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Wyoming Seniors Chase Johnson and John Wendling Earn First Team All-Mountain West Conference Honors, Four Cowboys Named Second Team All-MWC and Four Earn Honorable Mention

Laramie, Wyo. (Dec. 5, 2006) -- University of Wyoming senior offensive tackle **Chase Johnson** and senior strong safety **John Wendling** were named to the **First Team All-Mountain West Conference** squad on Tuesday in voting by the nine MWC head football coaches and media members covering each of the nine schools.

Johnson concluded his Wyoming career starting 47 consecutive games, dating back to the very first game of his redshirt freshman season. He was also named to the preseason watch list for the 2006 Outland Trophy (Top Lineman in the nation). Wendling ended his college career ranked No. 10 on the Wyoming career tackle list with 259. He was named to the preseason watch lists for both the Jim Thorpe Award (Top Defensive Back in the nation) and Bronko Nagurski Award (Top Defensive Player in the nation). Wendling is also one of 17 finalists for the Draddy Trophy, which is awarded each year by the National Football Foundation (NFF) to the top football scholar-athlete in the country. Both Johnson and Wendling were honorable mention All-MWC selections in 2004 and 2005, prior to earning First Team honors this season.

The four Cowboys who earned Second Team All-Conference honors were: **Wade Betschart** (junior tight end), **Ward Dobbs** (sophomore linebacker), **Jason Karcher** (senior center) and **Corey Mace** (senior defensive end).

Four other Cowboys were named Honorable Mention All-MWC. The Honorable Mention Cowboys were:

Michael Ford, Jr., Wide Receiver

Dorsey Golston, Sr., Free Safety

Aaron Robbins, Sr., Defensive End

Julius Stinson, Jr., Cornerback

The **MWC Offensive Player of the Year** was **John Beck, Sr., QB, BYU**.

Utah senior defensive back Eric Weddle won the **Defensive Player of the Year** award for the second consecutive year.

Senior place-kicker Kenny Byrd of New Mexico and **sophomore place-kicker/punter Louie Sakoda of Utah** were voted **Co-Special Teams Players of the Year**.

The **Freshman of the Year** was **UNLV wide receiver Ryan Wolfe**.

BYU's Bronco Mendenhall earned **Coach of the Year** honors.

TCU led the league in First and Second Team selections with 10. BYU was second with nine. New Mexico was third with seven First and Second Team honorees. Wyoming and Utah tied for fourth with six selections, followed by UNLV with five. Air Force had three honorees, and Colorado State and San Diego State each had two selections.

Here are some notes on Wyoming's All-Conference honorees.

2006 First Team All-MWC

#73 Chase Johnson

Senior - Offensive Tackle

- Chase Johnson was selected to the Outland Trophy watch list his senior season of 2006.
- He was ranked as the No. 30 best Offensive Tackle in the nation by [Phil Steele's 2006 College Football Preview](#).
- Johnson started every game at left offensive tackle from the very first game of his redshirt freshman season through his senior season -- 47 consecutive starts.
- His 47 consecutive starts ranks him ninth in the nation of all players at all positions for most consecutive starts.
- His blocking up front enabled Wyoming quarterback Karsten Sween to rank No. 6 in the MWC in passing and running backs Wynel Seldon and Devin Moore to rank No. 7 and No. 8, respectively, in the conference in rushing.
- His blocking also helped running backs Seldon and Moore to combine for 1,184 rushing yards in 2006.
- An Honorable Mention All-MWC selection in 2004 and 2005.
- Considered Wyoming's best pass blocker by the Wyoming coaching staff.
- Elected one of two team captains in 2006.

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2006 First Team All-MWC (Continued)

#23 John Wendling

Senior - Strong Safety

- John Wendling led the Wyoming Cowboys in tackles in 2006 with 78.
- He ranked No. 13 in the MWC in tackles, averaging 6.5 tackles per game from his strong safety position.
- Wendling is one of 17 national finalists for the National Football Foundation's Draddy Trophy which honors the nation's top football scholar-athlete for a combination of achievement on the football field, in the classroom and in the community. He will take part in the NFF annual ceremonies on Dec. 5 in New York City.
- He was named to both the Jim Thorpe and Bronko Nagurski watch lists in 2006.
- He was the leader of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- The leader of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).
- The senior ranked No. 10 in the conference in fumble recoveries, averaging 0.17 per game.
- He returned one fumble 54 yards for a touchdown against Air Force.
- Three times this season, Wendling recorded double figures in tackles -- 14 vs. Air Force, 11 at BYU and 10 vs. Colorado State.
- An amazingly versatile player, he not only started all 12 games at strong safety, but he ranked second for the Cowboys in kickoff returns (11 for 202 yards), and as the personal protector on punts, he faked six punts, rushing for 119 yards.
- Wendling concluded his Wyoming career ranked No. 10 in career tackles, with 259.
- A 2006 Preseason All-MWC selection.
- A 2004 and 2005 Honorable Mention All-MWC selection.
- Elected one of two team captains in 2006.

