



Tim Griffin becomes FWAA's 67th president

Tim Griffin, a veteran of Big 12 Conference reporting since its inception in 1996, has ascended to the FWAA's presidency for the 2010 season. Griffin became the association's 67th president and assumed his duties at the FWAA's annual awards breakfast on Jan. 7 in Newport Beach, Calif.

The 50-year-old Griffin has worked for ESPN.com the past two years covering the Big 12 Conference. Working tirelessly for the 24-hour blogging operation, Griffin has enhanced his reputation as a mad-dog reporter in Texas and in the Big 12 region.

From 1986-2008, he was a star sports reporter for the *San Antonio Express-News*, where he covered college and professional sports. Since the beginning of the Big 12, he covered that assignment for the paper until moving to ESPN.com.

Before the Big 12 was formed, Griffin worked as national college football and basketball reporter and columnist at the *Express-News*. He also covered professional baseball and football and sports business. By estimates of *Express-News* editors, Griffin has more than 7,000 bylines in *Express-News* archives during his nearly a quarter-of-a-century stay at the paper. That makes him one of the most prolific writers in the paper's history.

Before joining the sports department at the *Express-News*, Griffin was a news

reporter at the same paper from 1984 to 1986 and covered the police beat, general assignments and education. At the time, the *Express-News* and the *San Antonio Light* were embroiled in a newspaper war where work ethic was important in breaking stories.

"I always took pride in my work ethic," Griffin said. "I may not have been the most creative writer at turning a phrase, but no one was going to outwork me."

Born in Campbellsville, Ky., Griffin also resided in Bowling Green, Ky., Carmi, Ill., and Terre Haute, Ind., before his family settled in Memphis.

Griffin started his love affair with newspapers when he was in fifth grade in Memphis.

"My parents never let me read a morning paper because they knew if I ever did, I wouldn't get ready for school," Griffin said.

In those days, Memphis had an afternoon newspaper, *The Press-Scimitar*, so that is the newspaper he would grab after school.

He attended Memphis State starting in 1977. In 1980 he was awarded the Memphis Gridiron Club's Mike McGee Memorial Scholarship. He graduated a year later with a B.A. in Journalism (cum laude) from Memphis State.

Upon graduation Griffin began his newspaper career at the *Temple (Texas) Daily Telegram*. He was a news reporter

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President's column



TIM
GRIFFIN

I saw first-hand a few weeks ago when Texas lost to Alabama in the Bowl Championship Series title game why the fight for our access is so important.

The BCS games, thankfully, are different than most all of college football. Some media members would call them trips to Fantasyland.

Normally, after a Texas or Alabama game during the regular season, we would have been held out of either locker room. Closed locker rooms are the rule during the regular season and have been for many years.

But BCS rules state that post-game locker rooms, after short cooling off periods, are supposed to be open for 30 minutes. When the gathered press corps at the Texas locker room was told interviews would be outside in the hall, several veteran reporters familiar with the BCS rules wouldn't budge. It led to all of us having the opportunity to do our jobs and some fine reporting after the game.

Now, if it could just be as easy during the rest of the season.

Access is by far the biggest issue that faces our profession today. With the proliferation of media sources helping to make college football more popular than ever before, it's tougher to get the basic access to players and coaches that we need to do our jobs.

During the 25 years I've been in the business, things have gradually gotten away from us. Open locker rooms used to be the rule across college football — as they are in most professional sports. It used to be on Friday nights or after the games, many head coaches were even accessible at informal social hours and hospitality rooms. Now, we're lucky to get 10 minutes in a group interview with the men who are working in their jobs

today. How times have changed.

And with it getting tougher and tougher to do our jobs, I think it's vastly important that we recognize the sports information departments that go the extra mile to help us.

With that in mind, we'll be awarding our first "Super 11" to the top sports information departments in the country. We hope this award becomes coveted and is a measure that sets apart the very best in the business for the work they do.

A blue-ribbon panel of selectors from across the country will convene to determine those who will earn our first awards, which will be presented later this spring.

Another plan will be to honor the memory of former *Tallahassee Democrat* reporter Steve Ellis, who passed away last November. Ellis was a tenacious but fair beat reporter covering Florida State for nearly 30 years, including 19 at the *Democrat*.

We want to remember Steve by honoring the nation's very best beat writer. It's something that our organization should do.

