

New Football Building Dedicated at Homecoming



Mrs. Kathleen Elam cuts the ribbon to officially open the Bob Carroll Football Building.

When Bob Carroll came to the University of

Tennessee at Martin to coach football in 1956, his office was in the old football gym near the stage. At the back of his office, where some of the mortar had fallen, he could peek outside and get a glimpse of the sun shining.

That old football gym, office space for the football coaching staff and locker room facilities, was considered state-of-the-art when it was built in 1930. Even in the late 1950s, Carroll and his staff thought the gym was something special. "That building was a showcase back then because of the flooring in the gym," Carroll said.

In reality that old gym was antiquated then and should have been renovated long ago.

During the 2002 Homecoming game at Martin, with Chancellor Nick Dunagan and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Phil Dane, a new football operations building was dedicated and named after Carroll, the winningest coach in UT Martin football history and coach of the 1967 Tangerine Bowl team.

"Homecoming and Bob Carroll were synonymous for the more than 15 years he led our alumni affairs office, so I think it is fitting that we honored him on homecoming," Dunagan said. The new facility will serve as

the home of Skyhawk football. The 17,000 square-foot facility is located in the south end-zone of Hardy M. Graham Stadium and has office space for all football personnel, as well as meeting rooms, a locker room, a training room, equipment room and a multi-purpose room with a glass wall overlooking the field.

Carroll, the building's namesake, began serving UT Martin as a student leader and football player in 1952. He was voted team captain and was the president of the "T Club." He received the highest honor a team can give when he was selected as the Most Valuable Player in 1952 and 1953. He continued his football-playing career by transferring to Wyoming where he became an Academic All-American.

After graduating from the University of Wyoming in 1956, Carroll returned to UT Martin and began a successful coaching career that spanned almost three decades. In 1967, his UT Martin football team won the Tangerine Bowl and compiled a record of 10 wins and one loss. Carroll coached his teams to more wins than any other coach in the history of UT Martin football.

Carroll wrapped up his coaching career after the 1974 season and became assistant

athletics director. He continued in that role until 1980 when he was appointed to the University of Tennessee alumni affairs staff to coordinate UT Martin alumni activities and University of Tennessee alumni activities for all West Tennessee counties.

Carroll's influence on the athletics program is still felt today as he serves on the board of directors for the UT Martin Skyhawks. Carroll, also a tenured professor in the history department, retired in 1997. He authored *The First 100 Years: The History of the University of Tennessee at Martin*.

"Bob Carroll's impact on the lives of young people and the university in general has directly affected the university's ability to fund this project from private sources," Dunagan said.

Former football players, and many others associated with teams Carroll coached, contributed to this project.

Mrs. Kathleen Elam, wife of the late Tom Elam, was the primary donor to the project. Mrs. Elam recognized Carroll's contributions to the university and consented to the building being named in his honor. "Anytime you think of UT Martin football you think of Bob Carroll. I am extremely pleased that the UT Board of Trustees has recognized Coach Carroll in this way," Dane said.

Throughout his career at the university, Carroll has recognized the need for a new football facility. The Bob Carroll Football Building is an icon facility: it marks the beginning of a new tradition at UT Martin.

"I'm glad this building was built," Carroll said. "It will give the football team and athletics at the university an edge that it has needed for a long time. I think back a lot to the people that I worked with and the people in the community. You can be assured that you are never alone when you are doing something, and you don't get there by yourself. A lot of people have been a big help to me and I appreciate all they've done."