

# SPORTS FEATURE

## Award winner learned dedication at early age

By Mike Latona  
Staff writer

ELMIRA — Whenever his friends asked him to be a part of their nighttime activities, Tim O'Herron would politely decline — except on evenings when football games were scheduled.

While classmates were at the movies or grabbing pizza, O'Herron, accompanied by his mother Kathryn, would go on a much different kind of social outing.

Same place, every night. The Chemung County Nursing Facility.

The visit has become a ritual ever since O'Herron's father David suffered his second stroke in 1993 — the first had occurred 12 years earlier — leaving him paralyzed from the waist down.

Because O'Herron's sister Kathleen works in Rochester and his brother Chris attends Le Moyne College near Syracuse, O'Herron has been counted on to provide a big dose of support for his dad over the past two years.

Few people, however, ever heard O'Herron talk about the challenges he experienced in facing his father's illness.

"I didn't want to feel like people had to feel sorry for me," explained O'Herron, 18, a parishioner in the St. Anthony/St. Patrick cluster.

Despite these trying circumstances, O'Herron maintained excellence both on the football field and in the classroom. Last fall from his starting position as offensive and defensive lineman he helped the varsity Crusaders to an 8-1 record, and he also graduated fifth in his class with a 94 average.

Much of O'Herron's will to succeed stems from his Catholic upbringing, he said, which "has always played a big part" in his life. And it was his father who may have provided the greatest spark of faith by his own example in the years leading up to his second stroke.

"My husband, with a stroke, was on his knees every single night saying a rosary," Kathryn O'Herron recalled.

Tim O'Herron's accomplishments at Notre Dame made him a prime candidate for the Ernie Davis Memorial Scholarship, presented annually by the Community Foundation of the Elmira-Corning Area, Inc. to an athlete who blends academic and athletic excellence.

"I think he was just as qualified as all the other candidates, if not more so," said Mike D'Aloisio, O'Herron's football coach at Notre Dame, who wrote a letter of recommendation on his behalf.

Indeed, when the selection committee



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer  
As the Ernie Davis Memorial Scholarship winner, Tim O'Herron will receive \$8,000 while attending Nazareth College of Rochester.

announced its winner this past June, O'Herron was the choice. He will receive \$8,000 over the next four years while he attends Nazareth College of Rochester, where he plans to major in biochemistry and also stay active in athletics by weightlifting (Nazareth does not have a football program).

It was an understandably joyous meeting when father and son visited on the day O'Herron learned he'd won the Davis Scholarship, he said.

"(David) just had a smile on his face the next half hour," O'Herron recalled.

O'Herron's scholarship is named after Ernie Davis, an Elmira native who won the Heisman Trophy in 1961 as a running back at Syracuse University. Davis died of leukemia just two years later.

Not surprisingly, the close bond between O'Herron and his father has left him with mixed feelings about traveling to another city for college.

"He said he was pretty sad I was going to be leaving, and so was I. But I'll be home fairly frequently," O'Herron said.

As he prepares for the beginning of his freshman year at Nazareth, O'Herron says he's "excited about meeting a whole new bunch of people."

No surprise there. The ability to move forward is one of O'Herron's strongest assets, D'Aloisio observed.

"He's like the Energizer (battery) bunny. He just keeps going, and going, and going," D'Aloisio said.

### Sports calendar

The following benefit recreational activities are scheduled in the Rochester diocese during the upcoming weeks:

Aug. 30 — Jimmy Commisso Hospice Open: Shadow Pines Golf Club, Penfield; to benefit Genesee Region Home Care/Hospice of Rochester; call 716/238-3683.

Sept. 8-15 — Monroe County Senior Center: Open throughout the County; open to adults age 65 and over; celebration dance Sept. 15 at Stardust

Ballroom in Rochester; registration deadline Aug. 31; call 716/274-7823.

Sept. 11 — Advent House Golf Tournament: Victor Hills Golf Club, Victor; to benefit Advent House, a hospice in Fairport; call 716/225-6112.

Sept. 11 — Ralph P. DeStephano Golf Tournament: Ridgmont Country Club, Greece; to benefit programs and services at Greece's Park Ridge Hospital; raffle tickets for one-week pass to Ryder Cup also being sold prior to tournament; call 716/723-6750.

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