Heading into 2010, the FWAA has never been in better shape. More people than ever are covering college football. And thankfully, many of them see the benefits of joining our organization that extend past a Marriott discount card or free access to recruiting websites.

When we work together, we're able to fight for the common good of the profession. It has resulted in open locker rooms at BCS games.

Hopefully, that will only be the start.

Before we start with 2010, we need to look back at the job that Gina Chappin did at the BCS title game with her staff from the Rose Bowl. From the daily e-mails of post practice and arrival quotes from each team to the police-escorted shuttles to the stadium, she should be congratulated. Personal thanks for her holding that last bus as Chris Low and I hammered out our final stories well past even West Coast deadlines for a certain large national website. My gratitude is

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10 conferences represented on Freshman All-America team

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — The Football Writers Association of America and AON Insurance announced their ninth annual Freshman All-America Team during the association's annual awards breakfast. Ten of the 11 NCAA Bowl Subdivision Conferences were represented on the team sponsored by AON Insurance.

The Southeastern Conference and Pac-10 each placed five players on the FWAA team. The Atlantic Coast had four players and the Big East and Big 12 three each. No other conference had more than two

players. Of the 28 players honored, the team was exactly split between true freshmen and redshirt freshmen.

Oregon's first-year coach Chip Kelly was selected as the best first-year coach after leading his team to a Pacific-10 title and berth in the Rose Bowl.

The team and coach are selected by a 11-person panel of nationally prominent writers led by Mike Griffith of the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. Both true freshmen and redshirt freshmen were considered for the team and are so noted.



FWAA Freshman All-America team

OFFENSE		
Pos	Player, School	Hometown
QB	• Tom Savage, Rutgers	Springfield, Pa.
RB	• Dion Lewis, Pittsburgh	Albany, N.Y.
RB	Ryan Williams, Virginia Tech	Manassas, Va.
RB	LaMichael James, Oregon	Texarkana, Tx.
WR	• Eric Page, Toledo	Toledo, Ohio
WR	• Alshon Jeffery, South Carolina	St. Matthews.
TE	• Orson Charles, Georgia	Tampa, Fla.
OL	• David DeCastro, Stanford	Bellevue, Wash.
OL	Aaron Douglas, Tennessee	Maryville, Tenn.
OL	Braden Hansen, Brigham Young	Sandy, Utah
OL	Tanner Hawkinson, Kansas	McPherson, Kan.
OL	Barrett Jones, Alabama	Memphis, Tenn.

DEFENSE		
Pos.	Player, School	Hometown
DE	Nick Perry, USC	Detroit, Mich.
DE	Aldon Smith, Missouri	Raytown, Mo.
DT	Scott Vallone, Rutgers	Central Islip, N.Y.
DT	Jerel Worthy, Michigan State	Huber Heights, Ohio
LB	• Chris Borland, Wisconsin	Kettering, Ohio
LB	• Vontaze Burfict, Arizona St.	Corona, Calif.
LB	• Luke Kuechly, Boston Col.	Cincinnati, Ohio
LB	Brian Wagner, Akron	Springfield, Ohio
CB	• Josh Robinson, UCF	Sunrise, Fla.
CB	Bryan Willis, Troy	Columbus, Ga.
S	John Boyett, Oregon	Napa, Calif.
S	• Shamiel Gary, Wyoming	Tulsa, Okla.

SPECIALISTS		
Pos.	Player, School	Hometown
P	Tress Way, Oklahoma	Tulsa, Okla.
K	• Nick Ferrara, Maryland	Hicksville, N.Y.
KR	• Warren Norman, Vanderbilt	Stone Mountain, Ga.
PR	• Greg Reid, Florida State	Valdosta, Ga.
• Indicates true freshman		

FIRST-YEAR COACH OF THE YEAR	
Chip Kelly	Oregon

Patterson is Coach of the Year

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — TCU coach Gary Patterson has been named the winner of the 2009 FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award. Patterson is the second Mountain West Conference coach in six years to win the honor.

The Eddie Robinson Award, which is sponsored by the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, was highlighted during a reception in Newport Beach, Calif., in conjunction with the 2010 Citi BCS National Championship Game. Coach Patterson received the trophy at that time.

The entire FWAA membership votes on the association's Coach of the Year Award, which was narrowed to seven finalists in early December. Urban Meyer, then at Utah, is the only previous Mountain West Conference coach to win the award in 2004.

