

Surry County Sports Hall of Fame



Lee Buchanan/The Messenger

Fred Folger Jr. of Mount Airy punted and ran his way to football glory at Duke in the '40s.

'Fearless Freddy' Folger got his kicks at Duke

By Lee Buchanan
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Fred Folger Jr. is known around Mount Airy as a respected attorney and former state legislator.

But on the football fields of Mount Airy High and Duke University in the '40s, he was Fearless Freddy Folger.

On Saturday, he will be inducted into Surry County Sports Hall of Fame.

"I'm honored to be included in that group," Folger said Tuesday. "There's a lot of good people in there, and I'm glad to be among them."

How did he earn the nickname "Fearless Freddy"?

"I ran that way because I was scared," he said. "Some people got it mixed up and dubbed me 'Fearless.'"

Folger starred at Mount Airy High in football and baseball from 1941 to 1943. In 1942 he helped the Bears to a championship when he fired a 65-yard touchdown pass to "Butter" Cox on the game's first play.

Folger then took his game to

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Duke on an athletic scholarship.

World War II got in the way, though, and he left college for a two-year stint in the Navy.

He returned to Duke in 1946 and became one of the best kickers in the country, averaging 42.5 yards per punt.

His coach at Duke, the legendary Wallace Wade, praised Folger as one of the game's great kickers.

Two weeks before the 1947 season opener, Duke's top two

tailbacks were injured and Folger suddenly found himself the Blue Devils' number-one runner.

That year Folger ran for 316 yards and passed for 383. He led Duke in total offense with 689 yards.

He also continued to kick and sported the third-best average in the nation. He was named Duke's most valuable player.

Folger was named to the UPI All-Southern Team and was honorable mention All-American in 1947.

Folger also played safety on defense. For years he held the career mark at Duke for interceptions and punting average, and he still holds the career mark for interception yardage at 283.

Folger also played baseball for the Blue Devils, playing center field and hitting .277 in 1948 with two doubles, two home runs and 13 runs batted in.

He returned to Mount Airy and set up his legal practice in 1953.

Folger, 82, plans to attend Saturday's ceremony. He also hopes to retire soon, something he's been vowing to do for a year.