



# Mike Griffith becomes FWAA's 64<sup>th</sup> president

Mike Griffith of the *Knoxville News Sentinel* was named the FWAA's 64<sup>th</sup> president at the association's annual meeting on Jan. 8 in Scottsdale, Ariz.

Griffith, 40, succeeds Dennis Dodd of CBS SportsLine who served as the FWAA's president this past year. Other officers named in early January were Ron Higgins of the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* as the first vice president and George Schroeder of *The Daily Oklahoman* as the second vice president.

Griffith has been in the newspaper business for two decades at newspapers from Idaho to Alabama.

But he first served three years in the U.S. Army from 1984-87 and was a member of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division where he earned his Paratrooper Badge, Army Achievement Medal and Good Conduct Medal. Then, it was on to Michigan State, where he earned his B.A. in journalism in 1991.

While a student at Michigan State, Griffith worked part-time at the *Lansing State Journal*, where he got his start covering junior college men's and women's basketball, amateur golf, professional boxing, Detroit Lions home games, prep and local soccer and high school football.

Upon graduation, Griffith landed his first full-time newspaper job at the *Idaho Falls Post Register*, where he got his first

taste of covering college football as the Idaho State beat writer. After two years there, in 1993 he moved to the *Anniston Star*, where Auburn sports were his main beat.

Then he switched Southeastern Conference teams when he took a job a year later at the *Mobile Press Register*. For four years he covered all the major Crimson Tide sports and continued his affinity for NASCAR, which started in Anniston.

He has been in Knoxville since 1998 and has covered both Volunteer football and men's basketball as a beat, as well as NASCAR. He has been a radio and television analyst.

Mike has won several writing awards in Alabama and Tennessee, as well as in the FWAA's Annual Best Writing Contest. Since its inception, Mike has coordinated the Scripps FWAA Freshman All-America team.

New members to the 2007 board are: Chip Brown, *Dallas Morning News*; Bob Holt, *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*; Carter Strickland, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*; Bob Clark, *Eugene Register-Guard*; Matt Markey, *Toledo Blade*; Michael Lewis, *Salt Lake City Tribune*; Buddy Davis, *Ruston Daily Leader*; Steve Irvine, *Birmingham News*; Brett McMurphy, *Tampa Tribune*; Robbi Pickeral, *Raleigh News & Observer*, and Joe Hornstein of Central Florida (ex-officio).



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# President's column



**MIKE GRIFFITH**

How many times have you heard this one: "We're sorry, he's not being made available to the media."

You sigh, you persist to the sports information representative, most often fruitlessly, and call your office to inform them the collegiate football story everyone wants — editors,

readers, talk-show listeners and Internet chatters — is not available.

It doesn't stop there.

You worry competition from across town or across state, be it electronic, print or Internet, will find means to the story. Perhaps the TV broadcast giant with rights to the game will have an exclusive showing on game day while you're munching your press box cookies.

Hence, the common dilemma: Do you, A) Break the respective school's rules and policies and contact the athlete yourself, risking possible repercussions down the line, or B) wait and hope the news breaks at the same time for everyone?

The folks that answered "A" are more likely to please the people they work for and keep their jobs than the ones who choose "B" and get beat on a consistent basis.

University sports information rules, like NCAA bylaws, don't apply to media members in a court of law.

But there's also much to be said for maintaining a positive relationship with the coaches/athletic departments you cover, particularly for beat reporters planning on covering a specific team for a significant length of time.

That's just one example of how relationships are breaking down between media members and the schools they cover.

Another growing issue affecting relationships between media and universities is that they sometimes become competitors.

When news is revealed through school releases, even if given to media sources at the same time, it's often on the respective university's website first.

Pre-Internet that seemed to work fine.

But now, those same schools you cover on your organization's website have their very own Internet stop, complete with sponsors.

Such competition for the advertising dollar is where most media managers looking to the Internet as the future and/or a source of revenue must draw the line.

No wonder past FWAA president Ivan Maisel of espn.com, one our highest profile members, suggests newspaper publishers must get involved at a high level before changes occur.

