

# ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

▶ SAM BOGHOSIAN, UCLA '52

In 1954, the UCLA Bruin football team went undefeated and won the national championship. Many members of Delta Sigma Phi, including Sam Boghosian, UCLA '52, played huge roles in that season, and in the success of the team during the whole decade of the 1950s. While that was a great time for him, Boghosian's biggest accomplishments came after he left UCLA and went into his career as an offensive coach at both the college and professional levels.

A native of the vineyards outside of Fresno, CA, Boghosian played football, basketball and baseball in high school, and went on to UCLA where he continued his athletic interests as an offensive guard and defensive tackle on the football team. He chose UCLA over the likes of Cal, Stanford, USC and Oregon because he played in the same system in high school that UCLA played at the time – the single wing – and because of some family members who had also played at UCLA.

Weighing 195 pounds, which was big in those days but is the size of a small defensive back today, Boghosian went on to become an All American at UCLA as an offensive lineman. However, that wasn't the only place he played. As all players back in the 1950s did, Boghosian played on both sides of the line, and also covered kickoffs and punts, probably the biggest difference in the game

between the 1950s and today.

In addition to his athletic accomplishments, Boghosian studied political geography, and knew that he wanted to be a teacher or coach of some kind after graduation. "I was always interested in dealing with players or kids through teaching," Boghosian said. "My plans coming out of school were to eventually go from the Air Force ROTC into the Air Force program, but Red Sanders, the coach at UCLA hired me before I graduated, so I went into coaching."

His career started after graduation on campus at UCLA in 1955 as the freshman football team's assistant coach. In 1956, he took over the junior varsity team, and from 1957-1964, he worked with UCLA's varsity team. He then moved on to coach at Oregon State from 1965-1973, a place that he loved, and where he would have stayed had he not gotten a shot at the NFL.

That shot came in 1974, when Boghosian went to Houston to work with Sid Gilman for the Houston Oilers for two seasons. He then took a position as the Offensive Coordinator for the expansion Seattle Seahawks in 1976. "I was the offensive coordinator and the line coach, and what I did was take Sid Gilman's playbook from the Oilers to Seattle, and adapted Jim Zorn, Steve Largent and all those young kids to the system, which is where we got started."

After two seasons with the Seahawks, Boghosian took a year away from football before joining Tom Flores, Head Coach of the Oakland Raiders, as his Offensive Line Coach from 1979-1987. The two of them had an amazing run together in Oakland (and later in Los Angeles when the team moved there), winning two Super Bowl titles during their tenure.

"Winning two Super Bowl rings was a great thing that I can say about my time with the Raiders. In Super Bowl XV we beat the Philadelphia Eagles, and in Super Bowl XVIII, we beat the Washington Redskins," he said. "The other great part about it was the people that I worked with daily, including Tom Flores, who is my neighbor and who I still get coffee with every morning. We had other guys like Jim Plunkett, Art Shell, Marcus Allen, and Gene Upshaw on the team, which also made it fun."

As for today's NFL, Boghosian sees a very different league from his time there, with greed playing a larger part than it ever did while he was coaching in the league. However, there are things happening that are heartening, including the work of some players within the NFL, who this past season gave up a game check to put into a fund called the Gridiron Greats Fund. The money from their game checks went to help former players who have been injured or who are struggling because of injuries sustained while



Photo: Tony Gonzales

Boghosian instructs his linemen on the sidelines with the Raiders during his tenure with the team. While with the Raiders, Boghosian was a two-time Super Bowl champion.

playing. “I think those guys have got heart for their fellow football players. You’ve got to really respect and admire them for doing that. It’s a fantastic thing, and I wish every player in the NFL would join them. It would sure help some of the older guys, who are having trouble getting medical coverage after putting their health on the line for the league.”

Since retiring from his post-NFL job in 1998, he has stayed actively involved on the Executive Board of the Southern California Chapter of the NFL Alumni Association, and has been actively involved in a number of charities as well. In fact, when he’s

not playing golf, being involved in a charitable function is all he does. “I like providing assistance to kids, whether it is financial, coaching, or whatever it may be. I oversee the Coachella Valley’s division of the Southern California Chapter of the NFL Alumni Association, and our motto is Caring for Kids. Whatever we can do, whether it is a golf tournament or any other function, we will raise money for kids,” he said.

Boghosian was inducted into the UCLA Athletics Hall of Fame in 1999 because of his stellar accomplishments as a member of the team and as a coach. “I was a starter there, an

Academic All-American, coached there for ten years, and was named to the All-Time UCLA football team as a defensive lineman. That is probably what helped me get inducted into the Hall of Fame,” he said.

As you look back at his career, you can see that Sam Boghosian has made a tremendous impact on both his alma mater, as well as his community. The fact that he continues to dedicate his time to helping others is a testament to all that we as Delta Sigs should strive to stand for during our lives. Let’s take our hats (or helmets) off to Sam Boghosian, one of our brothers making a difference.