

THE '85 BEARS: SWEETNESS!

To watch Walter Payton play football was one of the many privileges of my life. He was one of those players who, as soon as he stepped onto the field, there was no telling what you were about to see. Whether breaking records or how hard he would hit his defenders; on and off the field he was a champion.



For those reasons, I wanted to draw this picture for him as a "thank you" for all that he did for me. After meeting all of the rest of the team and giving the drawing to him at Halas Hall, I had no idea how personable he was going to be. He ended up buying two of my limited edition prints and inviting me to his house in South Barrington to hand deliver them and spend the day with him. I was seventeen years old and couldn't have been happier. There's nothing better than finding out that the person you look up to is actually even better than you ever thought they were capable of being.

I look back on those days with great fondness and with him being gone, great sorrow, too. I consider myself among the privileged who actually got a chance to meet him in person. Walter Payton will always rank as not only one of the greatest to ever play the game of football, but was also one of the finest people I've ever met as well.



SUPERBOWL XX CHAMPIONS!!

The 1985-86 NFL season was one no Chicago Bear's fan will ever forget and it was a nice distraction to my cancer recovery as well. During my free periods at school, I would sit and draw all sorts of pictures but as the Bears claimed their victory for the city of Chicago, I felt it was time to give back. This drawing was originally designed for Walter Payton. My assistant principal thought it would be better to do the more personalized version for him and keep this one for myself. What a wise man he was...

Through a series of unbelievable events, I was given the opportunity to meet the SUPERBOWL champs and get their autographs, including Coach Ditka's, on the original drawing. The original also going in the restaurant where I worked as a busboy. Governor Thompson had stopped in during an election campaign and had requested that the drawing be displayed at his new downtown Chicago office accompanied by the game ball and the Vince Lombardi trophy. It was quite an honor and was the fuel that launched my company



WILLIE GAULT

The following year, while I was attending Art school in the city, I ran into Willie Gault at the Chicago-Northwestern train station. He remembered the Bear's poster and the Walter Payton drawing and we talked about his time with the Bears and the Olympics. I had a lot of fun during those years with everyone always asking me, "...so, how's Walter?" It was a time in my life that I will never forget.

