

October 10th, 2010

Homecoming weekend will feature special 5 p.m. Friday tribute to “Coach Jack”



It's homecoming week in Trenton, and this year's festivities will feature a special event that many Trenton High School football alumni have long been waiting for.

At 5 p.m. Friday, prior to the Homecoming parade, football game and traditional crowning of the queen, a dedication ceremony will be held at the football field's main entrance to unveil the new permanent memorial to legendary Trenton football Coach Jack Castignola.

Mark Lybrook, one of the leaders of the campaign to get the memorial built, is hoping large contingents of former THS football players will be on hand to pay tribute to "Coach Jack" that evening.

“We are encouraging all former students, players, family, and friends of Coach Jack to attend,” said Lybrook, a 1976 graduate who has been at the forefront of the campaign to permanently honor Castignola since it began about five years ago.

A social mixer is planned after the game at Mr. Nick’s on West Road for all Coach Jack supporters, sponsored by the THS Class of 1976 and the Coach Jack Memorial Committee.

The Board of Education approved final plans for the memorial in mid-August, and it was originally hoped that the dedication would occur at a game Sept. 24, but the timing was just too tight for construction to occur.

The delay was pleasing to many, though, who thought Homecoming evening would be the more appropriate choice anyway.

“I can’t think of a better time to do it,” said Joe Dixon, a 1974 alum who earned all-state honors playing for Castignola.

No taxpayer dollars are being spent on the monument, which is being paid for with money collected through the alumni group’s fundraising efforts. The cost was expected to be between \$12,000 and \$15,000.

Lybrook said the Castignola memorial is considered an initial step in a three-phase plan to create a more extensive alumni-funded entryway that will include a permanent ticket booth and additional space to recognize other people in the future. Contributions continue to be accepted to help pay for those later phases. Checks made out to the Jack Castignola Memorial Fund can be sent to the 5/3 Bank branch or Timber’s Hair Salon, both on West Road.

Castignola arrived in Trenton in 1964 and created a winning tradition that included numerous league championships and along the way won the hearts and minds of hundreds of players like Lybrook who continue to sing his praises for his inspirational leadership and compassion. He was diagnosed with cancer in 1985 and died several months later. He compiled 231 career wins at both Trenton and Monroe Catholic Central, and today ranks 19th overall in Michigan high school football history.

