

# *The Gryphons' Lair*

**Issue 28 – May 2019**

## *Featured Alumni*

This month, we feature Gryphon Football alumni Doug Pflug!

Doug was a running back with the Gryphons, making appearances at a few Yates Cup finals, before graduating in the late 80s with a degree in Sociology. He was a two-sport athlete also competing in wrestling.

Thinking back to his playing days, he tells a great story about his favourite memory being when he was asked to fill in for an injured teammate during the 1986 Yates Cup final against Western. The play was a fake field goal attempt deep in Western's red zone. "It was my rookie year, I was a second-string tailback, and I was absolutely scared to death to have such an important place in this game," he says. The play was successful, and Doug ran about 15-20 yards before being tackled on the 2-yard line. "I was so happy because our team scored on the next drive as I watched from the sidelines. That play taught me to always be ready and regardless of the role we have, we must always rise to the occasion and give it our very best for the team. Knowing my efforts set my team up for the score on the next drive is exhilarating still to this day." Stories like this that are described with so much detail nearly 23 years later brings a unique sense of family and nostalgia to our Gryphon alumni.

After leaving U of G, Doug started a career with the Guelph Police, fulfilling the dream he has had since he was 9 years old of being able to make a difference in society. While working as a police officer, Doug coached with the Our Lady of Lourdes Football team to get his football fix. "This was very important to me because I was able to share my love of football, police a great community, and be a positive male role model to the young men and other students as a coach and a police officer." Doug continued to share his expertise and guidance as a police mentor with the Guelph Storm since 1995, as well as serving as the Strength and Conditioning Coach for 17 years.

Like many of our alumni, Doug's passion for the game and the Gryphons are just as strong today, and he plays a huge role in our Gryphon Football community with multiple

volunteer efforts that help to make our program the best.

In 2001, Doug was contacted by former head coach Tom Arnott to join the team as the law enforcement mentor to provide guidance and ensure our players are great citizens as well as football players.

Doug then took on a formal mentor role for 2 former Gryphon players, Johnny Augustine and Orion Edwards, from 2012-2017 supporting them on and off the field to become the stars they are today.

In 2012, Doug sought to increase his involvement with the team, starting up multiple social media initiatives including a fan-based Facebook page and Twitter ([@GryphonsLair](#)) where he lives tweets the games and posts some sideline shots, as well as all Gryphon Football, updates.

In 2015, Doug and his wife, Michelle, established the Pflug Family Community Service Award to be presented at the Wildman Trophy Dinner to recognize the outstanding community service efforts of a player. The winner this season was [Nicholas Mirijello](#), who received his name on the trophy, a \$200 gift certificate, and a letter of reference.

In 2015, Doug established a partnership with Avalon Group Homes for at-risk-youth and created the opportunity for Gryphon players interested in working with youth to earn a part-time job. Players that have worked for this group include Johnny Augustine, Orion Edwards, Dean Yaromich, [Akeem Knowles](#) and [Elijah Walker](#).

Doug's involvement with the Gryphons has also consisted of creating multiple community-based endeavours including honouring [Community Heroes](#) of Guelph before every home game and the annual Gryphon Football Special Olympics Powerlifting meet hosted at Alumni Stadium.

The list of ways Doug has contributed to help make Gryphon Football and our athletes successful off the field and in the community is more extensive than can possibly be described in a short newsletter feature but is definitely deserving of the recognition.

“Being a Gryphon is, simply put, paying it forward to make the lives of our community and younger members better. We have a very special organization,” he says. “As a young man, it helped me channel my energy in a very productive way. It taught me about elite teamwork, brotherhood, honour, integrity, passion, and accountability. All these traits assisted me in transitioning into law enforcement where the same traits are held so dear.”

Thank you, Doug, for all you have done and continue to do to help advance our Gryphon Football program! You are truly a great Gryphon alumnus!