Patterson led the Horned Frogs to a 12-0 start and their first undefeated regular season since their 1938 national championship season. TCU also earned its first BCS bowl appearance, a Jan. 4 date in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl, where Boise State ended TCU's perfect season, 17-10.

TCU was the only team in the nation to rank in the top five in both total offense and total defense. The Horned Frogs were No. 1 in total defense for the fourth time in the last 10 seasons and fifth nationally in total offense. In 2009, TCU set single-season school records for points scored (498) and total offense (5,937 yards).

Patterson's 85-28 record (.752) is the best mark of

TCU's four coaches who guided the team in at least 100 games. Patterson's 85 wins are second on the Frogs' career victory list. In terms of victories, he trails only Dutch Meyer (109-79-13, .575), who coached TCU to its 1935 and '38 national championships.

In nine seasons as the head coach at TCU, Patterson has coached 113 All-Conference selections, seven All-Americans, 12 Freshman All-Americans and one Academic All-American. Patterson has had 21 players drafted with a total of 41 in NFL camps.

The FWAA has honored a major-college coach with its Coach of the Year Award since 1957. In 1997, the FWAA coaching award was named after Eddie Robinson, a coaching legend at Grambling State University for 55 years. The late "Coach Rob" had more Division I victories (408) than any other coach. Robinson passed away on April 4, 2007, but his legacy will certainly not be forgotten. He coached his entire career at Grambling and produced numerous professional players and coaches as well as players who graduated and distinguished themselves in other professional endeavors.

The Eddie Robinson Museum will be dedicated in mid-February in Grambling, La. A gala banquet is scheduled at the Grambling State University Assembly Center on Feb. 12. Many of the former National Football League players guided by Robinson during his record-setting career at Grambling are scheduled to attend the banquet and the museum's ribbon-cutting ceremony on Feb. 13.

Pictured at the presentation of the FWAA Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award are FWAA 2009 President George Schroeder, TCU coach Gary Patterson, Eddie Robinson Jr., and Tostitos Fiesta Bowl chairman Alan Young. (Photo courtesy of Pasadena Tournament of Roses Archives.)



Tom Mickle named posthumous winner of Bert McGrane Award

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — The late Tom Mickle has been awarded the FWAA's prestigious Bert McGrane Award posthumously, it was announced at the association's annual awards breakfast on Jan. 7.

The McGrane Award, symbolic of the association's Hall of Fame, is presented to an FWAA member who has performed great service to the organization or the writing profession. It is named after McGrane, a Des Moines, Iowa, writer who was the executive secretary of the FWAA from the early 1940s until 1973.

The 55-year-old Mickle, who was the Executive Director of Florida Citrus Sports at the time of his death in 2006, was a long-time FWAA member who championed writers' causes.

When Mickle was an assistant commissioner in the Atlantic Coast Conference, he was instrumental in developing what is now the Bowl Championship Series. And, at the time, Mickle was the point person who encouraged the FWAA to move its meetings to the championship game site each year and worked out the details for the move to happen in the mid 1990s.

But just as significant was his passion for the FWAA's All-America team. Shortly after he went to Florida Citrus Sports in 2002, Mickle's group started hosting the FWAA All-America Team celebration on the floor of the Citrus Bowl Stadium. Eventually, the All-America event was moved to the Disney property and aired on ABC-Television. Thanks to Mickle and his initial ties with ABC, the FWAA All-America team is still announced on ABC-ESPN each year.

A native of Media, Pa., Mickle attended Duke Univer-

sity and graduated in 1972. He remained there and worked in several capacities in sports information and the Varsity Club, the Blue Devils' fundraising group for former athletes. He joined the ACC and became Commissioner Gene Corrigan's right hand man. He helped negotiate blockbuster television deals in basketball and football for the ACC and the league's first series of bowl agreements.

On the back of a cocktail napkin, Mickle sketched the beginnings of what has turned out to be the BCS. The Bowl Coalition started in 1992 and eventually became the BCS.

In 2002, Mickle was named to replace Chuck Rohe as executive director of Florida Citrus Sports. He held that post until his death.

Shortly thereafter, the BCS established an internship program in Mickle's memory. In late 2006, the Citrus Bowl renamed its press box after Mickle. A brushed aluminum plaque that features Mickle's face now resides between the stadium's main television and radio booths.

