

Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006  
Shreveport, Louisiana

### QUARTERBACKS AND CADILLAC

Remember the 1978 movie "Heaven Can Wait?" Julie Christie looks up at Warren Beatty and says, "You're the quarterback. You're the one." I guess there's nothing like hanging out with the quarterback.

And that's exactly what I got to do last week in Shreveport at the Doug Williams Foundation Celebrity Golf Classic. Doug was quite a quarterback himself, starring and coaching at Grambling University, and winning a Super Bowl ring when he played with the Washington Redskins. I've known Doug for a number of years, and he asked me to play with a number of NFL superstars who showed up for this worthwhile fundraising event.

Doug Williams built this foundation from scratch doing great things in Louisiana, working closely with his partner, Shack Harris who heads up player personnel for the Jacksonville Jaguars. Doug and Shack began this foundation to endow scholarships for needy students and supply athletic equipment for local Louisiana youth sports teams. In addition, the foundation presented \$100 Wal-Mart gift certificates to Hurricane Katrina evacuees who immigrated up to north Louisiana following the storm.

And these guys sure know how to draw the stars. Cadillac Williams, the NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year was there. Just taking a look at him in street clothes let everyone know why he beat up on LSU so much during his college years at Auburn. Michael Irvin, former Dallas great and always outlandishly dressed, was there giving everybody advice.

A whole list of other NFL players was in tow along with CBS sports announcer Tim Brando. Tim has made the big time, as one of the premier collegiate announcers in both college football and basketball. He is a Shreveport native, and still keeps his home there, even though he travels throughout the country most of the year. Tim use to host a radio show in Port Allen, across from the State Capitol, and I was a regular with him for years. I'm not sure if you listened, but we always had a good time.

Also playing with us was former Arkansas quarterback Matt Jones who now also plays for Jacksonville. I asked Matt about his fondest college football memory. Without missing a beat he said, "Beating LSU." Former Saints quarterback John Forcade was also part of our group. John was a real star at Ole Miss, and lit up New Orleans when the players strike took place back in the late '80s. John stepped in, and stole the spotlight from the regulars game after game. He has been coaching an indoor arena football team in Shreveport over the last several years.

A tall statuesque lady introduced herself to me. "I'm Lucille O'Neal." It didn't take long to realize that I was talking to Shaq's mama. So I did the natural thing and asked, "Who's going to win the NBA championship?" Shaq and the Miami Heat will take on the Dallas Mavericks with the finals starting this week.

“Miami in six games,” Ms. Lucille offered. I ventured one more question. “And who do you think is going to be MVP of the finals?” She smiled, “My boy, of course.”

I’m not much of a golfer, but it was a treat just being in the company of all these superstars. When I made it to my golf cart, I was pleasantly surprised to be teamed up with Jacksonville Jaguars quarterback Byron Leftwich. From all reports, he has Jacksonville in the hunt for the NFL title this year. And I really wore him down. No, not with my golf game. Neither one of us had shots to brag about. But put yourself in my shoes. I had the undivided attention from one of the NFL’s premier quarterbacks for over four hours. Boy, did I pepper him with questions.

What’s he doing now a little over two months before the season opens? “Hard conditioning. I lift weights three times a week. Heavy weights. I’m meeting with coaches, and I am already studying game plans for the season. I live in Jacksonville, so I’m there at the training camp everyday.”

What about diet? “I watch carefully what I eat. Chicken and broccoli are staples. No sugar or fried foods. There’s a lot of money invested in this body, and I have to fine tune.”

What’s the in-season workday like? “I put in 12 to 14 hours a day. I watch last week’s and next week’s game film, first by myself, and then with the coaches. It’s like studying for a final exam. I’m on the field everyday. I still do weight training, but more repetitions and less weight. I want to maintain what I have. My one day off is Tuesday, and I go to the movies, generally by myself. I just want to tune out and rest. It’s my time alone.”

What happens when one of your linemen misses a block, and you get creamed? “Those guys don’t want anything to happen to me. If I go down, they lose. They are also my friends, so I don’t get mad. Hey, you’re going to take a shot every now and then in this league.”

What’s your biggest surprise playing in the NFL? “The size and quickness of the players on the field. I’m 6’6” and weigh 250 pounds. But most of the guys are just as big or bigger. The defensive linebackers are probably the quickest players on the field. It’s unbelievable how fast they move.”

How do you pinpoint your passes? Do you throw to a specific spot and expect the player to be there? “I throw to a pattern, but I always glance out of the corner of my eye. Your window for a completed pass is so narrow. You have to assume there are two or three defensive linemen where you’re going to throw the pass. I figure there’s about a three-foot window I have to hit. So that’s my job and I can do it. I don’t care whether it’s a long pass or short pass. I can get it wherever I need to.”

Final question. Who’s the best quarterback in the NFL? “It has to be New England’s Tom Brady. He is not only a great athlete, but he has the experience. Right now he is the best. I think I’m just as good at quarterback, but I don’t have his experience. But give me time. I’ll be there.”

Byron Leftwich, and these other NFL stars are class guys, who came at their own expense for the golf tournament. It was a thrill for an average Joe like me to pull out my clubs and be a part of

this distinguished group. Hats off to Doug Williams and Shack Harris. They are giving something back to their home state, and we all should be proud.

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### QUOTES OF NOTE FROM THE NFL:

- 1. Joe Theismann, ESPN Announcer and Former NFL Quarterback**  
*"Nobody in football should be called a genius. A genius is a guy like Norman Einstein."*  
(Norman? Is he related to Albert? I guess we know who *isn't* a genius)
- 2. Torrin Polk, University of Houston Wide Receiver**  
When asked about his coach John Jenkins, he said ...  
*"He treats us like men. He lets us wear earrings."*  
And next he's going to let them paint their fingernails.
- 3. Former New Orleans Saints RB George Rogers**  
*"I want to rush for 1,000 or 1,500 yards, whichever comes first."*
- 4. Houston Oilers Head Coach Bill Peterson**  
*"You guys line up alphabetically by height."*  
Bill also gets extra credit for these inspirational words.  
*"Men, I want you just thinking of one word all season. One word and one word only: Super Bowl."*
- 5. Dick Butkus, Former Chicago Bears Linebacker**  
*"I wouldn't ever set out to hurt anyone deliberately unless it was important – like a league game."*  
Hey, at least he holds back in practice!

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Peace and justice.

Jim Brown

Jim Brown's weekly column appears each Thursday here at Politicsla.com, and in a number of newspapers throughout the State of Louisiana. You can read Jim's Blog, and take his weekly poll, plus read his columns going back to the fall of 2002 by going to his own website at <http://www.jimbrownla.com>.

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