to march into the stadium one more time. —VB

Blue Thunder Marching Band
20 year Reunion

by Kate Baker, former member of the Blue Thunder from 1999-2004. During that time, she was a member of the saxophone line, a section leader and band council president. She became a staff member/graduate assistant in 2004 until 2006 and returned again in the fall of 2007.

Interview with...
Jennifer Woodfield
VOLLEYBALL 1993-1996

HOMETOWN: (where did you grow up and where do you live?) La Grande, OR – Boise, Idaho


FAMILY: Oldest sibling of 7; 6 girls, 1 boy – have a chocolate lab named Berkeley.

JOB: Respiratory Specialty Sales Representative, Sanofi-Aventis pharmaceutical co.

FONDEST MEMORY AS A STUDENT:
Internship at ISBDC.

FONDEST MEMORY AS A BOISE STATE STUDENT-ATHLETE: Home games, beating Idaho.

FAVORITE PLACE ON CAMPUS:
Bronco Gym.

THOUGHTS ON COACHES: Mike Waller was our rock through good and bad times.

HOW HAS THE UNIVERSITY AND ATHLETICS CHANGED SINCE YOU LEFT? Moved from the Big West to the WAC.

LIFE AFTER BOISE STATE? Career in pharmaceutical sales, 6 years with Merck, 3 years with sanofi-aventis. Just finished second year coaching high school volleyball at Centennial.

WHAT STANDS OUT THE MOST ABOUT BOISE STATE?
Fiesta Bowl.

WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU MOST ENJOY WATCHING?
Football, soccer.

WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE VARSITY B CLUB?
Great opportunity to see old teammates and other BSU alumni.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU TO BE A BOISE STATE BRONCO?
Being a Bronco is a family thing…I have 3 sisters who are Broncos. It runs in our blood!
We are sad to report that Ron Heffner (69) passed away on October 28th, 2007. Ron Heffner was recruited by Coach Lyle Smith to play for the Broncos in 1956. Ron came to Boise from Glenns Ferry and played defensive back and wing back for the Powerful Boise Junior College Broncos. Ron was known for his great hands and his hard nose play on defense. After the 1956 season Ron was called on by the military and served in Washington DC. Ron then returned to Idaho and established himself as a very successful business man in the real estate market and founded Heffner Realty which helped contribute to Boise’s growth. Ron was very much involved with Boise State athletics, he served as Bronco Athletic Association president for the 1991-1992 season. Ron’s son Terry who graduated from Bishop Kelly HS played for the Bronco football team from 1986 to 1990. Ron Heffner was a true Bronco and will be missed.

The Passing of a Bronco

We are sad to report that Ron Heffner (69) passed away on October 28th, 2007. Ron Heffner was recruited by Coach Lyle Smith to play for the Broncos in 1956. Ron came to Boise from Glenns Ferry and played defensive back and wing back for the Powerful Boise Junior College Broncos. Ron was known for his great hands and his hard nose play on defense. After the 1956 season Ron was called on by the military and served in Washington DC. Ron

The tradition continues...

The football tradition at Boise State has been envied by many and duplicated by few.

College went on to win the Camelia Bowl Championship in 1971 with a team that was not to be denied. The 1971 season included a 42-14 ambush of the University of Idaho Vandals. Coach Jim Criner followed up with nothing short of a Cinderella season in 1980 when Boise State Broncos notched the 1-AA National Championship by beating former National Champs, Eastern Kentucky Colonels. Finally Pokey Allen put the entire state of Idaho on a “magic carpet” ride in 1994 taking the Broncos to the cusp of another National Championship against Youngstown State in the 1-AA National Championship losing 28-14. Pokey left his mark with his winning ways, and flamboyant personality.

These four memorable coaches are captured in “The Tradition Continues” lithograph which is being offered by Gallery 601, this is a very limited print which is autographed by each coach. Proceeds from the sale of the print will help the Varsity B club continue its effort to reach out to all former Broncos.

Interview with...

Tyree Kiser

FOOTBALL 1958-1959

JOB: Retired from the Federal Government – Department of Defense (Intelligence)

FONDEST MEMORY AS A STUDENT: The great outdoors of Idaho

FONDEST MEMORY AS A BOISE STATE STUDENT-ATHLETE: Making friends with all the Hawaiian players on our team.

FAVORITE PLACE ON CAMPUS: Football Stadium

HOW HAS THE UNIVERSITY AND ATHLETICS CHANGED SINCE YOU LEFT? Mucho Grande!! Our football

THOUGHTS ON COACHES: All great, especially coach Lyle Smith

HOMETOWN: (where did you grow up and where do you live?) Williamson, West Virginia, graduated from high school in 1952 I currently live in Star, Idaho

DEGREES: A.A. Boise Junior College in 1959 B.A. Economics, Marshall University in 1965

FAMILY: Wife – Betty Jo Daughters – Tamara, Tarita, Tabitha Grand Kids – Samantha and Ty Cantelo, Taryn Anderson

When Lyle Smith set foot on the Boise Junior College Campus in 1946 he kicked off a program that rolled over opponents like no other, winning the National Junior College Championship in 1958.

Tony Knap hired by Lyle Smith to continue the tradition as Boise State