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In Loving Memory Of A Legend

UA Hall Of Honor Recognizes Brandon Burlsworth

By [Jerry L. Reed](#)

FAYETTEVILLE—Brandon Burlsworth's story has been chronicled more than once and by more than one author.

Clearly, it's a story worthy of legendary status even if it's written about someone who lived only 22 years.

Tears still drop today in his memory because of his life among those who knew him.

Definitely, he was a legend.

Because of it, Brandon Burlsworth will be inducted posthumously into the University of Arkansas Sports Hall of Honor on Sept. 3.

Other inductees are former football players Harry Jones, Wayne Martin and Jerry Jones, ex-basketball players Jerry Carlton, Lee Mayberry and Tracy Webb Rice, track and field All-American Seneca Lassiter and tennis All-American Peter Doohan.

Among many accomplishments, this year's class combined to win 20 All-America distinctions, 36 all-conference accolades and played a part in 13 individual or team national championships.

Honorees were elected to the UA Sports Hall of Honor by a vote of former letterwinners in conjunction with the A Club.

In this election year, Burlsworth was a given.

Think about it.

- Former walk-on from Harrison wins scholarship after a redshirt year.
- Two-time All-Southeastern Conference offensive guard (1997-98).
- First-team All-American (1998).
- Third-round draft pick by the Indianapolis Colts (1999).
- Only the third player in Razorbacks football history to have his number (No. 77) retired (in fact, his locker remains intact as a tribute to his memory in the Arkansas dressing room). Clyde "Smackover" Scott and Steve Little both had No. 12 retired in their honor.

Why Burlsworth?

"Brandon always stood for the right thing; always made the right decision," said Arkansas coach Houston Nutt. "He was a Christian, a role model, had class and perfect character. That's why we tell our Razorbacks, 'Do it the Burls way.'"

Sadly, Brandon Burlsworth died on April 28, 1999 in a horrible automobile accident while on his way to attend church with his mother.

His brother, Marty Burlsworth, today the executive director of the Brandon Burlsworth Foundation, won't soon forget it.

"When I got the news, it was kind of a blur," Marty Burlsworth said. "It's something that stays with you forever.

"I think it's still a blur for my mother."

Arguably, one of the most popular Razorbacks players, but not because of his Drew Carey, Coke bottle-thick glasses — those are given to children by the Brandon Burlsworth Foundation visiting Arkansas football games in his honor — Brandon Burlsworth probably deserves to be included in this class of inductees.

"I'm real happy about that," Marty Burlsworth said. "It makes you feel good. I just wish Brandon could be here to accept this honor. I wish he could accept it on his own.

"I sure rather him be here.

"What makes it special is because he was voted in by his peers. Being a Razorback meant a lot to him. That was a big issue for him since he was a little guy.

"He made it against all odds.

"Few have been able to do that. What's strange is that they were going to retire his number at Harrison (No. 54) but he didn't know it. It was going to be just days after his death. Of course, he didn't know it.

"We kept it a secret."

However, it's no secret Brandon Burlsworth left an impression on all who knew him, or know his story.

Ask Marty Burlsworth.

"We'll never forget him."