

Football *Charges* Back

Ralph F. DellaCamera Stadium
Hails a Victorious Homecoming





Homecoming is typically an annual event that welcomes alumni back to campus. This year's Homecoming at the University of New Haven, however, was far more significant. UNH's Homecoming hailed the return of the Charger football program after a five-year absence. It celebrated the dedication of the new Ralph F. DellaCamera Stadium, featuring a visually stunning blue and gold sprint turf field, and it reminded students, alumni, faculty, staff and friends of a storied football past that portends an equally storied future.



Ralph F. DellaCamera, Jr. '75 B.S., Marketing, a member of the UNH Board of Governors, made the transformational gift to install the new field. He stood in front of the 3,500 fans gathered at the stadium for the Homecoming match against Stonehill College on September 26, and talked about his path to success.

"It isn't about how hard you get hit, it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward," said DellaCamera, the CIO and managing member of DellaCamera Capital Management LLC in Manhattan. He then dedicated the field to his father, Ralph F. DellaCamera, "for teaching and instilling in me the belief that I should never give up and that I should believe in myself."

The return of Charger football did not come easily. President Steven H. Kaplan and Director of Athletics Deborah Chin worked for years to get UNH's team accepted into the highly competitive Northeast-10 Conference. The University hired a new head football coach and recruited an entire squad of players from scratch.

With just a year to field a team, Coach Pete Rossomando and his staff found talent in



Photos from top, mementos of the Ralph F. DellaCamera Stadium Dedication and Homecoming included a special game-day ticket and commemorative coin; Ralph F. DellaCamera, Jr. '75 B.S., left, receives a hug from his father, Ralph F. DellaCamera, after dedicating the stadium to him; alumni and friends gather to tailgate before the game; the UNH Marching Band celebrated a homecoming of its own, re-emerging with the return of football.

25 Years Later, Familiar Voices Echo Over the Airwaves



numerous places. Quarterback Ryan Osiecki '12 B.S., Criminal Justice, a 2008 freshman walk-on at the University of Louisville whose father, Sandy Osiecki, was a backup quarterback for the Kansas City Chiefs, transferred to UNH in January. Wide receiver Sharieff Hall transferred from Bethune-Cookman University in Daytona Beach, Fla.

The stadium was originally named for Robert B. Dodds, a now-deceased UNH Board member and University benefactor. His widow, Isabella Dodds, who has continued in her husband's tradition of supporting UNH, graciously agreed to the stadium's renaming. At the event, President Kaplan thanked Mrs. Dodds, then continued, "Football had a long and proud history at UNH. It belonged here, and it needed to come back."

It returned with a vengeance that day. With just 21 seconds left in the game, Osiecki completed a pass to Hall for the winning touchdown against Stonehill. Cheering from the sidelines was 44-year-old reserve nose guard Wayne Parks '12 B.S., Arson Investigation, a Fairfield firefighter with three children, two of whom are in college. Parks' age has brought him and the University plenty of publicity, from The New York Times to ESPN. He also has become a cause célèbre for the middle-aged athlete.

"What I like," the Times quoted Parks as saying, "is when people say you can't do something, because I like to prove them wrong. The second thing is, I really like the people who have said, 'Wow, you've really inspired me.'"



games for WNHU 88.7 FM from 1980 through 1984, are reprising their roles for the UNH radio station more than two decades later.

"Our hair is thinner, our waistlines are thicker, we're both married with kids, and the equipment is more sophisticated," Mortali '84 B.S., Communication. "Other than that, very little has changed. We still love football."

A native of North Haven, Mortali went on to become a six-time Emmy Award-winning producer for ESPN, headquartered in Bristol, Conn. His most recent documentary, "Triumph and Tragedy: The 'Ray Mancini Story,'" which premiered on ESPN Classic in November 2007, won the 2008 CableFAX Program Award for Best Show: Sports, and also was nominated for a Sports Emmy in the Outstanding Documentary category. Ryan also grew up in North Haven, worked for WTNH-Channel 8 and Comcast Cable, and is now a buyer for Sikorsky Aircraft in Stratford.

"Our friendship has grown since our days as students," Mortali said, "so the on-air rapport is as good, if not better, than it was when we last teamed up in 1984."

One last thing, he says.

"It's great to have Charger football back."



**Pat Ryan, and Craig Mortali
back at work for WNHU 88.7 FM**

A First Season Ends Well; On to Next Year

In their first season since 2003, the Chargers finished with a 5-5 overall record, including a 4-4 record in the Northeast-10 Conference. The New Haven Register quoted quarterback Ryan Osiecki '12 B.S., Criminal Justice, as saying, "Most people had us last in the NE-10. We went 5-5, so I think it was a good season overall. We have a lot of things to work on, and we're only going to get better."