

Tom Landry the Legend

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There is life after football.

Tom Landry, who coached the Dallas Cowboys for 29 years, is enjoying life after the National Football League.

Landry was in Huntington at Marshall University's Student Center Friday to raise money for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, an organization Landry has been associated with for over 30 years.

Landry was a popular coach and figure around the NFL during his tenure with the Cowboys. He took "America's Team" to five super bowls, winning two of them.

On Feb. 25, 1989, Jerry Jones – new owner of the Cowboys – fired Landry as coach. But that didn't stop him.

"I'm keeping busy – maybe too busy sometimes," said Landry Friday. "I talk a lot around the country and that keeps me busy. But I enjoy it a great deal. I speak in a lot of churches and with organizations like the (FCC). I try to do all I can to help them."

Landry spoke to approximately 300 people attending a breakfast Friday.

On the Cowboys

To many devoted Cowboy fans, Landry *was* the team. He took them, molded them and made them winners as he coached Hall of Famers such as Roger Staubach, Calvin Hill, Bob Lilly, Don Meredith, Bob Hayes, Mike Ditka and Tony Dorsett.

His humiliation with being fired soon subsided when Dallas held Tom Landry Day on April 22, 1989.

"I sort of keep up with the NFL," he said. "I travel a lot. I think I've only been in two games in an actual stadium, and that wasn't in Dallas. But I think the Cowboys have a chance at making the playoffs this year."

Since Staubach retired and Dorsett was traded, the Cowboys have not been a legitimate threat to win a title since the early 1980s.

But now they have Troy Aikman and Emmitt Smith.

“Emmitt is a lot like Tony in that he’s very quick,” said Landry. “But when Tony hit a hole, he could fly. Smith is not as explosive, but he’s tough and hard to bring down.

“Nobody will ever compare to Roger Staubach. Troy is a fine quarterback and seems to be what Dallas needs. But Roger was something special.”

Why is it tough to repeat as Sugar Bowl winners?

“Well, you sort of lose the edge, the year after you win a Super Bowl,” said Landry. “I’ve been fortunate enough to have won two Super Bowls, and I think when you win one, it kind of relieves everybody. The players really don’t feel that they’re any different, but they are. Once you achieve it, there’s a letdown and it’s tough to get it again.”

On Magic Johnson

“Well, we’re all certainly disappointed,” said Landry, the morning after Johnson announced his retirement from the National Basketball Association due to the AIDS virus. “I think he was everyone’s hero. He has such a great personality and is such a great player that it was really a shame that this happened.”

On his faith

Inducted into the Hall of Fame in 1990, Landry holds one thing precious that happened in 1959.

“Being a Christian is the most important thing to me,” said Landry. “My faith and my family are my priorities. I enjoy telling others about being a Christian and how it’s been the best way of life for more than 33 years.”