Bennett, James Named 2007 Legends of the Sun Bowl
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Don James, Cornelius Bennett Named
2007 Legends Of The Sun Bowl
Alabama's Cornelius Bennett was the C.M. Hendricks Most Valuable Player at the 1986 Sun Bowl. (Brian Kanof Photo)
Don James led Washington to two Sun Bowl appearances and was twice named National Coach of the Year. (UW Media Relations)
EL PASO, Texas (November 30, 2007) - College Football Hall of Fame members Don James and Cornelius Bennett have been named the 2007 Legends of the Sun Bowl, announced Bernie Olivas, executive director of the Sun Bowl Association.

"We are really excited to have the opportunity to add Cornelius Bennett and Don James to our Legends of the Sun Bowl," said Olivas. "Both have lasting legacies in the sport of college football and we are just glad that some of that history was left in Sun Bowl Stadium."

James, who guided Washington to a pair of Sun Bowl appearances, is the Huskies all-time winningest coach, while Bennett, who played in the Sun Bowl twice, was a three-time All-American at Alabama.

The pair will be inducted into the Legends of the Sun Bowl at the Rotary Sun Bowl Team Luncheon at the Judson F. Williams Convention Center on Dec. 28 at 11:30 a.m. Tickets to the event can be purchased by calling Maxine Johnson at (915) 544-2582.

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James brought Washington to El

Paso in 1979 and 1986. In 1979, his No. 13 Huskies

stunned No. 11 Texas, 14-7, at Sun Bowl Stadium. He returned to the Sun City in 1986, where No. 12 Washington was knocked off

by No. 13 Alabama, 28-6, a game in which Bennett played.

James played collegiately at the University of Miami before serving a two-year stint in the U.S. Army as a second lieutenant. He return to the University of Kansas after his service and served as the freshman football coach, while completing his master's degree in education.

After a two-year stint as a high school football coach in Miami, Fla., James moved on to the college ranks where he served as an assistant at Florida State (1956-65), Michigan (1966-67) and Colorado (1968-70).

In 1971, James became head coach at Kent State University, where he compiled a 25-19 record over four years. While there, he coached NFL great Jack Lambert and current Alabama head coach Nick Saban. He led the Golden Flashes to their only conference title in 1972 and a trip to the Tangerine Bowl.

In December of 1974, James was hired by the University of Washington. He was head coach for 18 years (1975-1992). He led the Huskies to six Rose Bowl appearances and the 1991 national championship. In all, James' Huskies appeared in 15 bowl games over 18 years, including a Pac-10 record nine straight from 1979-87.

James compiled a 153-57-2 (.726) record at Washington, including a then-record 99 wins in Pac-10 Conference play. He also led the Huskies to 22 consecutive wins from 1990 to 1992.

He was twice named national coach of the year in 1984 and 1991. James was inducted into the Husky Hall of Fame in 1993 and the College Football Hall of Fame in 1997. In 22 years as a head coach, James was 178-76-3 (.698), with 16 bowl appearances and seven conference championships.

Bennett, a three-time All-American at Alabama, played in the 1983 Sun Bowl against SMU and the 1986 Sun Bowl against Washington. Against SMU, Bennett had a seven-tackle performance, as the Crimson Tide upset No. 6 SMU, 28-7.

In 1986, Bennett led the Crimson Tide to a second upset, as No. 12 Alabama knocked off No. 13 Washington, 28-6. He had 11 tackles and one sack against the Huskies and was named the C.M. Hendricks Most Valuable Player. At the time, Bennett was just the third defensive player in the game's history to win the MVP award.

A native of Birmingham, Ala., Bennett was the 1986 Southeastern Conference Player of the Year, as well as the 1986 Lombardi Trophy winner. He also finished seventh in the Heisman Trophy balloting that season. In all, he finished 1986 with 61 tackles, 23 for a loss, with 15 sacks, six forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries.

Bennett had a storied career at Alabama, which included defensive MVP at the 1985 Aloha Bowl and three-time All-SEC honors. He recorded 287 tackles, 37 tackles for a loss and 20 sacks during his four-year stay at Alabama. He

was named to the Tide's Team of the Century and was also named the Player of the Decade for the 1980s. He was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in 2005.

He was taken with the seventh overall pick in the 1987 NFL Draft by the Indianapolis Colts. Bennett played 14 seasons in the NFL (1987-2000) and started in five Super Bowls, including four consecutive appearances with the Buffalo Bills (1990-1993).

Bennett had an outstanding NFL career, which included five Pro Bowl appearances (1989, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994) and two AFC Defensive Player of the Year awards in 1988 and 1991. He recorded 71.5 sacks, seven interceptions and 26 fumble recoveries during his NFL career. At the time of his retirement, Bennett's 26 fumble recoveries ranked third all-time in NFL history.

After playing with the Bills from 1987-95, Bennett spent the next three seasons with the Atlanta Falcons, where he helped lead the Falcons to the Super Bowl in 1998. He closed out his career with the Indianapolis, playing for two seasons with the Colts.

In 1994, the Sun Bowl Association and the Rotary Club of El Paso commenced Legends of the Sun Bowl to honor individuals whose exemplary accomplishments have enhanced the bowl throughout its 74-year history. Legends are honored at the annual Rotary Sun Bowl Team Luncheon held the week of the game.

Previous inductees have included the

following: Charley Johnson, Harrison Kohl and Bill Stevens (1994); Johnny Majors (1995); Tony Dorsett (1996); Tom Brookshier and Pat Summerall (1997); Jesse Whittenton (1998); Hayden Fry and Jimmy Rogers, Jr. (1999); Vince Dooley and Derrick Thomas (2000); John H. Folmer and Barry Switzer (2001); Thurman Thomas (2002); Ken Heineman (2003); Pat Tillman and Alex Van Pelt (2004); Terry Donahue and Verne Lundquist (2005); and Grant Teaff and Tony Franklin (2006).

The Legends of the Sun Bowl induction ceremony at the Rotary Sun Bowl Team Luncheon features both competing teams for the 74th Annual Brut Sun Bowl, which is slated for Monday, Dec. 31 at noon (MT). For information on tickets and other Sun Bowl events, please call the Sun Bowl Association office at (915) 533-4416.