



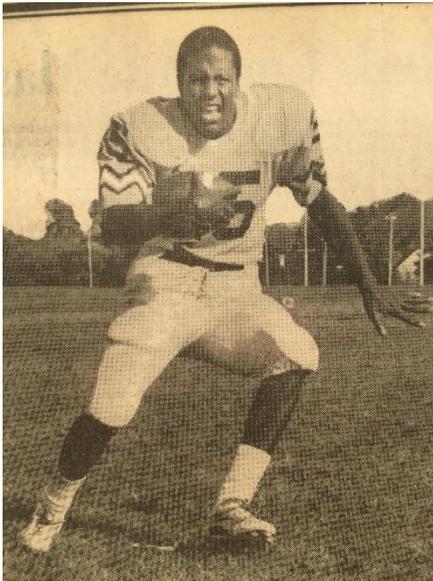
The year was 1976 and a young Duane Owens was beginning a pretty good athletic career but was trying to figure out what high school would be the best fit for him. And it all came to him in a similar way that it came to Mike Burns a few years earlier; at a basketball game. Duane came to watch his cousin Jerry Fulmer play against Nottingham he was hooked. He looked forward to the day that he would be out there in front of the big crowd playing in front of the cheering CBA fans.

In high school, Duane was a two-sport athlete. As was the case with many of us at the time, basketball was his first love. The Bob Felasco coached Brothers were far and away considered the top team in the area. So, Duane patiently waited his turn and moved up to the varsity as a junior (the way it always used to be)! Second year Coach Jack Conroy was trying to recapture the magic brought about by Felasco the few years before. With a group led by Jerry Zabinski and Pat Burns, Mike's brother. Because of his great athletic ability, he was used more as a rebounder that season and was a key contributor on the 1980 Section III championship team. In his senior year, Duane stepped up and had an overall outstanding season. Moved outside to his natural guard position Duane thrived. Right from the start he showed that he could score, having several double figure games, yet still continued to be a factor on the boards. The Brothers won the CNYCL Championship that year and for his efforts Duane was a second team All-League selection.

But where Duane truly excelled was on the football field. As a sophomore, Duane became a starting running back and actually led the team in rushing. Although the season was less than memorable: although in back to back weeks the Brothers were beaten by Henninger 75 – 0, then six days later they snapped a 17 game Nottingham win streak by tying the Bulldogs 0-0 so I guess that can be considered memorable. Duane injured his shoulder late that season but was healed and ready to go the following year. There was a coaching change before his junior season. Former Penn State All American running back Bob Campbell took over the reins and was charged with bringing life to the CBA program. And he started with Owens. Campbell recognized that Duane was a special talent. The 1979 season was a breakout year for Duane. The team improved dramatically. They went from league doormat to contender and much of it can be attributed to Duane. That season Duane led the league in rushing, finishing the year with 1003 yards in 91 carries, rushing for over 100 yards in six of the team 9 games. He was chosen as an All-League selection, one of only three underclassmen chosen on the 23-

man team. All-State followed and Coach Campbell call him a “super kid, a leader... potentially the best back I ever coached”.

In his senior year the expectations were high; and Duane did not disappoint. With junior Steve Locey at quarterback, the team finished the season with a 6-2-1 record. That year his final game was the first high school



football game ever played in the Carrier Dome almost 38 years ago. Personally, he had a great year, adding defensive back to his resume. In fact, during the course of the season, against Watertown he returned an interception 103 yards for a touchdown and against Henninger he performed the same feat, only this time with a fumble. And his offensive production still thrived. Against Fowler in the final game of the regular season, Duane rushed for 241 yards, in get this.... the first half! But his most memorable performance came against Auburn at Holland Stadium (a miniature Archbold Stadium for those of us that can remember) on homecoming. That morning Duane took his SAT's. To celebrate, Duane had touchdown runs of 76, 72, 62, 37 and 5 and a 92-yard kickoff return. He ended up rushing for 270 yards on 21 carries and oh yeah, also had two interceptions. Campbell put it succinctly “There is not a kid in the league as good as him. He’s the best back this league will see in a long time.” As the year ended, Duane again led

the league in rushing picking up 1040 yards in only seven games. He also led the league in scoring with 17 touchdowns. He was chosen All-City again, this time on offense **and** defense, and repeated as All-State selection. Campbells’ final assessment of Owens’ play was that Duane was probably the greatest player, offensively and defensively, we have ever had at this school.

With the career that he had it was only fitting that Duane continue his career at the college level. Courted by several schools he chose the warm weather and small college feel of Wake Forest to continue his academic and athletic career. Although recruited to play football, Duane loved playing basketball and, in the summers, would play pickup with the members of the basketball team. In his junior and senior year those players convinced Duane to join the team when football ended.



In his main sport, a change in the coaching staff even before he played a down did not dampen his enthusiasm or performance. In his freshman season, he led the Demon Deacons in rushing with and accounted for over 400 yards in total offense. In his junior and senior years, he was moved to wide receiver. As a junior, he ranked third in the ACC in touchdown receptions. For his career, he accounted for almost 1500 yards and just over 200 touches or a little more than 7 yards to possession, which included 10 touchdowns. Duane, your performance as a CBA athlete was nothing but spectacular. Tonight, we would like to show our appreciation for what you did for our programs thirty-five years ago as we welcome you into the LaSallian Athletic Hall of Fame