Malcolm Moran, another widely respected reporter, recently left the newspaper business to take over as the Knight Chair at Penn State University. Speaking at the annual FWAA Breakfast at the BCS Championship site, Moran said now that he's on the "other side," he sees how poorly the media is viewed by the schools.

In Knoxville, where the University of Tennessee's level of media scrutiny ranges between intense and nuclear, the Vols' open football practice policy has gone by the wayside, and with it, so have many positive working relationships.

The media wants and needs access. The universities, and their ever-increasing number of high-dollar coaches, demand control. There's the rub.

There are some rays of hope on the horizon, but it's going to take people who realize that understandings and compromises are in the best interests of everyone, including the fans funding collegiate athletics.

The National Football Foundation is getting involved with a media-friendly two-day forum in Dallas that could in-

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Freshman All-America team

The team features teammates from Alabama and Florida State and three unanimous selections (Texas quarterback Colt McCoy, Wisconsin running back P.J. Hill and Alabama linebacker Prince Hall). The SEC led all conferences with five players. The Big 12 placed four players on the squad. Twelve of the 27 freshman All-

America selections were true freshmen.

In addition, Boise State coach Chris Petersen was named the top first-year coach at his school.

The team and coach are selected by a group of writers led by FWAA president Mike Griffith of the *Knoxville News Sentinel*, a member of the Scripps chain.

OFFENSE		
Pos.	Player, School	Hometown
QB	*Colt McCoy, Texas	Tuscola, Texas
RB	*P.J. Hill, Wisconsin	East Elmhurst, N.Y.
RB	+ Damion Fletcher,	Biloxi, Miss.
RB	Reggie Arnold, Arkansas	Little Rock, Ark.
WR	+ Percy Harvin, Florida	Virginia Beach, Va.
WR	+ Ryan Wolfe, UNLV	Santa Clarita, Calif.
TE	+ Brandon Warren, Florida	Alcoa, Tenn.
OL	+ Sam Young, Notre	Coral Springs, Fla.
OL	Ciron Black, LSU	Tyler, Texas
OL	+ Andre Smith, Alabama	Birmingham, Ala.
OL	Eddie Adamski, No. Illinois	Kildeer, Ill.
OL	Eben Britton, Arizona	Burbank, Calif.

DEFENSE		
Pos.	Player, School	Hometown
DL	+ Eric Norwood, S. Carolina	Acworth, Ga.
DL	Jeffrey Fitzgerald, Virginia	Richmond, Va.
DL	Corey Wootton, N'western	Rutherford, N.J.
DL	George Selvie, So. Florida	Pensacola, Fla.
LB	* Prince Hall, Alabama	Moreno Valley, Calif.
LB	Joe Pawelek, Baylor	Spring Branch, Texas
LB	Gerald McRath, So. Miss	Powder Springs, Ga.
DB	Quinton Andrews, W. Va,	Opa Locka, Fla.
DB	Trevard Lindley, Kentucky	Hiram, Ga.
DB	+ Alterraun Verner, UCLA	Carson, Calif.
DB	+ Myron Rolle, Florida State	Galloway, N.J.
DB	Andre Sexton, Oklahoma St.	Houston, Texas

SPECIALISTS		
Pos.	Player, School	Hometown
K	+ Brett Swenson, Michigan State	Pompano Beach, Fla.
P	+ Matthew DiLallo, Colorado	Wellington, Fla.
KR	+ David Harvey, Akron	Penn Hills, Pa.
First-year Coach of the Year: Chris Petersen, Boise State		
• Indicates unanimous selection; + true freshman		

## Kaylynn Monroe wins Meece scholarship

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Kaylynn Monroe, a freshman at Florida State University, has been named the 10th 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 19-year-old Monroe is the daughter of long-time FWAA member Carol Monroe, the senior director of public relations for the Capital One Bowl/Champs Sports Bowl.

