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Eddie Moss Day celebrated at PBJHS

SEPTEMBER 26TH 2019 BY DEE LOFLIN

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Poplar Bluff, Missouri - Former NFL player Eddie Moss was recognized on the field where he once played on Thursday, Sept. 19, during Poplar Bluff Junior High's first home football game of the season.

Earlier in the day, Moss spoke about leadership to 115 students in a pod named in his honor under the Junior High's house system, which groups students across classes and grade levels in an effort to create a sense of camaraderie within the school community.

"In order to be a leader, you also gotta be a follower," said Moss, who graduated from PBHS in 1967. "If you're just barking orders, you become a dictator. You gotta listen to the people around you too."

Having a "good attitude, integrity and people skills" are also key leadership qualities, Moss noted. In preparation for his hometown visit, the students toured the Poplar Bluff Museum to learn about the Moss family, and other pieces of local history displayed in a building over a century-old that the R-I district sold to the city for a dollar

Moss began his athletic career as a basketball player until he started "growing wider instead of taller," he joked. Past Mules Football coach Jim Lohr took the budding student-athlete under his wing during the summer of Moss' sophomore year to teach the young man the game. Summertime typically meant farm work so it was a "big deal" for his parents JD and Willie Marie to allow him to stay with the coach, Moss explained, describing Lohr as a "second father."

As a varsity Mule, Moss played a number of positions including offensive center, defensive nose tackle, running back, fullback, linebacker and later in college, tailback. “It helps to play a lot of positions,” he advised the students about being versatile. The Mules went undefeated in 1966.

Moss earned a full ride to Central Methodist University in Fayette, but unfortunately sustained injuries in an auto accident causing him to lose the scholarship, he reflected. He persevered to play football at Indian Hills Community College in Iowa eventually transferring to Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, where he was named to the All-Conference team.

In 1972, Moss was drafted by the Buffalo Bills but was the last player to get cut during preseason. He returned to Poplar Bluff to help coach the Mules, yet soon would receive a second break, getting picked up by the St. Louis Football Cardinals from 1973-76. He finished his professional career with the Washington Redskins, from 1977-78. He was inducted into the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in the Class of 2016.

Moss, who turns 71 on Friday, Sept. 27, resides in St. Louis with his wife Phyllis. Earlier this year, Moss was gracious enough to donate his collection of sports memorabilia to the PBHS wall of fame, revamped by security officer Wesley Lewis.

Eddie Moss Day was organized last week by communication arts teacher Chris East. Each of the school’s houses are named after famous living Poplar Bluff alumni including TV producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, basketball player Tyler Hansbrough, voice-over actor Scott Innes, author Linda Ladd, football player Derland Moore, and Moss himself. The other pods will seek opportunities to make similar connections with their namesakes, according to Principal Candace Warren.

Pictured: Eddie Moss sits with PBJHS students after signing autographs over lunch on Thursday, Sept. 19, in the FEMA gym.

Photo and article submitted by Tim Krakowiak, Communications/Marketing Director, Poplar Bluff R-I School District

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