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A night to remember



N.H. Gov. John Lynch closed out the pre-game festivities when he and Kennett captains Ian White, Seth Shackford (sidelined with a torn ACL), David Lawton and Alain Lanciaux strolled to the 50-yard line, meeting the Plymouth captains for the ceremonial coin flip to start the game Friday night. (JAMIE GEMMITI PHOTO)

Nearly 2,000 attend official dedication of Kennett High's Gary Millen Stadium

BY LLOYD JONES
THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

CONWAY — It was an evening filled with plenty of emotions as the Gary Millen Stadium was officially dedicated Friday before an estimated crowd of nearly 2,000

on the campus of Kennett High School in Redstone.

The only blemish on an otherwise perfect evening was that visiting Plymouth topped Kennett, 34-6 (see game story in Sports, page 14).

The Millen Stadium is named after the

late Kennett High social studies teacher and head football coach Gary Millen, who died unexpectedly on May 5, 2006, at the age of 53. Millen went 186-86 in football as head coach at Kennett. He took the

see **STADIUM** page 12

State senate hopeful says dirty politics are behind claims by Maine Attorney General that his company engaged in predatory lending

BY NATE GIARNESE
THE CONWAY DAILY SUN

OSSIPEE — State Rep. Bill Denley, who is running to represent Carroll County in the state senate, founded Downeast Mortgage Corp., a major Maine lender that

closed its doors this spring facing a dire financing crisis and prosecution by Maine Attorney General Steven Rowe for alleged predatory lending practices.

Downeast was prosecuted for allegedly advising a Maine couple to form a limited liability corporation to get around resi-

dential lending guidelines and ultimately to take out a home loan with Commercial Street Capital, a company owned by many of the same officials who owned Downeast, including Denley.

see **DENLEY** page 10

STADIUM from page one

Eagles to the post-season 19 times, winning six state championships and appearing in a total of 11 title games.

The dedication of the stadium was a festive evening with countless community members and students turning out in their finest black and white. Gary MacDonald, president of the Millen Foundation, served as the master of ceremonies for the 30-minute pre-game dedication. "It's perfect weather, an incredible crowd, and two undefeated football teams — you can feel the energy in the air. It's Friday Night football at its very best," he said.

MacDonald went over the mission of the Millen Foundation: to encourage Kennett High School students to strive for, achieve and embrace the virtues of scholar-athletes; to support and promote sports programs and athletes at Kennett High; to fund scholarship opportunities for Kennett High students to pursue higher education; and to support teachers and coaches in acquiring facilities, equipment and other resources necessary to develop and promote academic, athletic and artistic excellence for all Kennett students.

"Tonight we officially open a stadium that we could only dream about two years ago," MacDonald said. "Gary Millen was a trusted friend to many of us. He consistently demonstrated the attributes we hope to see continue in future Kennett student-athletes. With this stadium, Gary Millen will forever be a part of Kennett teams to come."

Kennett High Principal Jack Loynd, proudly wearing a Kennett High jacket and hat, followed. "Doesn't the sound of Gary Millen Stadium have a nice ring to it," he asked, drawing a thunderous ovation.

Loynd said the evening provided a sort of reality check, because it was hard to fathom how much had been accomplished in a relatively short period of time. He had a message to the current Kennett student body. "Tonight you have the opportunity to experience true school spirit," he said. "The new high school and Gary Millen Stadium are proof that dreams can come true."

Plymouth High Coach Chuck Lenahan, who was

"Gary's life was marked with many talents, but I will remember him for his unquestionable character and devotion to this students. He consistently demanded the best from his students and athletes, which is now evident in their success. Gary has influenced many lives, and his memory will continue to impact the players, coaches and fans that step into this stadium."

a close friend of Millen, also spoke. Now in his 38th year at the helm of the Bobcats, Lenahan notched his 300th high school victory the week before. He received a nice ovation in recognition of the accomplishment.

"It's an honor for Plymouth to be here tonight," he said. "Coach Millen was not only a great football coach, but he was a good person, too."

Lenahan and Millen coached against each other for 30 years. Lenahan called him "a fierce competitor" once they stepped onto the football field, but when the final whistle sounded, "win or lose we had great handshakes and smiles, we were friends again."

"When I think of the greatest games I've ever coached," Lenahan continued, "every one of them all seem to come down to Kennett. People talk about having a rivalry with Plymouth; our rivalry is with Kennett and always will be. I can only imagine how much Coach Millen is missed. I'm so glad to be able to be at this dedication ceremony for the chance to honor a great coach and truly great man."

N.H. Gov. John Lynch, who was a high school classmate of Millen, rounded out the group of speakers. "Gary was a much better athlete than I ever was," he said, recalling Millen had been captain of their high school football, basketball and baseball teams. "Gary led by example and he pushed all of us to be our very best. Gary Millen was truly a great man; it's fitting that this wonderful stadium is named after him. He was a

man who made a difference in the lives of so many. "For 30 years, Gary Millen was a dedicated teacher and coach to the students at Kennett High School," Lynch continued. "Gary was remembered for his tough but fair attitude that his students knew in the classroom and on the field. Gary's life was marked with many talents, but I will remember him for his unquestionable character and devotion to this students. He consistently demanded the best from his students and athletes, which is now evident in their success. Gary has influenced many lives, and his memory will continue to impact the players, coaches and fans that step into this stadium."

MacDonald then introduced the 2008 Eagles, who sprinted onto the field between a path set up by the Kennett High spirit squad to another loud ovation.

The American Legion Post No. 95 Color Guard of North Conway followed, marching to midfield with the Kennett High Drumline. At midfield, the group then veered to the left and marched to the new flagpole. There, Commander Larry Smith presented a new flag to four Kennett alumni — Robbie Knox '06, Jeff Perry '90, Jody McDonald '90, and Kelly Jon Scruggs '91 — who had the honor of raising the flag during a moment of silence for Millen.

New Hampshire Idol finalist Rebecca Deschenes, of Conway, then belted out a stellar rendition of the National Anthem. That was met with another rousing round of applause.

Lynch closed out the pre-game action when he and Kennett captains Alain Lanciaux, David Lawton, Seth Shackford and Ian White ventured to the 50-yard line, meeting the Plymouth captains for the ceremonial coin flip to start the game.

At halftime, the Kennett High band and spirit teams performed, and youngsters from the local Pop Warner Football League (members of the Green Machine, Eagles, Patriots and Tigers) performed drills at both sides of the 30-yard line.

Sut Marshall, a member of the Millen Foundation, summed up the night well. "This to me is much more than a football stadium," he said. "It's community, it's the town bonding together. What better way to spend a Friday night than with your friends. I'm sure Gary is looking down and smiling."

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Sept. 19, 2008



Jamie Gemmiti photos