Kaylynn's impressive academic record at Winter Park High School included selection to the National Honor Society, the English Honor Society and the Principal's Award. She was a member of the Winter Park High School soccer team, which advanced to the state finals in Class 6A and was ranked fourth nationally.

In addition to her academic work, Kaylynn was involved in a number of extra-curricular activities and philanthropic projects in high school and at Florida State University, where she is pursuing a career in the environmental field.

For more information about the Volney Meece Scholarship, contact Dave Sittler at:

[davesitt@aol.com](mailto:davesitt@aol.com) or 918-581-8312.

# Boston Globe's Blaudschun named winner of Bert McGrane Award

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Mark Blaudschun, a long-time writer at the *Boston Globe* and the FWAAs war-horse of the press box, has been named the 2007 recipient of the Football Writers Association of America's Bert McGrane Award, it was announced during the FWAAs annual awards breakfast on Jan. 8.

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

"It is a great honor to get," Blaudschun said. "I can't believe it. It is special because of the organization."

Blaudschun, 58, was the 56<sup>th</sup> president of the FWAAs in 1999 and has been the press relations liaison with BCS games. As the Bert McGrane winner, Blaudschun will take over as the chairman of the membership honors committee, which consists of past McGrane winners and selects the Hall of Famer each year.

"Mark has been very instrumental in the development of press operations in the BCS Bowls and has been a real champion of news media's rights in the press box during the regular season as well," said Steve Richardson, FWAAs executive director. "He is very deserving of this honor as a long-time bulldog of the press box. He will make a fine chairman of the McGrane Committee."

Blaudschun, a graduate of University of Miami (Fla.), has worked at the Boston Globe for two decades. He



Boston Globe writer Mark Blaudschun served as the FWAAs 56th president in 1999.

has covered national college football and basketball in addition to covering the New England Patriots for three seasons. Blaudschun also has worked at *The Dallas Morning News* and the *City Magazine* in San Francisco after getting his start at two East Coast newspapers, the *Passaic Herald News* and the *Rockland Journal News*.

Blaudschun lists his hobbies as golf, reading and going to the horse races.

Blaudschun will be honored this summer during the National Football Foundation's Hall of Fame induction weekend in South Bend, Ind., and his name will be placed in the College Football Hall of Fame's rotunda.

## BERT McGRANE AWARD WINNERS

Winners of the FWAAs Bert McGrane award for outstanding service to the organization and the writing profession:

1974	Charley Johnson, <i>Minneapolis Star</i>	1990	Jack Hairston, <i>Gainesville Sun</i>
1975	Wilfrid Smith, <i>Chicago Tribune</i>	1991	Murray Olderman, <i>Newspaper Enterprise Association</i>
1976	Paul Zimmerman, <i>Los Angeles Times</i>	1992	Volney Meece, <i>The Daily Oklahoman/FWAA</i>
1977	Dick Cullum, <i>Minneapolis Tribune</i>	1993	Bob Hentzen, <i>Topeka Capital-Journal</i>
1978	Wilbur Evans, <i>Cotton Bowl Athletic Association</i>	1994	Edgar Allen, <i>Nashville Banner</i>
1979	Tom Siler, <i>Knoxville News-Sentinel</i>	1995	Dick Herbert, <i>Raleigh News &amp; Observer/AFCA</i>
1980	Maury White, <i>Des Moines Register</i>	1996	Bob Hammel, <i>Bloomington Herald-Times</i>
1981	Fred Russell, <i>Nashville Banner</i>	1997	Bill Lumpkin, <i>Birmingham Post-Herald</i>
1982	Furman Bisher, <i>Atlanta Journal</i>	1998	Don Bryant, <i>University of Nebraska</i>
1983	John Mooney, <i>Salt Lake City Tribune</i>	1999	Field Scovell, <i>Cotton Bowl Athletic Association</i>
1984	Si Burick, <i>Dayton News</i>	2000	Jimmie McDowell, <i>All-American Football Foundation</i>
1985	Blackie Sherrod, <i>The Dallas Morning News</i>	2001	Edwin Pope, <i>Miami Herald</i>
1986	Raymond Johnson, <i>Nashville Tennessean</i>	2002	Orville Henry, <i>Morning News of Northwest Arkansas</i>
1987	Tim Cohane, <i>Look Magazine</i>	2003	Dan Foster, <i>Greenville News</i>
1988	Dave Campbell, <i>Waco Tribune-Herald</i>	2004	Pat Harmon, <i>Cincinnati Post</i>
1989	Jim Brock, <i>Cotton Bowl Athletic Association</i>	2005	Steve Richardson, <i>FWAA/Dallas Morning News</i>
		2006	John Junker, <i>Fiesta Bowl</i>
		2007	Mark Blaudschun, <i>Boston Globe</i>