2006 Second Team All-MWC

#46 Wade Betschart

Junior - Tight End

- Wade Betschart led Wyoming tight ends with 18 receptions.
- He also led UW tight ends in receiving yards, with 146.
- Scored two receiving TDs, the most of any Cowboy tight end.
- In addition to being an outstanding receiving tight end, Betschart also was the lead blocker for the Cowboy rushing attack coming out of the backfield from his H-Back position. His blocking enabled Wyoming running backs Wynel Seldon and Devin Moore to rank No. 7 and No. 8, respectively, in the conference in rushing.
- His blocking also helped running backs Seldon and Moore to combine for 1,184 rushing yards in 2006.
- Betschart also was a key contributor on special teams as part of several return teams.
- He recovered two fumbles on the season to tie for the team lead and tie for 10th in the MWC in that category.

#29 Ward Dobbs

Sophomore - Linebacker

- Ward Dobbs ranked No. 2 on the Wyoming team with 69 total tackles in 2006.
- He ranked No. 17 in the MWC in tackles, averaging 5.8 per game.
- He was named MWC Defensive Player of the Week for his performance versus Utah as he recorded 8 tackles, 2.0 sacks, and forced one fumble in a 31-15 Wyoming victory.
- His other outstanding games came against: Air Force (18 tackles and 1.0 TFL); Boise State (12 tackles and 0.5 TFL); BYU (6 tackles); and Colorado State (5 tackles).
- He was part of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- Part of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).
- An Honorable Mention All-MWC selection as a redshirt freshman in 2006.

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2006 Second Team All-MWC (Continued)

#69 Jason Karcher

Senior - Center

- Jason Karcher was the only center in the Mountain West Conference named to the Dave Rimington Trophy watch list in 2006.
- A fierce competitor, Karcher started the first 37 consecutive games of his Wyoming career at center, right guard and right tackle, before suffering torn cartilage in his right knee against Virginia in the second game of the 2006 season. After undergoing arthroscopic surgery, he missed only three games and then returned to start the last seven games of '06.
- His blocking up front enabled Wyoming quarterback Karsten Sween to rank No. 6 in the MWC in passing and running backs Wynel Seldon and Devin Moore to rank No. 7 and No. 8, respectively, in the conference in rushing.
- His blocking also helped running backs Seldon and Moore combine for 1,184 rushing yards in 2006.
- Considered Wyoming's best run blocker by the Wyoming coaching staff.
- An unselfish and versatile offensive lineman, he moved to center in the spring of 2006 to help the Cowboy offense. He also played right guard and right tackle during his four years as a starter.
- An Honorable Mention All-MWC selection in 2005.

#95 Corey Mace

Senior, Defensive End

- Corey Mace was Wyoming's top defensive lineman, ranking No. 4 on the team in tackles (51).
- Among defensive linemen in the MWC, Mace ranked among the top tacklers, averaging 4.2 tackles per game -- right behind Tommy Blake of TCU, who averaged 4.3 tackles per game.
- Mace was third in tackles for losses on the UW defense, with 5.5 on the season.
- He had an unbelievable game for a defensive lineman against Air Force, recording 13 total tackles.
- Another outstanding game for the defensive end was against Colorado State, making five tackles, including one TFL and breaking up one pass.
- His high sack game came on the road at Virginia, where he recorded 2.0 sacks in the game.
- He was part of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- Part of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).

2006 Honorable Mention All-MWC

8 Michael Ford

Junior - Wide Receiver

- Michael Ford ranked No. 2 in the MWC and No. 36 in the nation in receptions, averaging 5.00 catches per game.
- He ranked No. 8 in the conference and No. 89 in the country in average receiving yards, averaging 56.2 yards per game.
- Ford caught four TD passes on the season to lead Wyoming and rank No. 6 in the MWC in that category.
- His 674 total receiving yards on the season ranked No. 76 in the nation.
- He led Wyoming in receptions (60), receiving yards (674) and TD receptions (4).
- Very consistent throughout the season, Ford caught four or more passes in 10 of 12 games this season.
- His best day came against Syracuse when he caught 12 passes for 110 yards.
- His best game in conference play this year was versus Utah, as Ford caught five passes for 92 yards and one touchdown.
- He also caught five passes for 58 yards and a TD at New Mexico, had four catches for 72 yards at UNLV and caught four for 72 yards against current No. 11 ranked Boise State.
- Ford caught at least two passes in every game this season, and he has caught at least two in each of his last 14 games.
- He started all 12 games at wide receiver this season for Wyoming.

