

Columbia adding to long list of greats

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By **JOEL LUNA** | **0** comments

WEST COLUMBIA — A couple of tennis players, a football player and a track star are the 2011 inductees into the Columbia-Brazoria ISD Athletic Booster Club Hall of Honor on Friday.

Bobby Farmer, Van Manning, Bobby Crump and Gene Hernandez will be saluted for their past accomplishments on the tennis courts, gridiron and track.

There will be a ceremony for the group from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Friday at Columbia United Methodist Church, then there will be a presentation during halftime of the Sweeny and Columbia game at Griggs Field.

Farmer and Manning both were state champions, but Farmer was Columbia's first individual state champion in 1962. He won the singles title that year in Class 2A. In 1961, Farmer was a state finalist in boys singles, and in 1960 was on a boys doubles team that finished as a state semifinalist.

Manning garnered gold in 1976 as the boys Class 3A singles state champion.

Crump was a standout in track, and in his four seasons with the Roughnecks, he won nine gold medals at state. "I've been to several of their games, and I've sat through the halftimes watching those other athletes get inducted and never in the world did I think it would be me," Crump said on Wednesday afternoon. "It never crossed my mind." Crump set the Class 3A, 100-meter dash record with a run of 10.4 seconds. He ran on the 400-yard relay team and won another gold medal that year. "As a freshman, our coach (Glenn Schmidt) told us how it was going to be at state with lots of people and that we should just go over there and do our best," Crump said. "Now that year I ran a 10.1 at the Wharton Relays in the 100." He proceeded to win gold medals as a sophomore and junior in both the 100 dash and 400 relay team. In his senior season, Crump continued to win gold medals in both of those events, but added the 200-meter run. "It felt like I was just floating, and I enjoyed that race so much," Crump said of the 200 win. "I ran that race for the first time ever at the regional and finished it at 21.3, but at the state meet I ran a 21.1." The one thing that got Crump through all of this success was his humbleness. "I never bragged at races, and I never talked because my mother taught me to identify myself and my coach taught me to develop it," Crump said. He was recognized as a high school All-American during his senior season at Columbia on the 400 relay team. Crump ran at Wharton Junior College after Columbia, then transferred to Texas Southern University. "The fastest I ran the 100 at TSU was a 9.9, and the 200 meters I lowered to 20.8," he said. Currently, he resides in Rosharon and owns Unique Artwork.

Hernandez established himself as a dominant defensive back for the Roughnecks. He helped them to the 1969 Class 3A state finals where, they lost to Brownwood, 34-16. "It is hard to believe that it has been 40 years, it's like a blink of an eye," Hernandez said. "I live in La Grange and recently went to see them play when they came here earlier this season, and it was good to

see they still have some speed." After going undefeated in 1969 during the regular season, Columbia beat La Porte (42-12), Brenham (6-6; advanced on penetrations) and Belton (10-6) before getting to the state final. "It was pretty unique back then because our group as seventh-graders to our senior year lost like three games," Hernandez said. "We lost one in eighth grade, and then one as a junior, and of course the final game of our senior year. It was a unique group that jelled together especially on the field. It was a thrilling year that senior season, not only for us but the community as well."

Hernandez earned All-State honors as a junior in 1970, then attended TCU on a scholarship. He played all four seasons with the Horned Frogs, then got a tryout with the San Francisco 49ers. "We weren't very successful at TCU, that's what you call our dog days," Hernandez said. "But I was fortunate to make all-conference, but because we had so many tackles. We had a good defense, just not enough depth." Hernandez led the Southwest Conference in interceptions in 1973 and was all-conference in '73 and '74.

The 49ers selected him in the 11th round in 1975. "My San Francisco stint wasn't as long as I wanted," Hernandez said. "To see those type of players and that atmosphere is many steps up from college. I got cut at the end of training camp and then went back the following year and got cut again at the end of training camp. So then I thought it was time to finish school." Hernandez credits his best two coaches. "After going through all of these periods of life - when I was young I had my heroes, and about myself being someone in the NFL," Hernandez said. "But by looking back at the people who were my best influences and the ones who gave me a foundation I just concluded that my parents (Evelyn West Hernandez and Louis Eugene Hernandez) were my two best coaches I had."

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