# Schiano is coach of the year

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. — Rutgers coach Greg Schiano was named the winner of the 2006 FWAA/Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award on Jan. 5 at a reception at the Camelback Golf Club.

The Eddie Robinson award is sponsored by the Fiesta Bowl and is voted on by the entire FWAA membership.

"Greg Schiano is one of the greatest examples of perseverance and hard work college football has known," Dennis Dodd, 2006 FWAA president, said. "He single-handedly put Rutgers back on the map. Being a Scarlet Knight now means something profound and lasting."

The FWAA coaching award is named after Robinson, a coaching legend at Grambling State University for 55 years. He has more Division I victories (408) than any other coach.

The FWAA has honored a major-college coach with its Coach of the Year Award since 1957. Schiano is the first coach from a traditional Eastern school to win the award since Syracuse's Dick MacPherson in 1987.

"It is a tremendous honor to be this year's recipient of the Eddie Robinson Coach of the Year Award," said Schiano. "Coach Robinson's ability to win games consistently, while keeping his players' development into responsible men first and foremost, has served as a model for me as a head coach."

Rutgers finished the 2006 season with an 11-2 record



Outgoing FWAA president Dennis Dodd, coach of the year Greg Schiano, Michael Watkins of the Eddie Robinson Foundation and Ellie Ziegler of the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

after solidly beating Kansas State 37-10 in the Texas Bowl, which was played at Reliant Stadium in Houston. The Scarlet Knights were 5-2 in the Big East Conference and posted an 11-victory season for only the second time in the 137-year football history of the school.

A year ago, Schiano also was in Phoenix to lead the Scarlet Knights into the Insight Bowl, where they lost 45-40 to Arizona State and finished 7-5.

This past season, Rutgers set a single-season attendance record when it averaged more than 40,000 fans a game. Fourteen Scarlet Knights captured All-Big East honors, including five first-team selections.

## EDDIE ROBINSON COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD WINNERS

1957	Woody Hayes, Ohio State	1974	Grant Teaff, Baylor	1991	Don James, Washington
1958	Paul Dietzel, LSU	1975	Woody Hayes, Ohio State	1992	Gene Stallings, Alabama
1959	Ben Schwartzwalder, Syracuse	1976	Johnny Majors, Pittsburgh	1993	Terry Bowden, Auburn
1960	Murray Warmath, Minnesota	1977	Lou Holtz, Arkansas	1994	Rich Brooks, Oregon
1961	Darrell Royal, Texas	1978	Joe Paterno, Penn State	1995	Gary Barnett, Northwestern
1962	John McKay, USC	1979	Earle Bruce, Ohio State	1996	Bruce Snyder, Arizona State
1963	Darrell Royal, Texas	1980	Vince Dooley, Georgia	1997	Mike Price, Washington State
1964	Ara Parseghian, Notre Dame	1981	Danny Ford, Clemson	1998	Phillip Fulmer, Tennessee
1965	Duffy Daugherty, Michigan St.	1982	Joe Paterno, Penn State	1999	Frank Beamer, Virginia Tech
1966	Tom Cahill, Army	1983	Howard Schnellenberger, Miami	2000	Bob Stoops, Oklahoma
1967	John Pont, Indiana	1984	LaVell Edwards, BYU	2001	Ralph Friedgen, Maryland
1968	Woody Hayes, Ohio State	1985	Fisher DeBerry, Air Force	2002	Jim Tressel, Ohio State
1969	Bo Schembechler, Michigan	1986	Joe Paterno, Penn State	2003	Nick Saban, LSU
1970	Alex Agase, Northwestern	1987	Dick MacPherson, Syracuse	2004	Urban Meyer, Utah
1971	Bob Devaney, Nebraska	1988	Lou Holtz, Notre Dame	2005	Charlie Weis, Notre Dame
1972	John McKay, USC	1989	Bill McCartney, Colorado	2006	Greg Schiano, Rutgers
1973	Johnny Majors, Pittsburgh	1990	Bobby Ross, Georgia Tech		

