St. Paul's President Honored to Be Inducted in CIAA Officials Hall of Fame

By MICHAEL JOHNSON Chronicle Sports Writer

St. Paul's president Dr. Thomas Law said being an official did a lot of positive things in his life. But probably the most important one was preparing him for his next job.

"I profited from my officiating because I was able to make decisions, work hard and in how to deal with people," said Law, who was inducted into the Central Intercollegiate Athletic Association's Officials Hall of Fame last month. "Those type of things come from what you learned. As president, I've been able to make decisions, live with them and get on with the next thing."

Law was an official at the high school and the collegiate level, but he feels a special affinity toward the CIAA, where he served as a member of the Southside Board and the

Hampton Roads Board of Officiating. Law remained an official until 1969, when he left to become president of Penn Valley Community College in Kansas and at Virginia State before returning to his alma mater.

When he heard of his nomination, Law stayed cautious, in case of a letdown. But when he heard he was inducted, he felt relieved and excited.

"I consider it an honor to be accepted by such outstanding people because the CIAA was founded by outstanding officials," said Law, who took over as St. Paul's president in 1989. "Some of those people helped me along the way and some of those helped me when I was an official."

During the induction, Law referred to it as "My Cooperstown, New York. . . my Springfield, Massachusetts. . . my Canton,



Dr. Thomas Law

Ohio." Law compared it to having a uniform retired for an athlete and said the induction is the crowning. moment in that part of his life.

"The idea is that all good players make it in the Hall of Fame when their careers are over and I guess I made it, too," Law said with a chuckle. "It's the aspiration of all athletes to be named to the Hall of Fame, because it's the highest in your field. Being nominated doesn't mean much when you don't get in. Like in the Oscars, people get nominated all the time, but they don't. win."

One of things Law misses is the camaraderie and the excitement associated with being an official. Despite being removed from the sidelines for more than 20 years, Law still gets excited when he sees the game.

"Being a president in the CIAA enables me to still be near the game," said Law, whose son is a basketball official in Maryland. "I still talk the language of the game and follow the latest rules in official changes and I still enjoy the game."

Law said the importance of good officiating is lost in the eyes of the casual observer. He said many

of the people in the stands do not realize the impact officials have and the amount of hours put into their craft from physical examinations to regular clinics to keep abreast of the changes in the sport.

"People don't appreciate the vigor they go through and the strict regimentation required to do the

job. Many people overlook the important part officials play in the game," Law said. "I take my hat off to a lot of the officials in the game today. And I thank the CIAA and the Board of Officials for taking it seriously and in assigning games and realizing how officials make the game better."



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Legins

come back.'

Finally settling in at Reynolds, Legins dominated on the football field. After starting as a sophomore at free safety, Legins was juggled around three positions before moving to tailback and linebacker this year. Legins rushed for 1,228 yards while making 106 tackles on his way to all-state honors and playing. in the Shrine Bowl.

While playing football is a joy to most high-school students, Legins sees it as a means to an end. One end will be achieved this fall when he enrolls in Chapel Hill - to leave the city he has known all his life. Getting out of Winston-Salem but being close to home is the reason Legins chose UNC over Virginia, Clemson and Notre Dame, among other suitors.

"I look at it as my way of leaving Winston-Salem, because it is so familiar to me," he said. "I don't enjoy doing some of the things here.

leave, but you're old enough to It's no surprise to me what happens in this town anymore.

> "When someone says something like, 'There's a party here tonight,' it doesn't excite me. The guys say I'm old, and I guess I am because there's not a lot you can do with the guys any more. I don't drink or party . . . or anything I can do with guys. I just want to hang out with my girl and do things like play Putt-Putt. I think that's exciting."

Reynolds football coach David McConnell said Legins' maturity is most impressive for . someone his age.

"Jomo is very level-headed and mature, and he is very focused on . the field and in the classroom," McConnell said of Legins, who has made the honor roll several times. "An athlete has to take care of academics and athletics in order to make in college, and Jomo has more than done that.

"Coming from an environment like 18th Street where there are a lot

of drugs and other activities that can steer young people the wrong way, Jomo has shown excellent maturity and discipline toward achieving his goals in life." Bennie Legins said, "Most kids that had the success Jomo has had would be arrogant, think they're better than some of the others kids. But he has always been positive about everything in life and that's why he'll be maturity is the acceptance of responsibility. Legins carries with him a letter from an unidentified youngster saying he wants to be like his football idol - overcoming adversity to get a four-year scholarship at a major university. Legins also speaks to students at middle schools during his free time. He said it's a way of giving back to those who helped him out.

"People like my mom were there for me in my life and they told me to do the right thing with my life," he said. "There are a lot of things. That's all I can ask for."

people who look up to me, and if I

mess up, then I look at it as having a lot to lose.

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"I said if I was caught doing something like selling drugs, I would lose my scholarship and I look at that as being the most important thing in my life. Right now, I can't ask for anything more in life than that."

Now Legins is counting down successful in life." Another sign of his days to graduation day at Reynolds and calmly awaits playing at Chapel Hill. Legins said he is not overly excited about next fall because he knows what lies ahead for him and anything is not quite the same test.

> "I'm ready to go but I'm not like some of the other kids who are excited about what school they're going to because I know what have to do; play football, get an education," he said. "I have a full scholarship, school is paid for the four years and my life is set if I do the right

