

## ***2019 HOF Inductee***

### **Thomas A. "Tom" Catlin - Class of 1949**

Tom Catlin was born September 8, 1931 in Ponca City, Oklahoma. He was the son of Hugh and Elsie Catlin.

Tom was active in all areas while at Po-Hi, both academically and in sports. He lettered in four sports: football, basketball, baseball and track. Football was his favorite. He was named to the All-State football team in football with the Wildcats under Coach Earl Sullins in 1949.

He became a two-way starter for the University of Oklahoma, a center and linebacker. Tom was an All-Conference player in 1950-51 and '52, only the fourth player in Oklahoma history to receive that distinction at least three times. He helped lead the Sooners to a national championship in 1950 under head coach Bud Wilkinson and earned All-America honors in 1951 and 1952.

Tom played for the Cleveland Browns in 1953-54. Following his ROTC commitment at OU, he then joined the Air Force as a pilot from 1955-57. He finished his playing career a year later with the Philadelphia Eagles.

Tom's coaching career began at West Point in 1957 under head coach Red Blaik before joining Hank Stram's staff in 1960 with the Dallas Texans. In 1966, he became the defensive backfield coach for George Allen's Los Angeles Rams. He was promoted to defensive coach in 1969, staying with the Rams until 1977. He worked under coaches Allen through 1970, Tommy Prothro 1971-72 and Chuck Knox 1973-77. He then moved with Knox to the Buffalo Bills, serving as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach. After the 1980 season, he was named assistant head coach.

Knox and Catlin moved to the Seattle Seahawks in 1983, where Caitlin stayed until his retirement in 1996.

Tom was named NFL Coach of the Year in 1992 by *Sports Illustrated*, the first assistant coach ever to achieve that distinction. He also was named Pro Football Weekly's Assistant Coach of the

Year.

In 2009, Tom was posthumously inducted into the Oklahoma Sports Hall of Fame. Tom passed away on June 7, 2008, at the age of 76.

Each year at Po-Hi, the Tom Catlin Award is given to a worthy Po-Hi football player exemplifying outstanding character. It is sponsored by the First Baptist Church, Tom's home church.