

Clif Wright Reflection:

Those who were fortunate to be students at Williams in the fall of '86 can never forget the indomitable spirit of Clif Wright, aka *The Crisper*, whose arrival on campus was marked by an unforgettable and infectious joy for living: a rollicking laugh, a playful swagger, an intellectual curiosity, and a relentless effort on the football field. The Philly native in the top siders and tweed was a unique combination of academic achievement and attitude--possessed of a personality that might move seamlessly across conversation topics as diverse as prime rib or the prime rate, cut blocks or hot stocks, Marcus Allen or Marcus Aurelius. He truly was a sort of Renaissance Man. A proud alum of St. Joseph's Prep in his hometown, Clif had a probing intellect which he continued to feed at Williams and indeed throughout his life.



In college, Clif immediately endeared himself to his teammates, who chuckled at his witticisms and marveled at his lightning quick first step, exceptional strength, and unblockable spin move. At 5'9 ½ 240 pounds, he made an immediate impact on Saturday afternoons on Weston Field.



Eph coaching legend Renzie Lamb christened Clif *The Crisper* in preseason of his freshman year, when he remarked during defensive line drills that his charge's dimensions resembled those of William *The Refrigerator* Perry, but only in miniature. "You're the size of the vegetable crisper drawer! You're The Crisper!" The name

stuck, and the spinning top of a wrecking ball would go on to anchor the Eph defensive line during unprecedented back-to-back 8-0 campaigns.

As important as football and his teammates were to him, there was much more to Clif than athletics. The range of his knowledge and the breadth of his reading was impressive. He possessed a broad knowledge of



current events, politics, and the Classics, an interest which he continued while at Williams. At least one roommate suspected he might someday return to graduate school for the study of antiquity, perhaps even winding up a Professor of Classics. Clif enjoyed music and the arts, and he firmly believed in one's civic obligation to be an informed and active citizen. Though he took his interests seriously, and he cherished his friendships, he never took himself too seriously. Clif could laugh at himself. And he taught us to laugh at ourselves too.

Those who lived with him at Thompson House (the Old Infirmary) can never forget the sight of him on Sunday mornings; he often woke first, and as hall-mates stumbled downstairs to head over to Mission Park for brunch, they would typically find him leaning back in his chair with his feet crossed atop his desk, reading *The Wall Street Journal* or *Liar's Poker*, with his Count Basie and Sinatra *Live at the Sands!* cd playing softly on his stereo. They will forever recall his immortal greeting of "Dude!" or "Hoss!", must always smile at the memory of



his determined gait--equal parts waddle and swagger--chuckle at the unofficial NCAA Hot Dog Eating Record he established in the Jack's Hot Dog Stand contest in 1987, respect the tenacity that brought him back to the gridiron after suffering a compound fracture to his leg during his sophomore season and then another suffered in a car wreck, smile with deep gratitude at the love and devotion he exhibited during 30 years of loyal friendship.

Cliff defied convention: brilliant, iconoclastic, loyal, kind, and--when you got him on the gridiron--virtually unstoppable. He was equal measure strength and quickness, a little bit of bluster, a lot of bit of heart, a bear of a man with the raspy laughter of a giddy child. Tales of his adventures and exploits live on throughout the Purple Valley. Once finding himself alone late at night on Spring Street, he undertook an unprecedented course of action that continues to live on in campus lore: stepping into Colonial Pizza in the early hours of morning, Clif ordered a pie for delivery...and then requested that they deliver the pizza AND him to his dorm. The astonished restaurant personnel could only admire the genius and moxy of the idea and honored his request.

Much is often made of the fact that he was a veritable fashion plate, and though his teammates often busted his chops over it, there is truth to this claim.

Clif cut a memorable figure across campus in a stylish plaid sports coat and corduroy slacks. On special occasions, he would bust out his infamous purple Bermuda shorts. Regardless of the weather, you could find him in his dock siders without socks (never socks!)... even in the midst of a snowstorm. Just as memorable were the cheesy pop tunes (Katrina and the Waves, Madonna...) he would blast from his red Jeep as he cruised Routes 7, 2, and Spring Street, the latter when on his way



to the weight room, which he'd prowl in his purple 51 Williams Football sweatshirt, scowling at each enormous quantity of iron he would shoulder before contemptuously sending it back to earth, where its crash



would shake the foundations of the old Lasell Gynasium. A Pied Piper of sorts, it was not unusual for little kids from Williamstown to show up on the porch of Thompson House looking for the *Crisper* to hang out with him and bask in the attention he graciously gave them.

Friends respected his acumen and ability to cut through the nonessentials of an issue and get to its heart, praising a matter when appropriate and exposing it as foolish when not. Let Clif know you'd be in the city, and no matter how short the notice, he'd train up from Philly to meet you for dinner--which was guaranteed to be full of laughter, incisive political commentary that resisted easy classification, some Philly Eagles trash talk, and various fun remembrances of what it was like to be 20



years old and attending college in the most beautiful valley on earth with several hundred of your closest friends. He was a gentle giant, a respected intellect, a relentless football player, and a generous and

unforgettable friend. We will not see his likes again. Join us in honoring and remembering this good and decent man, our dear friend Clif Wright.



Below is a condensed list of Clif's achievements:

- St Joseph's Prep '86,
- Williams College '91 , BA in Political Science
- Dr. Coughlin Bowl for grit on the football field
- Williams College Class Agent, Class of 1991
- Williams Black Alumni Network, Steering Committee
- Temple University, JD 1999
- Academic Accomplishments
 - Outstanding Oral Advocacy (legal research and writing)
 - Best Exam (legislation)
 - Distinguished Class Performance (state constitution law)
- Over ten years of experience in new business development with expertise in sales, marketing, product development, and growth strategies