

In Conversation With ... Bill Redell

By Chris Durka

I recently had the opportunity to have a conversation with Bill Redell who played an integral role in the outstanding success of the Hamilton Tiger Cat defence in 1967. Many in fact believe that this was the greatest Ti-Cat defence of all time. The 1967 defence did not allow a single touchdown to be scored against them in the last 6 games of the season including the 2 game eastern total points final and the Grey Cup game.

Bill was not only a stalwart defensive back; he was also the team's backup quarterback which provided the Ti-Cats with a reliable insurance policy in the event Joe Zuger, the team's starting quarterback was injured.

Bill was an accomplished and experienced quarterback in his own right. He was the starting QB for the Edmonton Eskimos prior to arriving in Hamilton and could have easily been a starting QB for other teams in the Canadian Football League. He was a two way player also and in 1966 he was selected as a CFL All-Star.

Redell started playing quarterback in San Marino High School in Westlake Village California where his talents were noticed by scouts from the University of Southern California and he was ultimately presented with a football scholarship. Soon after however, Bill decided to transfer to Occidental College where he felt that he would have a better opportunity to play quarterback. The choice he made was an excellent one because he ended up having an exceptional career as a quarterback there. He led Occidental College to 2 Southern California Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Championships and was named All Pacific Coast Quarterback and All American Defensive Back in 1962-63.

In 1964 Bill was drafted by the National Football League Los Angeles Rams and by the Denver Broncos of the American Football League. Bill chose to try out for the NFL Rams but after training camp he was found expendable and this is when he made contact with coach Neil Armstrong of the Edmonton Eskimos who was looking for a quarterback.

Bill played quarterback for the Eskimos from 1964 to 1966 and in 1967 he was traded to the Tiger Cats in a blockbuster trade orchestrated by Jake Gaudaur the Ti-Cat General Manager at that time. The Ti-Cat management recognized

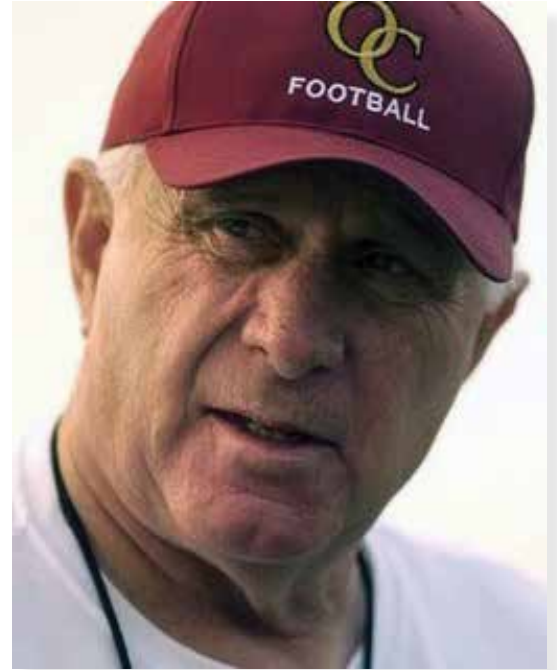
Bill's playing abilities both as a quarterback and as a defensive back which was a necessity for the team at that time. Bill would immediately start on the defence and also provide the Ti-Cats the quarterback experience in the backup role that was so vitally needed. The trade was a great trade for the Cats because they also received all-star receiver Tommy Joe Coffey and Hamilton native Ed Turek in that trade.

Bill quickly adapted to his new surroundings and his team mates. He mentioned what a great experience it was to be surrounded with players such as Garney Henley, Joe Zuger, Dave Fleming, Angelo Mosca, Hal Paterson, Dave Viti, John Barrow, Bob Krouse and list went on. His fondest memory was to be part of that great 1967 team and winning the Grey Cup that year. He continued to say that he liked playing for Ralph Sazio who he described as being a tough coach who possessed a keen ability to thoroughly prepare his team for every game.

Bill said that he really enjoyed his time in Hamilton particularly experiencing the articulate character of the supportive Ti-Cat fans. He remembered the happy times he and his family had when they stayed at 21 Duff Street during his stay in Hamilton.

After football, Bill went into a business career for 10 years before returning to football to become a renowned coach in California at all levels. As a college coach he was an assistant at California State University, Fullerton and California Lutheran University. He then continued his coaching at the high school level as a head coach for 25 years. His high school teams went on to set 9 CIF (California Interscholastic Federation) records of 48 consecutive wins, 9 consecutive CIF Championship appearances and 8 CIF Championships.

Bill has been named the US Nations High School Coach of the year on 4 separate occasions and has won numerous awards ranging from the prestigious Southern California Broadcasters Life Time Achievement Award



to the Gerald R. Ford Award. In 2001, he was inducted into the National Football Foundation College Hall of Fame. He is also a member of 10 other Hall of Fames, most recent being the Occidental Collages' Inaugural Athlete Hall of Fame.

This year he was selected the winner of the nation-wide contest for 'Coaches Who Have Made a Difference'. This honour was awarded by the National College Football Hall of Fame and the 2018 Rose Bowl Committee. He accomplished all this while running a large insurance firm of 135 employees, called Bolton and Company.

Bill was very candid and open in our conversation. He asked about a number of his former teammates and demonstrated a deep concern for all their well-being. It was a distinct pleasure to have had the opportunity to talk to # 12 Bill Redell, another great Hamilton Tiger Cat legend.

CHRIS DURKA IS a long-time Tiger-Cat fan, season ticket holder, historian and collector of Tiger-Cat memorabilia and autographs. Over the years, Chris has had the honour to speak with many Tiger-Cat players whom he now recalls in conversation.