# Florida wins Grantland Rice Trophy

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – With their 41-14 win over Ohio State in the Tostitos BCS National Championship game, the Florida Gators (13- 1) claimed the 2006 Grantland Rice Trophy as voted by the pollsters of the Grantland Rice Super 16 Poll.

Florida coach Urban Meyer accepted the trophy on behalf of the Gators on Jan. 8.

The Gators held previously unbeaten Ohio State, winners of the 2002 trophy, to 82 yards of total offense, eight first downs and just 19:12 of possession time in earning their second Grantland Rice Trophy.

Ohio State was the top-ranked team in the Super 16's preseason poll and was ranked No. 1 in each of the seven regular-season polls. Florida was ranked No. 8 to start the season by the FWAA pollsters.

Overall, schools from the SEC have won nine Grantland Rice trophies. This is the first by an SEC school since Tennessee won the award in 1998. Florida is also the third different school from the state of Florida to win the FWAA's national title since 1999 (Florida State, 1999; Miami, 2001).

The Grantland Rice Trophy has been presented to college football's national champion since 1954 by the Football Writers Association of America. It is named for the legendary sportswriter and was



2007 FWAA President Mike Griffith presents the Grantland Rice Trophy to coach Urban Meyer for Florida's national championship.

the first national championship award to be presented following the post-season. The Super 16 Poll was introduced in the 2002 season to deter-

## FINAL FWAA SUPER 16 POLL

Rk.	School [1st]	Conference	W-L	Pts.	Pvs.	Bowl Result
1	Florida [16]	SEC	13-1	256	4	Def. Ohio State, 41-14
T-2	LSU	SEC	11-2	220	T-5	Def. Notre Dame, 41-14
T-2	Ohio State	Big Ten	12-1	220	1	Lost to Florida, 41-14
4	Boise State	WAC	13-0	209	9	Def. Oklahoma, 43-42, in overtime
5	USC	Pacific 10	11-2	203	2	Def. Michigan, 32-18
6	Louisville	Big East	12-1	176	7	Def. Wake Forest, 24-13
7	Wisconsin	Big Ten	12-1	161	T-5	Def. Arkansas, 17-14
8	Auburn	SEC	11-2	119	13	Def. Nebraska, 17-14
T-9	Michigan	Big Ten	11-2	112	3	Lost to USC, 32-18
T-9	West Virginia	Big East	11-2	112	14	Def. Georgia Tech, 38-35
11	Rutgers	Big East	11-2	92	11	Def. Kansas State, 37-10
12	Oklahoma	Big 12	11-3	69	10	Lost to Boise St., 43-42, in overtime
13	California	Pacific 10	10-3	49	—	Def. Texas A&M, 45-10
14	Texas	Big 12	10-3	48	—	Def. Iowa, 26-24
15	BYU	Mountain West	11-2	41	—	Def. Oregon, 38-6
16	Arkansas	SEC	10-4	38	8	Lost to Wisconsin, 17-14

Dropped out: Notre Dame (12), Virginia Tech (T-15) Wake Forest T-15)

Also receiving notes: Notre Dame 15, Wake Forest 11, Virginia Tech 8, Oregon State 5, Boston College 5, Hawaii 4, TCU 2, Georgia 1.

