**McCorvey Delivers Impactful Speech at TaxAct Camellia Bowl Luncheon**

**By Tim Gayle**

The introductory video only provided a glimpse of the impact Woody McCorvey has had on college football.

Sure, there was the testimony of Clemson head coach Dabo Swinney, who played for McCorvey at Alabama when the former was a walk-on receiver and the latter was his coach in the early 1990s. McCorvey was one of Swinney’s first hires at Clemson and has worked this decade as the chief of football administration at Clemson.

But even the glowing remarks by Swinney don’t do justice for McCorvey, a standout quarterback for Alabama State as a player, a steady contributor as an assistant coach over the past five decades and a historical figure as an offensive coordinator at Alabama in 1996-97 and at Mississippi State in 2004-08 during an era where African Americans in coordinator positions were hard to find.

McCorvey was selected as an “Alabama Football Legend” and honored by the TaxAct Camellia Bowl on Thursday in a luncheon at the Renaissance Hotel.

McCorvey becomes the seventh recipient of the honor, joining Bobby Bowden (2014), Pat Dye (2015), Woodrow Lowe (2016), Gene Stallings (2017), Johnny Davis (2018) and Larry Blakeney (2019).

“I want to thank (executive director) Johnny Williams of the Camellia Bowl for selecting me as the 2021 Alabama Football Legend,” McCorvey said. “It’s indeed an honor. With 50 years in this profession of coaching and a person who grew up in the southern part of this state, to stand in the shadows of Gene Stallings, Bobby Bowden, Pat Dye, Woodrow Lowe, Larry Blakeney and Johnny Davis, it is truly an honor to receive this award.”

That’s about all the Atmore native had to say about the award. His reputation as a standout assistant coach in earlier in his career was on display for the players of Camellia Bowl participants Ball State and Georgia State, which earned the focus of his remarks during a 13-minute speech.

“Football has been a big part of my life and I have secured a lot of life lessons from this game,” he said, opening his presentation by quoting from a speech by Frederick Douglass and closing with lyrics from a Michael Jackson song. “Coaching is teaching and that will be my charge today.”

“Frederick Douglass said, ‘If there’s no struggle, there’s no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want the rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. Power concedes nothing without a demand, never has, never will.

A man may not get all he paid for in this world, but he certainly must pay for all he gets.’

“Breaking it down, there will always be struggles in life. We had struggles this year at Clemson, but we got better.”

He challenged the players to “play for one another and as a team; if not, production and efficiency will diminish.” He added, “have fun (and) give complete effort.”

Thursday’s luncheon was the third such honor for McCorvey, who was inducted into the Atmore Hall of Fame in 2010 and the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame in 2020.