Mickle's widow, Jill, will accept the Bert McGrane Award this summer in South Bend, Ind., during the National Football Foundation's Hall of Fame enshrinement weekend. Mickle's name will be placed in the College Football Hall of Fame's rotunda on a special plaque that includes the names of all the other McGrane winners



Tom Mickle

President's column (continued)

immense.

I'd like to congratulate my predecessor George Schroeder for all that he has done as he served as FWAA's president. He has set a high standard for me to follow.

I'm excited and honored to have been selected for this position. When I look at some of the names of the legends of our profession who have preceded me, I'm humbled by the opportunity to follow in what they have done.

The 2010 season will mark my 25th season covering college football. I've seen it gradually evolve over the years from the days when clunky couplers were needed to send a story to today where wireless access is a necessity.

It has been fun seeing most aspects change.

I just hope that the crusty old-timers from this era won't be sitting back a few years from now talking about how the access got away from us over the years.

You may contact me at timgriffin@satx.rr.com.

Bama wins Grantland Rice Trophy

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. —Following its 37-21 win over Texas in the Citi BCS National Championship Game, the Alabama Crimson Tide (14-0) received the 2009 Grantland Rice Trophy from the Football Writers Association of America. FWAA president Tim Griffin of *ESPN.com* made the presentation to head coach Nick Saban at a morning news conference.

After trailing 6-0 in the first quarter, Alabama rallied to take a 24-6 halftime lead, punctuated by Trent Richardson's 49-yard touchdown run and Marcell Dareus' 28-yard interception return that came with just three seconds left in the first half.

Heisman Trophy winner Mark Ingram ran for 116 yards and two scores and Richardson added 109 yards and another pair of scores on the ground. Two late turnovers forced by the Crimson Tide defense allowed Alabama to stretch a 24-21 fourth-quarter lead and provide

the final margin of victory.

The Grantland Rice Trophy has been presented by the Football Writers Association of America to college football's national champion since 1954. Named for the legendary sportswriter, the Grantland Rice Trophy was the first national championship award to be presented after the college football postseason.

This is the fifth time Alabama has won the FWAA national championship trophy and the fourth straight season a team from the Southeastern Conference has earned the award. The last time Alabama won an FWAA national title was in 1992. Other Alabama FWAA titles came in 1965 (a tie with Michigan State) and back-to-back Grantland Rice Trophies in 1978 and '79.

A panel of veteran FWAA member writers selected the Crimson Tide as the FWAA's national champion. The FWAA does not conduct a final poll.

FWAA 2010 President Tim Griffin presents the Grantland Rice Trophy to Alabama coach Nick Saban the morning after the Crimson Tide defeated Texas 37-21 in the Citi BCS National Championship Game. (Photo courtesy of University of Alabama.)



Griffin becomes new FWAA president

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and covered general assignments, police, business, city government and regional stories. In 1983 he moved to the *Plano (Texas) Daily Star-Courier* and reported on education for two years before he wound up in San Antonio.

Over the years, Griffin has been a contributor to other media as well. Currently he makes regular appearances

on radio all over Big 12 country, including stations in San Antonio, Kansas City, Omaha, Oklahoma City and Des Moines. He also has been a correspondent and columnist for *Baseball America* (1993-95) and *SI.com* (1999-2001) and is currently a featured contributor for *Dave Campbell Texas Football Magazine*.

Griffin resides in San Antonio with his wife, DeDee, and 5-year-old son, Bradley.

UConn team that lost star player Receives FWAA's Courage Award

DALLAS — The University of Connecticut football team has been named the winner of the 2009 FedEx Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award. The Huskies persevered throughout the 2009 season after the tragic death of starting cornerback Jasper Howard. The award was presented during Orange Bowl festivities.

"The entire University of Connecticut football family is very honored to receive the FedEx Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award," UConn coach Randy Edsall said. "Jasper Howard will always live in our thoughts and memories. I am very proud of my team and the way they responded to the tragedy of Jasper's death. Their perseverance both on and off the playing field was incredibly strong and a tribute to the type of student-athlete we have here in our football program here at UConn."

Howard, a 20-year-old junior, was stabbed after a campus-sponsored dance just hours after UConn's homecoming win over Louisville and died early the morning of Oct. 18. The Huskies lost three emotional games following Howard's death — to West Virginia and Rutgers by identical scores of 28-24, after holding the lead late, and 47-45 at Cincinnati.

