

SPORTS

Gridiron Club puts on another five star extravaganza

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The Marblehead Gridiron Club held its 17th annual Hall of Fame dinner and induction ceremony at the Gerry 5 last Saturday night. Danny Sullivan ('43), Bill Gillis ('55), Peter Maitland ('61), Harry Palmer ('49), Larry DiGiammarino ('78) were the 1999 inductees, which now brings the Hall of Fame total to 71.

"The five of them are all quality people, and it's our pleasure to have them in the Hall," Gridiron Club President and Treasurer William S. "Esso" Haines stated afterwards. "They are definitely a plus for the Hall, and they were just great players for Marblehead."

Sullivan talked about his playing days in the early 40's. "I wore the number one, as that was the only number that would fit," he remarked last Saturday night. "We only had one home game my senior year (the last year Marblehead was undefeated), and we had to get rides to the games. I don't think I'd be able to play today, because I'm only 5-5. Players are so big nowadays, and there was no such thing as a weight room back then."

He mentioned the legendary Trem Robards for giving him confidence. "He inspired me in showing that a little guy can indeed play football. Coach George Moriarity was much more than a coach, he was like a second father to me. My induction is a tribute to all my coaches."

Gillis and Maitland both mentioned another Hall of Famer, who was an inspiration to them when they were growing up playing for the black and red, "Bill Goodwin taught me how to be tough, and he was like an idol to me," said Gillis about Goodwin, who was inducted two

years ago.

"Bill Goodwin certainly had an impact on me," stated Maitland. "He was my line coach, and he helped me develop my work ethic in regards to discipline and teamwork. I was absolutely fortunate to have him help me."

Goodwin then talked about the two of them. "I knew Bill when he was just a youngster, and he hung out at the Green Street Playground. He was our water boy, but when he played he was one of those kids who really was a fighter. I played against him when he was at UConn (the University of Connecticut) and I was at UMass (the University of Massachusetts), and he hit me the hardest I've ever been hit. Peter was the most coachable kid that I ever coached. He wasn't too big, but he was tough, and he had the speed, attitude and desire to learn and to play. I'm very proud of them, and they certainly both deserve to be in the Hall."

Gillis, whose induction into the Hall marks the third father and son combination to be enshrined in Marblehead, mentioned that he had a handicap, but overcame it to achieve success as a player, coach, and athletic director. "I could only see out of one eye, and I know I wouldn't be able to play today. Marblehead was rich in athletic tradition, just like Notre Dame, and there are so many memories in this room. One of the men who I looked up to was George MacDonald, as he was like an older brother to me, especially when my father died when I was 10. He wore number six, when he was playing, and I wore that number when I was in high school because of him."

Maitland has a rich family football tradition, as his father played for



PHOTO BY BOB ROCHE

Larry DiGiammarino, Peter Maitland, Bill Gillis and Danny Sullivan, left to right, were on hand last Saturday night at the Gerry 5 in order to be inducted into the Marblehead Gridiron Club Hall of Fame. Harry Palmer, who was on vacation, was also one of this year's Hall of Famers.

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Swampscott, and his four younger brothers suited up for the Magicians. "The team was winless in my sophomore year, and believe me when I say that was certainly a character builder. Two years later in my senior year, everything turned around, because of coach Noel Reebeacker, Bill Goodwin and 'Spinner' Martin. Playing football taught me many things, and it established many friendships that I still carry to this day," said Maitland. DiGiammarino mentioned how ex-

cited he is of being inducted into the Hall. "It gives me goosebumps, and I can still vividly see all those memories from the 1977 team. I was in Alex's (Kulevich) office other day, and I saw in his trophy case a picture of our offensive unit, and that was just a great sight to see."

Kulevich talked about DiGiammarino's work ethic and attitude. "He was a great athlete, having played both baseball and basketball, but he needed to be convinced to play football. He only played that one year, but certainly did very well. Now, he's giving back to the town as a member of the school committee, and it's an honor for me to see him giving back to the community. I'm very proud of his accomplishments."

DiGiammarino talked about the lessons he learned from football. "You're dependent on 10 other people to help achieve your goal, and football is a unique sport in which it teaches you how to get up when you're down. It teaches you how to

persevere, and those are lessons in which I carry to this day. I grew up in Malden, and went to school there for the first six grades. I remember crying when we left Malden to move to Marblehead, because I wanted to wear the blue and gold of Malden. Instead, I wore the black and red of Marblehead, and I was honored to have done so. I'm a Header for life."

Palmer, the fifth inductee, was unable to attend the ceremony, because he was on vacation in England. Bob Russell, a former teammate, stood up for him as he was being honored with the rest of the 1999 Hall of Fame Gridiron Club class.

Palmer stated in a letter that Russell read: "I had two wonderful coaches with two very completely different styles. Dave Morey was a perfectionist, while Herm Hussey (inducted in 1993) was low key in his approach. Morey was a great motivational speaker, but the two of them made playing football so much fun."