#24 Dorsey Golston

Senior - Free Safety

- Dorsey Golston ranked No. 3 in the Mountain West Conference in interceptions with 4 on the season.
- Golston also ranked No. 50 in the NCAA in interceptions, averaging 0.33 per game.
- He ranked fifth for the Cowboys in tackles with 46 total tackles in 2006.
- Golston's top performances in '06 came versus: TCU (2 interceptions for 36 yards); New Mexico (6 tackles, 1 forced fumble and 0.5 TFLs); Boise State (8 tackles) and Virginia (5 tackles and 1 interception).
- He was part of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- Part of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).

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2006 Honorable Mention All-MWC (Continued)

#42 Aaron Robbins

Senior - Defensive End

- Aaron Robbins fought back from injuries in each of the last two years to be a key contributor to the Wyoming defense. He
- Robbins led Wyoming in sacks in 2006, with 4.0, despite missing two games with a sprained left knee.
- He ranked No. 7 in the MWC in sacks, averaging 0.40 sacks per game.
- Robbins ranked eighth on the Cowboy team in tackles, averaging 3.1 per game.
- His 5.5 tackles for losses ranked third for the Pokes.
- Robbins' best games of the 2006 season came against BYU (6 tackles and 2.0 sacks) and versus Air Force (5 tackles).
- He was part of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- Part of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).
- Robbins was granted an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA after missing virtually all of the 2005 season due to a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his right knee.
- In 2003, Robbins earned Honorable Mention All-MWC honors as a tight end, prior to him asking to move to the defensive side of the ball in 2004.

#20 Julius Stinson

Junior - Cornerback

- Julius Stinson was a key playmaker for the Cowboy defense in 2006. He ranked No. 3 on the team in tackles, with 57.
- Stinson also ranked among the leading tacklers in the conference among cornerbacks, ranking 29th, only one spot back of Utah's Eric Weddle. In fact, Stinson made just one fewer tackle than Weddle -- 57 to 58.
- Stinson was named MWC Defensive Player of the Week for his performance against Utah. In that game, the junior was credited with 7 tackles and returned an interception 42 yards for a touchdown in a 31-15 Wyoming victory.
- His other outstanding games came: at TCU (9 tackles, 1 PBU); versus Boise State (8 tackles, 1.0 sacks, 1.5 TFLs); against Colorado State (6 tackles); and at New Mexico (1 forced fumble and 1.0 sack).
- He was part of a Wyoming defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in total defense, allowing opponents only 262.9 yards of total offense per game.
- Part of a Wyoming pass defense that ranked No. 8 in the nation in pass defense, allowing opponents only 156.3 yards passing per game.
- Also helped lead the UW pass defense to a No. 14 national ranking in pass defense efficiency (104.9 rating).

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 5, 2005

2006 ALL-MOUNTAIN WEST CONFERENCE FOOTBALL TEAMS

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. - The Mountain West Conference announced the 2006 all-conference football teams and individual award winners today as selected by the nine head coaches and media panel. BYU quarterback **John Beck** was a unanimous choice for the Mountain West Offensive Player of the Year, while Utah defensive back **Eric Weddle** was named MWC Defensive Player of the Year for the second consecutive season. New Mexico place kicker **Kenny Byrd** and Utah place kick/punter Louie Sakoda share the inaugural MWC Special Teams Player of the Year award. Wide receiver **Ryan Wolfe** of UNLV was honored as MWC Freshman of the Year, while **Bronco Mendenhall** of BYU is the MWC Coach of the Year.

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR – JOHN BECK SENIOR, QB, BYU

- Beck is BYU's second MWC Offensive Player of the Year (Luke Staley-2001).
- Beck is the sixth quarterback since the inception of the MWC to be named offensive player of the year.
- Leads the MWC and ranks second nationally in passing efficiency (173.3) and completion percentage (70.4).
- Leads the MWC and ranks fourth nationally, averaging 319.1 yards passing per game.
- Leads the MWC and ranks fourth nationally, averaging 316.0 yards of total offense per game.
- Leads the MWC and ranks fifth nationally with 30 touchdown completions on the season.
- Named the MWC Offensive Player of the Week a league-record seven times during the 2006 season.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE YEAR – ERIC WEDDLE, SENIOR, DB, UTAH

- Weddle is the second player in league history to win back-to-back MWC Defensive Player of the Year honors (Kirk Morrison, LB, San Diego State - 2003-04).
- Ranks first in the MWC and 10th in the nation in interceptions per game (.50-6 INT).
- Recorded 58 total tackles on the season.
- The third player from Utah to be named MWC Defensive Player of the Year (John Frank-1999/Morgan Scalley - 2004-co-player), but the first to win the award in consecutive years.

