



Remembering our brothers who have passed from this life

NOLAN, RICHARD C. '50

Richard C. "Dick" Nolan, '50, the former head coach of the San Francisco 49ers and the New Orleans Saints, passed away on 11 November 2007. He was 75 years old.

Nolan had been in declining health with Alzheimer's disease and cancer for several years. He spent the last few months in an assisted-care facility. near where he and his wife, Ann, had their longtime family home outside Dallas. Their son, Mike Nolan, is now head coach of the 49ers, the first father-son to coach the same team since Bum and Wade Phillips both coached the Saints. The 49ers just signed Mike for another year.

Born in Pittsburgh, Dick Nolan's family moved to White Plains, NY, where he played quarterback at White Plains High before coming to Fort Defiance. AMA's varsity football team went 8-1-1 in 1949, losing only to Fork Union, and tying Manlius. The Blue and White outscored their opponents 235-76, and Dick Nolan was all over the field in every game, creating then recovering a fumble in the Greenbrier game to preserve an AMA win. In the Manlius game, he scored a touchdown on the second play of the game, one of just two scores as the game ended in a tie at 6-6.

After Augusta, Nolan went to the University of Maryland to play quarterback, but Terp Coach Jim Tatum turned him into an offensive and

defensive halfback. Maryland beat Oklahoma for the national crown in 1953 and Nolan was invited to play in the Senior Bowl his last year and later in a College All Star game in Chicago.

It was at UMD that Dick met Ann and they married four years later. They would move 22 times during their marriage. While at Maryland, a New York Giants scout spotted him and offered him a contract. In the 1954 season, Dick began nine years of dazzling defensive play in the NFL during which time he helped the Giants win one national and two Eastern Conference championships. His former teammate Frank Gifford said Nolan "was an extraordinary football player. He was smart and he was tough.

When his playing days were over in 1962, former teammate Tom Landry invited Dick to become the defensive coordinator for the Dallas Cowboys where he was the co-architect of the "flex" defense. He remained with Dallas until the 49ers came calling in 1968. The San Francisco team had never won the big ones in 22 years and 49er President Lou Spadia wanted a winner - and that was Dick Nolan. In 1970, he was the National Football Conference Coach of the Year. In three straight seasons, Nolan led the perennially downtrodden 49ers to three Western Division titles and three times, his mentor, Tom Landry, and the Cowboys won the big game to keep the Niners out of the Super Bowl. 49er fans later accustomed to Bill Walsh and the heroics of Joe Montana tend to forget how far the 49ers came with Dick Nolan at the helm.

NOLAN, RICHARD C. '50 (continued)

He had a 54-53-5 record through the 1975 season when he left to become defensive coordinator for Hank Stram in New Orleans. In 1978, Stram was fired and Nolan became the head coach of the Saints for the next three seasons. He ended his career back in Dallas working for Tom Landry

who, you may recall, also wore a coat and tie on the sidelines.

At AMA, Dick Nolan played not only football but basketball and baseball. He also was on the track team. A CW who lived in Big Barracks, he is remembered fondly by Headquarters Company Captain Tommy Clements, '50, as a "good cadet, a good student, a good athlete and a good friend. He was my favorite CW, always happy and always smiling." Tommy visited Nolan last Fall and showed him some pictures from the 1950 *Recall* which seemed to kindle some recognition.

Dick Nolan is survived by his wife of 53 years, Ann, and six children: Richard (Rook) owns a landscape business in San Jose, CA. Nancy Bellagamba is personal secretary for her brother, Mike, who is the incumbent San Francisco 49er head coach. Kelly is a teacher in Trophy Club, TX while Lisa is an international flight attendant for American Airlines living in Keller, TX. Son Jimmy is in the air freight business in Dallas. Dick's brother Jack lives in Wilton, CT while sisters Maryjane Barry, Nancy Hughes and Judy Garvin live in Naples, FL, Libertyville, IL and Minneapolis respectively.

Dick also left twelve grandchildren.

Mike was on the sidelines to coach the 49ers the day after his father died, something that everyone who knew Dick said he would want Mike to do.

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