

“Commitment to Community:
Anthony Thompson and Indiana University”

Reception Honoring Anthony Thompson’s
Induction into the College Football Hall of Fame

Remarks of Michael A. McRobbie

President

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1. WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Laurie and I are delighted to welcome you this evening to honor IU football legend Anthony Thompson, Indiana University’s most recent inductee into the College Football Hall of Fame. I would like to extend special welcome to Anthony’s family: his wife, Lori; their children, Anthony II, Sierra, Jacob, and Teeka; Anthony’s brother, Ernie; his sisters, Paula and Helen; and many others.

With this honor Anthony joins an elite group of IU football greats, including Zora Clevinger, John Tavener, “Bo” McMillin, Pete Pihos, and George Taliaferro. It is our good fortune that George Taliaferro could also be here this evening. Would you join me in welcoming him?

Legendary Coach Bill Mallory is also with us this evening and will offer his remarks in a few minutes. We are also joined by leaders from across the university and the community, including members of our Board of Trustees.

Before we move to the rest of the program, please enjoy the following highlight video that captures some key moments in A.T.’s illustrious career.

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2.1 EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY: IN THE CLASSROOM AND LAB

I never saw A.T. play in person, but watching that video makes me realize what a force he was in Big Ten football and how richly deserving of induction into the College Football Hall of Fame he is.

Indiana University has always been a community of excellence. When we are talking about athletics, we call it teamwork, but they really amount to the same thing. Both community and teamwork are about working together toward a shared goal in the pursuit of excellence.

This is true of education at IU, where the best classes are often ones where students come together to support each other in learning and where professors balance correction and encouragement. This is true of research where scientists and scholars join intellectual forces to drive towards the next innovation.

2.2 EXCELLENCE AND COMMUNITY: ON THE FIELD

And of course, community is just as important in athletics. The entire team—from coaches to trainers to assistants to our accomplished student athletes—play a vital role in each and every victory.

The road towards excellence requires that we set our sights high in every endeavor, both on and off the field. It requires a dedication that goes beyond the gridiron and the court. It requires that we belong to a community.

Our current football team exemplifies that sense of community. It has pulled together and supported each other under difficult circumstances. Under Coach Lynch, it now has within its reach the goals set by Coach Hep.

And this sense of community has a long history. A.T. himself has said of the honor we are celebrating this evening, “It would not have been possible without Coach [Bill] Mallory, his coaching staff and the support of my teammates. I am not going into the Hall of Fame because of Anthony Thompson; I’m going in because of all of those guys.”

3. COACH BILL MALLORY

At this point, it is my pleasure to introduce Coach Bill Mallory, A.T.’s coach and the winningest football coach in IU history. Please join me in welcoming Coach Mallory. Thank you, Coach Mallory.

4. INTRODUCING ANTHONY THOMPSON

Our guest of honor this evening has a long and decorated history with Indiana University. Arriving at IU in 1986, A.T. rushed for 5,299 yards during his IU career. He was selected the Walter Camp Foundation Player of the Year, the AFCA “Coaches Choice” Player of the Year, and Maxwell Award winner as the nation’s finest college football player during his senior year.

A.T. was named first team All-American following his junior and senior seasons and earned NCAA scoring and rushing titles during his senior year. Twice he was named Chicago Tribune Silver Football Big Ten MVP. In 1989, he was a finalist for the Heisman Trophy. And he was the first Hoosier athlete in the history of the university to have his number (32) officially retired. This, of course, is just his record of excellence as a student-athlete at Indiana University.

A.T. currently dedicates himself to two different callings. First, he ministers to his congregation at the Light House Church in south Bloomington. A.T. still feels strongly about the importance of community and working together to achieve a higher goal.

Second, he is an assistant director of development with the IU Varsity Club. There, his passion, persistence, and personality help him convey what a tremendous difference support from IU's alumni and friends can make in the lives of young people.

A.T. represents the excellence that arises from discipline, talent, faith, and community. Please join me in congratulating him on his induction into the College Football Hall of Fame and on his lifetime of accomplishments.

5. THOMAS HART BENTON MURAL MEDALLION

Chris Barrett, Head Football Coach at Terre Haute North High School, would now like to make a brief presentation.

A.T. is certainly a remarkable example of excellence at Indiana University and beyond. Tonight on behalf of Indiana University, it is my pleasure to recognize his great contributions to IU and to the people of Bloomington by bestowing upon him the Thomas Hart Benton Mural Medal in acknowledgement of the esteem in which Indiana University holds you.

The medallion is cast in bronze and features a portion of the Thomas Hart Benton Mural, which is located on the north wall in the IU Auditorium. The reverse side has the Seal of the University and space for the A.T.'s name and today's date. The medallion symbolizes the aspirations and ideals that are the foundation of the search for knowledge.

The presentation of the medallion to A.T. marks the high regard in which the university holds him. We applaud his achievements, commend his work, and express our deep appreciation for his tireless service. IU and Bloomington are better places because of him. Please join me in thanking A.T. for all he has done and congratulating him on his many magnificent accomplishments.

To conclude the formal program, I would like to introduce Gwyn Richards, Dean of the Jacobs School of Music, who will lead us in the IU Alma Mater and Fight Song. You will find the words on your tables if you need them.

Thank you all very much for coming this evening.