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Alumni Profile

"Roger the Dodger" returns

As a Mizzou student during the 1960s, Roger Wehrli knew all about the great campus party every fall called Homecoming. But as a football star, Wehrli toiled while others partied. That changed Oct. 20 when Wehrli came back to Columbia as Homecoming's partymeister: grand marshal.

From his vantage point on the field during the glory days of Mizzou football, every home game had the enthusiasm of Homecoming.

"It seemed like the whole campus was nuts about football, and everybody on campus came to the games and just went crazy," says Wehrli, BS Ed '70, of St. Charles, Mo.

Wehrli was a big reason the crowds were charged up. A King City, Mo., native, "Roger the Dodger" was a first-rate defensive back and kick returner during three seasons (1966–68) at MU. He set eight MU records including most interceptions in a season (seven in 1968) and most in a game (three vs. Oklahoma State in 1968) and led the nation in punt returns in 1968. Wehrli was All-Big Eight in 1967 and 1968 and All-American in 1968.

After being picked in the first round of the NFL draft, Wehrli went on to a long and distinguished career with the St. Louis Cardinals (1969–82). He had 40 career interceptions for 309 yards and recovered 19 fumbles. Earlier this year, he was elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Kellen Winslow, who was elected in 1995, is the only other Missouri player in this elite group.

Wehrli has fond memories of his involvement at MU with Phi Gamma Delta fraternity. After retiring from football, he went to work with fraternity brother Paul Edwards, BS BA '69, who

roger wehrli

Conerback and kick returner Roger Wehrli is one of two Tiger football players to have been inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. Kellen Winslow was inducted in 1995. Savitar photo.

had opened FormStore Inc., a business forms manufacturing company. Wehrli is vice president.




But his fondest Mizzou memories run to football, and perhaps his proudest moment was playing against Alabama and Paul “Bear” Bryant in the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Fla., his senior year (1968).

“Florida is Alabama territory,” Wehrli says, “so we stayed in an Army barracks the night before the game to get away from the hubbub. But we arrived to find a note on every pillow saying ‘Roll Tide.’”

Despite that attempt at intimidation, the Tigers won the game 35-10, and Wehrli made an interception that set up a score.

Wehrli still follows Mizzou’s progress. “I’ve enjoyed watching Coach [Gary] Pinkel building that same tradition we had in the ’60s. He has brought a discipline and put a program together that has put some of that back in there. I still live and die with the Tigers when they play.”

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