

FORTY-FIVE YEARS LATER: Standout athletes visit old teammates at Missouri Hall of Fame induction

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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Two former standout area athletes recently had one of their biggest athletic accomplishments, being inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame.

The two inductees were Ricci Stotler, a Civic Memorial High School graduate, and Chuck Colclasure, an East Alton-Wood River High School graduate. Stotler was a defensive back and placekicker and Colclasure was a tight end for Missouri.

Both were members of the 1969 University of Missouri football team, considered one of the greatest in school history finishing with a 9-1 regular season record and one loss 31-24 to Colorado. The Tigers lost 10-3 to Penn State in the Orange Bowl that season. Colclasure, Ricci and their teammates from the 1969 Missouri team were inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame. Chris Carpenter of the St. Louis Cardinals and Billy Butler of the Kansas City Royals were also enshrined. A total of 1,700 attended the event.

Ricci said the best part of the whole affair was reuniting with other teammates he hadn't seen for 45 years.

"It was a good experience," he said. "I think everyone felt that way. After a few minutes of stories about how we should have done this or that it brought back a lot of memories."

Ricci said he was fortunate to play on both excellent high school and college teams. He obtained a degree in education and has had a fencing business with a Brighton address for 40 years.

"I operate out of my home," he said. "It has been pretty good to me. Everything I did on the football and basketball court takes second to my family. I couldn't be more proud of my kids and their successes."



Mel Gray, the famed speedster receiver, was in attendance and Colclasure spent time with him.

“Mel is a real good guy,” Colclasure said. “He is humble even after his great accomplishments.”

Colclasure graduated from Wood River High School in 1966 and was redshirted his freshman year. He also played in the 1970 season for Missouri. Colclasure qualified for state in track his junior and senior years in high jump and was also on some relay teams.

The East Alton-Wood River High School graduate said the main thrill was seeing so many people from the 1969 team.

“We had over 40 guys return,” he said. “We got to reminisce and we were just like buddies again. Everybody got along. It had been a lifetime since we had last seen each other.”

At Missouri, Colclasure said he had a spiritual awakening after being with some teammates on a Campus Crusade for Christ at the school.

“I planned on going to medical school, but I decided to forego that and attended Westminster Theological Seminary and became a Presbyterian minister. He was in the ministry for about 10 years and eventually started a few businesses in Atlanta.

He said most of all, it was a great honor to be included in the enshrinement, but what he treasured most was renewing the friendships of the past.

“It was interesting to see how everybody has done and how down to earth and loving the guys were,” he said. “It was like we were still in the huddle.”