

## **ARCHIE GRIFFIN Q and A FOR OHIO STATE ALUMNI CLUB OF AUSTIN, TEXAS NEWSLETTER**

We want to thank Mr. Griffin for this great opportunity. It is an honor to be able to interview him. Here are our questions:

**You have said that, "continuing to do what you did yesterday will not prepare you for the inevitable changes that today and tomorrow bring." What are some of the biggest challenges ahead for the Alumni Association and what are some of the ways you plan to meet them?**

Two of the biggest challenges we face are growing our membership and providing more indispensable benefits to members who have already joined our organization. The solutions to both of these challenges are interrelated. We want to offer our members more useful benefits, particularly as it pertains to social and career networking, lifelong education, and more opportunities to serve the Ohio State community and the community at large. Once you've accomplished those goals, I think you are better positioned to attract new members, since you'll then have something that is a truly unique benefit for someone who graduated from Ohio State. It's kind of a build it and they will come approach. In the interim, though, we are trying to be more aggressive in marketing our organization and letting people know that we are more than just an outlet to get a pair of face-value football tickets.

**Why did you take on the role of president and CEO of the one of the biggest (and best) dues-supported alumni associations in the world? What excites you most about being a part of the Alumni Association at this point in time?**

Well, I have a great love for Ohio State and always have. This university has given me the tools to live a great life and I consider it an honor to represent our alumni. In terms of what excites me, two things stand out. First, I love the fact that I get a chance to interact with Buckeyes on a daily basis. I most certainly draw energy from meeting people who share my love of Ohio State. Second, I am very excited about the direction our organization has taken and the effort our staff shows in driving us toward those goals. I can assure you that there is a group of people in our building working very hard to make things better for our members.

**The Alumni Association offers opportunities for service. What are the ways that someone here in Austin can get involved?**

I think joining the Austin alumni club is the most important thing. Our clubs do a great job of organizing efforts and identifying areas of need, and I am proud of our Austin club for being a leader in its community. This club is clearly one of our stars. But, I'd also just tell someone to take the initiative, get out there, and do some good. It is one thing to join an existing effort but it is another to recognize a need in your community and take a leading role in addressing that need. I think too often people stay on the sidelines and wait for direction from others. I have a firm belief that Ohio State graduates come out of Columbus with the tools to be leaders. Use those tools in your community in the ways that you see as best.

**You have spent much of your career in Ohio, from your days playing for Eastmoor High School, the Buckeyes and the Cincinnati Bengals to your positions with the Department of Athletics and now the Alumni Association. Was it circumstance or something else that kept you in the state?**

It was probably a little of both. I could not have dictated that I was going to be drafted by the Bengals, so that just worked out well for me. It was truly a special thing, though, because in Cincinnati I had the chance to play with my brother, Raymond, and some of my Ohio State teammates like Pete Johnson. Once I left the NFL it seemed natural to come home and from there I just had many doors opened for me because of my Ohio State connections. That is when I really started to learn that Buckeyes take care of each other.

**Your connection to the university is equally as strong. What makes The Ohio State University so special to you?**

Well, I was born here for one, over in university hospital. I've often thought that I probably had a room that had a view of the stadium, although I don't know that for sure. But growing up in Columbus I've really grown to have a great appreciation for Ohio State and everything it embodies. It started by listening to Ohio State football games called by Burt Charles and Vic Janowicz on WVKO radio, carried through to my time here where I had so many great educational experiences, and has continued into my post-college life. I owe just about everything to Ohio State. As I mentioned early, it gave me the tools I needed to be a leader and succeed in life long after my playing days were over. I am forever grateful for that.

**You have been involved with many charitable organizations, including founding the Archie and Bonita Griffin Foundation Fund. Can you tell us about the fund and your inspiration for starting it?**

My wife, Bonita, and I decided to start the fund because we both believe that young people need to have every opportunity to succeed in life. The fund itself gives kids in central Ohio the chance to participate in sports, educational, and travel programs that can help enrich their lives. But, I will say that overall my inspiration when it comes to taking a philanthropic approach to life comes from my college football coach, Woody Hayes. Woody was constantly preaching the importance of paying forward to make certain that future generations have more and better opportunities than we do. I heard him preach paying forward and I watched him practice it. That left a strong impression on me that never faded.

**To an athlete of your caliber, physical fitness must be very important. What type of exercise program do you follow? Do you participate in any sports now?**

Yes, physical fitness is very important to me and I try to work out as often as possible. It's actually necessary for me because I enjoy a good meal and I don't want to put on those extra pounds! But, when I work out now I mostly use the ellipticals because they are low-impact and don't stir up any of those aches and pains I accumulated playing football all of those years. In terms of competing in sports, I don't play a lot of things but I do enjoy playing golf. My golf game is not quite as consistent as I'd like it to be, but I think you'd find a lot of golfers who'd say the same thing.

**You were featured in a recent ad for the state of Ohio in the *Wall Street Journal* and it talks about balance. How do you balance the many aspects of your life?**

When in doubt, I fall back on the same principles that my mother and father taught me when I was growing up. My family is of the utmost importance to me, so they come first. I also have a strong faith in God, and He helps provide me with answers when I am struggling with something that doesn't have an easy answer. But in terms of the day to day balance, I firmly believe in having a good plan and executing that plan on a daily basis. Having a solid plan can help you in every aspect of life.

**Some of the things Austin is known for are 6<sup>th</sup> Street, the Congress Avenue bats, and of course the University of Texas. What are your impressions of Austin, Texas? Do you have any favorite memories of your time here?**

Austin is a fabulous city. 6th Street was very exciting and when I was down there for our game a few years ago it was great to see that area turn into Buckeye Central. I also think the University of Texas has wonderful traditions and when I was there I really enjoyed the pre-game ceremony they held for Earl Campbell. But, I was most impressed with the people of Austin. The hospitality they showed Buckeyes was unmatched, and should be a model for other universities.

**You have answered many questions about your football career. With re-telling of the stories and the passage of time have you gained any new perspectives on it? What are the moments that stand out most to you now as opposed to if you were asked the same question years ago?**

I always say that my experiences in my first two games at Ohio Stadium are two that stand out the most. The first when I got in as a freshman and fumbled on my first collegiate carry, and the second the next week when I got another chance and rushed for a record amount of yardage against North Carolina. Those two games are significant because they illustrate the importance of overcoming obstacles and getting back up after you've fallen down. In terms of re-telling the stories, I think over time I've become more and more appreciative of the guys who helped me achieve what I achieved on the football field. I think as a young man you probably get very proud of yourself, but as you move on in life you realize how important other people were to making you a success. As time has gone on, I've realized that I was the right person, in the right place, with the right people, at the right time. I think today I have a better appreciation of all of those elements. If anything, time has made me more humble because it's clear that I would have never accomplished those things on my own.