"It still doesn't seem real," senior receiver Marcus Easley said after the loss to West Virginia, six days after Howard's death. "It's hard to believe we were suiting up for a game without him."

"I just feel empty," Edsall said after the West Virginia game. "The kids played their hearts out and did what we asked them to do. They did a great job but came up a little short. I know 'Jazz' is proud of their effort."

Two days after the loss to West Virginia, the entire team traveled to attend Howard's funeral in his hometown of Miami.

But the Huskies, whose five losses were by a combined 15 points, finished the year with three straight wins — including a double-overtime win over Notre Dame on Nov. 21 and a 29-27 win over South Florida on Dave Teggart's field goal on the final play. UConn beat South Carolina in the Papajohns.com Bowl on Jan. 2.

For the fourth straight year, the Football Writers Association of America and the FedEx Orange Bowl announced a nominee for the Courage Award each Wednesday during the season. A blue-ribbon panel of FWAA members determined the winner from all of the nominees.

The Courage Award was created by *ESPN The Magazine's* senior writer Gene Wojciechowski, also an FWAA member. The requirements for nomination in-



UConn head football coach Randy Edsall and Director of Athletics Jeffrey Hathaway are joined by Jasper Howard's mother Joangila Howard, stepfather Henry Williams and FWAA board member Heather Dinich at the presentation of the Courage Award.

clude displaying courage on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through hardship.

Previous winners of the FWAA's Courage Award are Tulsa's Wilson Holloway (2008), Navy's Zerbin Singleton (2007), Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey (2006), the Tulane football team (2005), Memphis' Haracio Colen (2004), San Jose State's Neil Parry (2003) and Toledo's William Bratton (2002).

2009 FedEx Orange Bowl Courage Award Nominees

- Sept. 23: D.J. Williams, Arkansas
- Sept. 30: Mark Herzlich, Boston College
- Oct. 8: Darius Nall, Central Florida
- Oct. 14: Ricky Rosas, USC
- Oct. 21: Derrick Coleman, UCLA
- Oct. 28: Connecticut football team
- Nov. 4: Antoine "Shaky" Smithson, Utah
- Nov. 11: Dan Potokar, Ohio State
- Nov. 18: Thomas "Rock" Roggeman, East Carolina

Haley Dodd wins Meece scholarship

NEWPORT BEACH, Calif. — Haley Dodd, a senior at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School in Overland Park, Kan., has been named the 13th winner of the Volney Meece Scholarship.

The scholarship is awarded annually by the Football Writers Association of America and named for the late Volney Meece, who served 22 years as the FWAA's executive director and was the organization's president in 1971.

The scholarship is a \$1,000 annual grant for four years. It is given to a deserving son or daughter of an FWAA member.

The 17-year-old Dodd is the daughter of FWAA member Dennis Dodd of *CBS Sportsline*. A longtime FWAA board member, Dennis Dodd served as the organization's President in 2006.

Haley's impressive academic record at Saint Thomas Aquinas High School includes selection to the Principal's Honor Roll with a 3.60 GPA, which she achieved while taking several elective honors courses.

In addition to her academic achievements, Haley has been involved in numerous extracurricular activities. Some of those achievements include school musicals, concert choir, girl's chorale, cheerleader, reporter for the

student newspaper and participation in the Walk For Life Charity.

"Haley Dodd is a model student for others," Matt Hallauer, Adviser for *The Shield*, the Saint Thomas Aquinas student newspaper, wrote in his letter of recommendation. "She excels at everything and does it politely. Haley will be a strong reporter at the college level. She has the maturity and sense of responsibility that she needs to properly juggle her priorities."

Scheduled to graduate in May 2010, Haley plans to attend the University of Missouri-Columbia, where she will study broadcast journalism.

Previous Meece Scholarship winners include: Brett Goering, Topeka, Kan.; Kelly Brooks, Denver, Colo.; James Butz, Schaumburg, Ill.; Sara Barnhart, Atlanta, Ga.; Patrick Davis, Coventry, Conn.; Jacqueline O'Toole, Gaithersburg, Md.; Garrett Holtz, Denver, Colo.; Katie Hersom, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Katie Wieberg, Lawson, Mo.; Kaylynn Monroe, Winter Park, Fla.; Nate Kerkhoff, Overland Park, Kan.; and Jack Caywood, Lawrence, Kan.



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