

Lou Holtz Upper Ohio Valley Hall of Fame 2014 Induction Held

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WINTERSVILLE - Four men were inducted as the 2014 class of the Lou Holtz Upper Ohio Valley Hall of Fame during a banquet featuring a keynote address from Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger Monday evening at St. Florian Hall.

Holtz, the East Liverpool native and NCAA coaching legend, said he comes back to the area because it's where he learned the values that have served him in life.

"We were poor, but I say I was born with a silver spoon in my mouth because I was born in the greatest country in the world, and there were people who taught me the value of choices. They taught me to take responsibility for my actions. We were very poor, but it's not what you had. It's who you had," Holtz said.

Holtz said anyone who achieves success had to make sacrifices and overcome adversity along the way.

For Roethlisberger, adversity included the loss of his mother in a car accident when he was 8 years old. He said it doesn't matter if a person has everything or was born with nothing. Everyone faces adversity, and it always gets better.

"You have to find a way to use it to make you stronger," Roethlisberger said. "I played as hard as I could to make her proud watching me from heaven."

He said there are many ways to be a leader, but he has found leading from behind allows him to observe and help teammates.

"You can be the first out on the field and be that rah-rah guy. I am the last one out. I want to see the faces of my team so I can see what's going on," he said. Roethlisberger said that allows him to see who needs to be calmed down, who needs to be pumped up and who needs to get over any fears.

"I want to get the best out of those guys. Sometimes, by being in the back, you can see what's going on ahead of you," he said.

The inductees included Bernie Allen, who was a standout athlete in the 1950s at East Liverpool High School and went on to a 12-year career in Major League Baseball after quarterbacking the Purdue Boilermakers in college.

"I got to live out my dream of playing professional baseball and playing college football," he said, thanking teammates and his family "for making me look good."

Fellow inductee Bobby Douglas, a retired championship winning NCAA wrestling coach and former Olympian, issued a plea to the 700 in attendance to support keeping wrestling as an Olympic sport. He said many great Americans and leaders were wrestlers. He credited his high school wrestling coach, George Kovalick, with helping him achieve what he did in life.

Harry Rhoads, the chief executive of the Washington Speakers Bureau, which handles clients including Holtz, former president George W. Bush, Colin Powell and Terry Bradshaw, was named the 2014 Distinguished American by the hall. Rhoads said Holtz is the only picture on his office wall.

"My partner and I realized he is the one we learned everything we know about in business from. Hard work, integrity and never give up. Those values he learned in the Ohio Valley and they go a long way," Rhoads said.

Jim Rohr, who retired in April after 13 years as chief executive officer with PNC Bank, where he started his career 42 years ago, was presented the 2014 Lifetime Achievement Award. He recalled starting out as a corporate banker in the area, where his first clients included Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp. and Weirton Steel Corp.

He said the area is about families, "people who give back. I think of how fortunate I have been because of people." He recalled that his father died when he was 10 and had owned a restaurant where more people came to the back door than through the front because his father helped others.