Cortland to Recognize Career of Former Football Coach Roger Robinson Oct. 1

SUNY Cortland will be honoring the late Roger Robinson, the school’s former head football coach and director of athletics, on Saturday, Oct. 1, as the Red Dragons play host to Montclair State.

Robinson’s family, friends and former players have been invited to campus for the festivities, which include an invitation-only pre-game brunch in the school’s Hall of Fame Room at 11:30 a.m. and a halftime recognition ceremony. Current Cortland head coach Dan MacNeill, who played under Robinson from 1975-78, and Cortland President Erik J. Bitterbaum are scheduled to make remarks at the brunch. Cortland Director of Athletics Joan Sitterly and C-Club President Louis Pettinelli will present a plaque to Robinson’s family at halftime.

Robinson was Cortland’s head football coach from 1963-79 and director of athletics from 1976-79. He ranks second at the College with 17 football head coaching seasons and 70 career victories. His 1964 squad won its first eight games before missing a chance at a small college bowl game with a 7-0 loss to also-unbeaten Montclair State in the season finale. Robinson’s teams also posted seven wins in 1965 and six victories in 1966 and 1972.

Robinson was also a dedicated researcher of football head and neck injuries. His research involved work with 110 ECAC member institutions in the early 1970s as part of an NCAA grant.

Born in Endicott, N.Y., Robinson graduated from Union-Endicott High School and earned both bachelor’s and master’s degrees from Syracuse University. As an undergraduate, he started at tailback, played defensive safety and was a nationally ranked punter for the Syracuse football squad. He graduated in 1947 and, as a senior, competed in the East-West Shrine Game in San Francisco.

He was drafted by the Washington Redskins, but instead chose to pursue coaching. Robinson was a line coach under Andy Kerr at Lebanon Valley College from 1948-50 and was the head football and track coach at Port Jervis (NY) High School from 1951-56. He then spent six seasons at Harvard University as the backfield coach and freshman track coach.

Robinson retired from Cortland in 1985. He passed away in April, 2004, and was survived by his wife of 57 years, Helen, seven children, 20 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

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