



THE NAVAJO NATION

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEC. 14, 2007

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Navajo President Joe Shirley, Jr., joins former NFL defensive end Michael Bankston to honor Fall 2007 Navajo Times All-Stars

GALLUP, N.M. – Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., joined former Washington Redskins defensive end and tackle Michael Bankston on Thursday to honor 125 Navajo football, volleyball and cross country athletes at the 2007 Navajo Times Fall Sports All-Area All-Star awards ceremony at Red Rock State Park.

Mr. Bankston is a 6-foot, 5-inch, 285-pound defensive lineman and 10-year veteran of the National Football League. He finished his football career with the 2001 Washington Redskins. A graduate of Sam Houston State University, Mr. Bankston was a fourth-round pick of the then-Phoenix Cardinals in 1992. He played six seasons (1992-1997) with the Phoenix/Arizona Cardinals as a defensive end and defensive tackle.

“He’s a big man with a big heart,” Navajo Times Publisher Tom Arviso said in introducing Mr. Bankston to the audience of several hundred. “He’s a guy who made it. He went all the way to the NFL. He’s sacked people like Troy Aikman, Steve Young, John Elway, and Randall Cunningham, just to name a few.”

In addressing parents, grandparents and dozens of student athletes, President Shirley urged the champions to “stay focused.”

“The whole world is still ahead of you, and you need to continue to stay focused,” he said. “Be a winner in life. Be a champion in your family, in the world of academia. That’s what I want for you. Do not be satisfied with the status quo.”



Navajo Nation President Joe Shirley, Jr., presented former Washington Redskins defensive end and tackle Michael Bankston with a Pendleton robe on behalf of the Navajo Times during the newspaper’s Fall 2007 Sports All-Area All-Star awards ceremony at Red Rock State Park.

The President told the athletes that they had worked hard for their success and that they deserved. It.

"This is your reward, the name recognition, the satisfaction that comes from a job well done," he said. "It feels good to be a champion. There's no feeling like it."

He also expressed his appreciation to the parents, grandparents, coaches, administrators and sponsors of student athletics for backing their kids.

"There's no combination like student athletes and parents," he said. "That's always a winning combination."

Mr. Bankston said he grew up in a small town in Texas without a store or a stoplight. He advised the student athletes to start off at a small school if they have to, work hard, and someone will notice them.

"I worked hard enough to make it to the NFL, and somebody took notice," he said. "Go. Start somewhere. And somebody will see you if you work hard enough. If you discipline yourself, if you set yourself apart from the rest of the crowd, somebody will take notice."

He said awards like these help propel athletes to the next challenge.

"It will help you when you get into college and later in life," he said. "You got to give it your all at all times. If you believe you, will achieve."

He encouraged the students to set goals and to write them down, to learn from mistakes and not repeat them, to take advantage of opportunities, and to always keep growing.

The big winners at the 2007 Navajo Times All-Area All-Star Fall Sports Awards Ceremony were:

- Boys Cross Country Runners of the Year: Richard Siow, Zuni; Lance Williams, Tuba City.
- Boys Cross Country Coach of the Year: Carl Perry, Tuba City.
- Girls Cross Country Runner of the Year: DeAnn Honanie, Hopi.
- Girls Cross Country Coach of the Year: Harvey Honyouti, Hopi.

Volleyball Players of the Year: Jourdan Bennett-Begaye, Kirtland Central; Robin Curleyhair, Monument Valley – Kayenta.

- Volleyball Coach of the Year: Rainy Crisp, Navajo Preparatory.

FOOTBALL AWARDS:

- 2007 Herman Fredenberg Memorial Offensive Player of the Year: Shad Bride, St. Johns.
- 2007 Edwin Tano Defensive Player of the Year: Kirby Mitchell, Red Mesa.
- 2007 Angelo DiPaolo Football Coach of the Year: Mike Morgan, St. Johns.
- 2007 Isaac Panana Memorial Most Valuable Player: Carlos Barela, Holbrook.

For the complete list of the Navajo Times All-Stars, go to www.navajotimes.com/sports/120607allarea.php

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