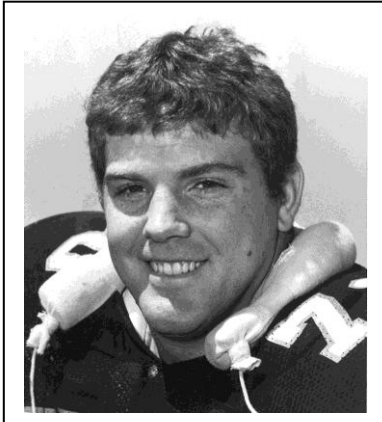


# M-CLUB ALUMNI ASSOCIATION SPORTS HALL OF FAME

## **RICHARD BYRD**

**FOOTBALL: 1981-1984**

*Inducted: April 20, 1990*



Richard Byrd is considered to be on of the school best ever defensive linemen and played a huge role in the success of the Golden Eagle football team in the early 1980s.

His was best known for his quickness off the ball and his strength to overwhelm opposing blockers. His talents and abilities made him one of the top pass rushers in the history of Southern Miss football.

As a true freshman in 1981 Byrd made an immediate impact. Playing in a backup role and on some of the special teams he had 18 tackles his rookie season. He had 10 "big plays" that year that included two quarterback sacks, two fumble recoveries, a tackle for a loss, a broken up pass and two key blocks on punt returns.

That 1981 defense is rated as one of the school's greatest. They allowed only 89 points in 11 games, an average of 8.1 per contest. They also ranked fifth in the country in total defense (9239.0), seventh in pass defense (114.0) and 26th in rushing defense (125.0) that year.

The '81 team ranked as high as No. 8 in the country, finished 9-1-1 in the regular season and played Missouri in the Tangerine Bowl.

Byrd became one of the leaders of "The Nasty Bunch" in 1982 and emerged as one of the most dominant defensive linemen in the country. He was second on the team in tackles that year with 95, and also recorded three quarterback sacks, three tackles for losses, caused two fumbles and deflected two passes.

The 1982 team defeated Alabama in Tuscaloosa's Bryant-Denny Stadium, snapping the Tide's 56-game home winning streak.

Byrd recorded 90 tackles during the 1983 season that included eight quarterback sacks and four tackles for losses. He also caused a fumble that year, deflected three passes and blocked a field goal attempt. The team finished fifth in the country in scoring defense (11.6) and sixth in total defense (273.8), while finishing with a 7-4 record.

Byrd continued his stellar play as a senior, leading the Golden Eagles to a 7-4 record and finishing the year with 83 tackles. He also had three quarterback sacks and a tackle for a loss. He also had the only interception of his career and also deflected a pass and recovered a fumble.

He finished his career with a then school record 16 quarterback sacks and 281 total tackles.

He was a second team all-South Independent selection in 1983 and a first team all-South Independent pick in 1984. He also earned honorable mention All-America honors in 1984.

Byrd was selected in the 2nd round of the 1985 NFL draft by the Houston Oilers (No. 36 overall) and played several season of pro football.

