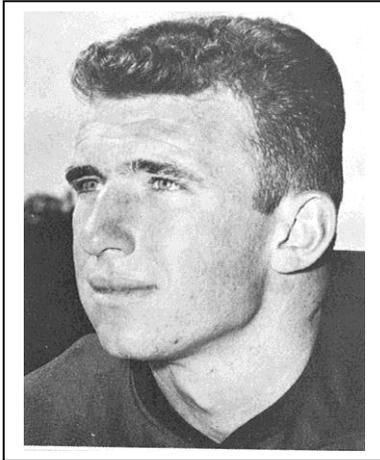


M-CLUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SPORTS HALL OF FAME

HAROLD HAYS

FOOTBALL: 1960-1961-1962

Inducted: May 7, 1977



When we are young we dream of playing football. For some that dream never gets beyond the backyard or the school yard. For others it ends after high school. But for others that dream continues on to a college campus and a chance to live out a dream that few are able to.

Harold Hays was one of those that was able to live out that dream and in the process loved every minute of it. To say that Hays loved the game of football would be an understatement, because it was something that he lived and breathed. He would spend every waking moment thinking, studying or playing football.

As a member of Coach Pie Vann's Southern Miss teams of 1960 through 1962, Hays was as good a center and linebacker as the school has ever had. After finishing at Hattiesburg (Miss.) High School, Hays went into the military with but one thing in mind. To learn the game of football, then return to play football at Southern Miss.

He returned from the service in time for spring practice of 1960 and immediately showed the coaching staff he had the size and skills,

not to mention the desire and savvy to play on the college level.

Serving as a backup and seeing time on the special teams was the role Hays settled into during the 1960 season and he was able to make considerable contributions to the team that year. His emergence solved a bit of a depth problem for the team and the coaches quickly saw they could rely on Hays.

The 1960 team finished the year 6-4, while averaging 347.8 yards and 18.9 points a game and giving up only 220.4 yards and 9.6 points per game.

Heading into the 1961 season Hays had improved enough that Vann was counting on him to be one of the leaders on the team, not to mention the fact that he was already getting attention as possibly one of the best centers in the South.

Now solidly entrenched in the starting lineup Hays led the team to an 8-2 record and the Southern defense was one of the nation's best. They allowed only 6.8 points a game and 197.0 yards per game that season, while allowing only two opponents to score more than seven points. Offensively Hays led an run oriented attack that averaged 320.3 yards a game, 209.1 on the ground.

Hays served as co-captain of the 1962 team along with Johnny Sklopan and the team would go on to finish 9-1 and win its second UPI College Division national Championship.

Hays of course relished his role as captain and leader of the team and the defense again was one of the country's best. Opponents would average only 170.5 yards and 6.7 points a game, while the explosive Southern offense would average 343.5 yards and 26.5 points a game.

He would go on to play in the 1963 Senior Bowl and be drafted in the 14th round of the NFL draft by Dallas and the 26th round of the AFL draft by Houston. Hays would play for the Cowboys and San Francisco from 1963 to 1969.

His love of the game and his desire to go full out every time he played is something Southern Miss fans have never forgotten and one reason Hays is a Southern Hall of Famer.