CO-SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYER OF THE YEAR – KENNY BYRD, PK, NEW MEXICO

- Byrd is a three-time MWC Special Teams Player of the Week in 2006.
- Leads the league and is tied for second on the New Mexico single season list with 18 field goals (18-22) this fall, including a long of 52.
- Is one of two players in the MWC to record a perfect PAT percentage of 1.000, making all 30 attempts.
- Has six multiple field goal games in 2006, including two game-winners on the road at UNLV and at Colorado State.

CO-SPECIAL TEAMS PLAYER OF THE YEAR – LOUIE SAKODA, PK/P, UTAH

- Sakoda is a three-time MWC Special Teams Player of the Week in 2006.
- Averaged 43.9 yards per punt to rank second in the MWC and 13th in the nation.
- Has pinned teams inside their 20 on 28 of his 56 total punts (50%).
- Recorded 13 punts that went 50 yards or longer.
- Is one of two players in the MWC to record a perfect PAT percentage of 1.000, making all 42 attempts. His 42 made PATS leads the Conference.
- Has made 12-of-16 field goals 11-of-12 on field goals under 40 yards.

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FRESHMAN OF THE YEAR – RYAN WOLFE, WR, UNLV

- Wolfe is the fourth freshman of the year honoree in UNLV history and second since the inception of the MWC in 1999. Running Back Dominique Dorsey earned the award in 2001.
- Leads MWC and ranks 23rd in nation with 75.9 receiving yards per game. Is also the second-leading freshman receiver in nation in both receptions (55) and yards (911).
- Top freshman receiver in both MWC and UNLV history.
- Tied MWC freshman record for receiving yards in a game with 176 on career-best nine catches vs. New Mexico.
- Broke the UNLV freshman records for most receptions in a season, most receptions in a game, most receiving yards in a game, most receptions in a game, receptions per game in a season, receiving yards per game in a season.

COACH OF THE YEAR – BRONCO MENDENHALL, BYU

- Selected as conference coach of the year for the first time in his career after leading BYU to a 10-2 overall record and a perfect 8-0 mark in MWC play.
- Second BYU coach to win the MWC Coach of the Year honor. Gary Crowton won the award in 2001.
- Named AFCA Region 5 Coach of the Year.

NOTABLES

- BYU QB **John Beck** and LB **Cameron Jensen**, TCU DL **Tommy Blake** and Utah DB **Eric Weddle** were all unanimous first-team selections.
- BYU QB **John Beck** was a unanimous selection for MWC Offensive Player of the Year.
- Seven student-athletes were repeat first-team all-Conference selections in 2006.
- Wide receiver **Ryan Wolfe** of UNLV was the lone freshman selected to either of the all-conference teams. Wolfe is the fourth freshman, and first wide receiver, in MWC history to earn first-team accolades (DonTrell Moore, TB, New Mexico-2002 (first team)/Lynell Hamilton, RB, San Diego State-2003 (first team), Hoost Marsh, KR, Wyoming-2004 (first team)).
- **Cameron Jensen** (LB-BYU), **Jake Kuresa** (OL-BYU), **Jason Phillips** (LB-TCU) and **Tavo Tupola** (OL-Utah) are all first-team selections in 2006. All four players were second-team honorees in 2005.
- Of the 50 first and second-team selections, 24 were seniors, 17 juniors, eight sophomores and one freshman. The first team had 16 seniors, six juniors, two sophomores and one freshman.
- TCU placed the most players on the two all-conference teams with 10 selections, followed by league-champion BYU with nine. New Mexico was next with seven, followed by Utah and Wyoming each with six and UNLV with five.
- TCU had the most first-team selections with six, followed by BYU and New Mexico with five a piece.

A listing of the 2006 All-Mountain West teams and individual honors are below.