# Clemson's McElrathbey named winner of FWAA Courage Award

Clemson defensive back/wide receiver Ray Ray McElrathbey is the winner of the 2006 FedEx Orange Bowl-FWAA Courage Award, which is annually given to a player, coach or support person in college football who displays courage, on or off the field.

McElrathbey, a redshirt freshman, saw most of his action on special teams this season. But he has undertaken the responsibility of caring for his brother, Fahmarr, now 12 years old.

Their mother has a cocaine addiction; their father has a gambling addiction. The brothers' home life in Atlanta was not stable, and both had spent time in foster care.

Ray Ray obtained temporary custody of Fahmarr and planned to support him with Pell grants, odd jobs and the monthly stipend for living off-campus.

After news of Ray Ray McElrathbey's situation was publicized, Clemson sought a waiver to allow a trust fund that would help McElrathbey care for his brother. The NCAA granted the waiver within 48 hours, citing the unique circumstances.

Also because of the waiver, Clemson coaches' families are allowed to help Ray Ray care for Fahmarr when it comes to transportation to and from school and other basic needs.

Ray Ray told *The New York Times* that the NCAA's decision "lifted a little weight from my shoulders." But Clemson coach Tommy Bowden, among others, noted the heavy burden of responsibility Ray Ray had shouldered.

"I could not fathom a 19-year-old freshman being a father, going to school and playing college football," Clemson coach Tommy Bowden said. "I could not imagine at that age handling all the responsibilities that Ray Ray has done this year.

"It has been quite a story because I see the players, coaches and their families doing what they can to help Ray Ray and Fahmarr.

"Ray Ray is very deserving of this award from the Football Writers Association of America and the FedEx Orange Bowl."

Following the Tigers' bowl game, McElrathbey attended the FedEx Orange Bowl, where he received the Courage Award Trophy and a donation from the Orange Bowl Foundation for the Fahmarr McElrathbey Trust.

McElrathbey was the team's special teams player of the week after recording four tackles against Florida Atlantic. He played defensive back the first 11 games, but moved to receiver before the regular-season finale against South Carolina.



Clemson's Ray Ray McElrathbey went to court to obtain legal custody of his brother Fahmarr, now 12 years old.

McElrathbey was selected by a blue-ribbon panel of FWAA members, who made their determination from a pool of nominees honored each week during the 2006 football season.

The Courage Award was created by *ESPN The Magazine's* senior writer Gene Wojciechowski, also a FWAA member. A select group of writers from the FWAA vote on the winner each year. The requirements for nomination for the weekly award include displaying some sort of courageous act on or off the field, including overcoming an injury or physical handicap, preventing a disaster or living through a lifetime of hardships.

Previous winners of the Courage Award are the Tulane football team (2005), Memphis' Haracio Colen (2004), San Jose State's Neil Parry (2003) and Toledo's William Bratton (2002).

## President's column (continued)

*(Continued from page 2)*

clude four prominent coaches, four Heisman Trophy candidates and BCS representatives.

A chance to further shrink the ever-widening gap between media and collegiate football programs takes place at the annual CoSIDA meetings in San Diego in July.

Charles Bloom, associate assistant commissioner of the SEC and a member of the FWAA Board, will be there as incoming CoSIDA President (for 2007-08). I'll be there representing the FWAA and pleading our case with hopes of finding middle ground for the daily beat writers providing the backbone of collegiate football coverage.

Maybe one day of one-half of an open practice? Photographers can only shoot so many knee-high and stretching drills. It's hard for reporters to assess talent watching wind sprints.

How about being allowed to interview the student-

athlete of your choosing? Many schools are trotting the same players out each week or limiting your choices to their liking and/or approval.

So much for freedom of speech and the freedom of the press.

Shouldn't the schools hold the news on their sponsored website until after it has been made available to the media?

Can you imagine if the White House had it's own sponsored web site and controlled the news? There are laws against that here, though some countries have governments that do control the media in that manner. They're on the other side of the world with nuclear weapons pointed our way.

So, fellow FWAA ambassadors, bring forth your suggestions. I'm all ears, and your local sports information department should be eager to listen.



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