Offensive Player of the Year
John Beck, Sr., QB, BYU#

Defensive Players of the Year
Eric Weddle, Sr., DB, Utah

Co-Special Teams Players of the Year
Kenny Byrd, Sr., PK, New Mexico
Louie Sakoda, So., PK/P, Utah

Freshman of the Year
Ryan Wolfe, Fr., WR, UNLV

Coach of the Year
Bronco Mendenhall, BYU

All-Mountain West First-Team

Offense

<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Cl.</u>	<u>School</u>
QB	John Beck#*	Sr.	BYU
WR	Travis Brown	Jr.	New Mexico
WR	Ryan Wolfe	Fr.	UNLV
RB	Curtis Brown*	Sr.	BYU
RB	Rodney Ferguson	So.	New Mexico
TE	Jonny Harline*	Sr.	BYU
OL	Jake Kuresa	Sr.	BYU
OL	Robert Turner*	Sr.	New Mexico
OL	Herb Taylor*	Sr.	TCU
OL	Tavo Tupola	Sr.	Utah
OL	Chase Johnson	Sr.	Wyoming
PK	Kenny Byrd	Sr.	New Mexico
PR/KR	Brian Bonner	Jr.	TCU

Defense

<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Cl.</u>	<u>School</u>
DL	Tommy Blake#*	Jr.	TCU
DL	Chase Ortiz*	Jr.	TCU
DL	Kelly Talavou	Sr.	Utah
DL	Antwan Applewhite	Jr.	San Diego State
LB	Drew Fowler	Jr.	Air Force
LB	Cameron Jensen#	Sr.	BYU
LB	Jason Phillips	So.	TCU
DB	Quincy Black	Sr.	New Mexico
DB	Marvin White	Sr.	TCU
DB	Eric Weddle#*	Sr.	Utah
DB	John Wendling	Sr.	Wyoming
P	Kip Facer	Sr.	UNLV

#--Unanimous Selection

*--Two-Time First-Team Selection

All-Mountain West Second-Team

Offense

<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Cl.</u>	<u>School</u>
QB	Jeff Ballard	Sr.	TCU
WR	Casey Flair	So.	UNLV
WR	Brent Casteel	So.	Utah
RB	Chad Hall	Jr.	Air Force
RB	Aaron Brown	So.	TCU
TE	Wade Betschart	Jr.	Wyoming
OL	Robert Kraay	Sr.	Air Force
OL	Sete Aulai	Jr.	BYU
OL	Clint Oldenburg	Sr.	Colorado State
OL	Matty Lindner	Jr.	TCU
OL	Jason Karcher	Sr.	Wyoming
PK	Jared McLaughlin	Jr.	BYU
PR/KR	Nate Meikle	Sr.	BYU

Defense

<u>Pos.</u>	<u>Player</u>	<u>Cl.</u>	<u>School</u>
DL	Tyler Donaldson	Jr.	New Mexico
DL	Jeremy Geathers	So.	UNLV
DL	Paul Soliai	Sr.	Utah
DL	Corey Mace	Sr.	Wyoming
LB	Joe Martin	Sr.	San Diego State
LB	Joe Jiannoni	Jr.	Utah
LB	Ward Dobbs	So.	Wyoming
DB	Quinn Gooch	Jr.	BYU
DB	DeAndre Wright	So.	New Mexico
DB	Brian Bonner	Jr.	TCU
DB	Eric Wright	Jr.	UNLV
P	Jimmie Kaylor	Jr.	Colorado State

Honorable Mention

Air Force: Shaun Carney, Jr., QB; Bobby Giannini, Jr., DB; Stuart Perlow, Sr., OL; Gilberto Perez, Sr., DL. BYU: Bryan Kehl, Jr., LB. Colorado State: Luke Adkins, Sr., LB; Josh Day, Sr., OL; Jeff Horinek, So., LB; Klint Kubiak, So., DB; Jesse Nading, Jr., DL; Damon Morton, Jr., WR/KR; Mike Pagnotta, So., DB; Blake Smith, Jr., DL; Kory Sperry, Jr., TE; Johnny Walker, Jr., WR. New Mexico: Glover Quin, So., DB; Marcus Smith, Jr., WR. San Diego State: Atiyah Henderson, Fr., RB; Patrick Justman; Nick Osborn, Jr., DL. TCU: Robert Henson, So., LB; Lonta Hobbs, Sr., RB; Chris Manfredini, Jr., PK; Blake Schlueter, So., OL. UNLV: Howie Fuimaono, Sr., DL; Marco Guerra, Sr., OL; Jay Staggs, Sr., DB. Utah: Jason Boone, Jr., OL; Martail Burnett, Jr., DL; Robert Conley, So., OL; Casey Evans, Sr., DB; Brice McCain, So., KR; Derrek Richards, Jr., WR; Louie Sakoda, So., K/P; Steve Tate, Jr., DB. Wyoming: Michael Ford, Jr., WR; Dorsey Golston, Sr., DB; Aaron Robbins, Sr. DL; Julius Stinson, Jr., DB.