

*This article is part of the promotion to celebrate the first 50 years of Ivy football. Gary was an outstanding Classmate and Cornell athlete; I think we all appreciate the continuing recognition of his achievements.*

When Ed Marinaro broke the Ivy League career rushing record in 1970, the record he smashed did not belong to a running back. That's because former Cornell quarterback Gary Wood was hardly the usual.

He was a totally unique type of quarterback, perhaps a throwback to a time before passing became prevalent -- a quarterback who ran for more yards than he passed.

Gary Wood would carry this style of play into the National Football League, where even his obituary noted that he "frequently thrilled crowds with his fearless rollout style and his penchant for turning planned handoffs into impromptu bootleg plays for big gains."

Coming to Cornell after a high school football career that saw him never play in a losing game, his freewheeling running and passing attack asserted itself early at Cornell. In his seventh Ivy game Wood won Ivy back of the week honors for a 25-0 win against Brown, where the "elusive ball handler" participated in all scoring and "consistently fooled the Brown defenses with his ball handling and faking," according to Gordon S. White of the New York Times. In that first year Wood would pass for 456 yards but rush for 449 yards.

By the beginning of next season, Wood was recognized as a "chief asset -- one of two top signal callers in Ivy League," (the other being Dartmouth quarterback Bill King) with coach

Tom Harp asserting "he will be responsible for all passing and most of the outside running." He did just that, passing for 890 yards and rushing for 889 yards. One game in particular summed up his performance. In a 35-34 upset over Princeton Wood threw for 212 yards and rushed for 125 more as he "outdid the fabled exploits of Frank Merriwell," according to the New York Times' Franklin S. Adams. He was named first team All-Ivy -- but as a halfback, perhaps a nod to his running game.

By his senior year Wood was recognized as one of Cornell's all-time greatest, with Coach Harp declaring before the season that "Wood is a better quarterback than [Navy's] Roger Staubach" -- a future NFL Hall of Famer. While this may be hyperbole, Wood turned in another outstanding season, with 545 yards passing and an astounding 818 rushing. He was again named first-team All-Ivy (again as a halfback), and was named to the AP All-East team. A two-time All-American honorable mention, Wood set five Ivy League career and single-season offensive records, and remains the only Ivy League player to rush for 2,000 yards and pass for 1,000 more.

The uniqueness of Wood's college career becomes apparent by comparing him to a modern quarterback known for his running game -- Michael Vick of the Atlanta Falcons. Vick, noted as perhaps the most mobile quarterback of his generation, gained three yards passing for every rushing yard at Virginia Tech. Wood actually rushed for more yards (2,156) than he passed (1,891).

Taken in the eighth round of the 1964 NFL Draft by the New York Giants, Wood had the misfortune of coming to a team with future Hall of Famer Y.A. Tittle already installed at quarterback. His size was also a factor, "5 feet 10 3/4 inches, making him a pygmy in the quarterback fraternity," as described in a New York Times article of the time. His first season he frequently replaced Y.A. Tittle, and was actually ranked 13th among N.F.L. quarterbacks, three places ahead of Tittle. His career had its moments.

In a 1966 game "Wood, a bold, hard to read scrambler, fired up his team by completing six of seven passes," in a win over the Washington Redskins. This was his best season, in which he

passed for 1,142 yards and rushed for 196 more. But after moving to the New Orleans Saints, returning to the Giants, and spending more time backing up another future Hall of Famer, Fran Tarkenton, he was done by 1969. One of his last assignments for the Giants was holding the football for field goal kicker, and fellow Cornellian, Pete Gogolak.

Of his career Wood said simply that he had been "categorized -- branded -- as a second-stringer," but he did last five seasons, and it's hard to imagine the NFL fully embracing his style of play, notwithstanding his size and bad luck in backing up two Hall of Fame quarterbacks. After two seasons in the Canadian Football League he was out of football.

After retiring Wood opened an insurance firm in New York. He helped found Temple Beth Torah in Melville, New York, and was inducted into the Cornell Athletic Hall of Fame and the Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. He died in 1994.

— Stephen Eschenbach

For Stephen Eschenbach's full story, please visit <http://www.ivy50.com>. Note, there are Ivy postcards of Gary Wood and all of the others athletes who have been profiled available by <http://www.ivyleaguesports.com/fan-cards.asp>.



2006: This year '64 had a quite respectable number of duespayers, but at 475, lower than our usual count. In '07 let's strive to get the number back up to 500! Thanks to all of you for your enthusiasm, interest, and support.

Don't miss this years chance to stay connected to Cornell and your classmates. Simply complete and return the enclosed dues card along with your payment. If you wish, you can pay your class dues on-line through our class website, <http://classof64.alumni.cornell.edu>. Easier still: sign up for automatic renewal.

**WHATEVER YOU DO,  
DON'T FORGET TWO THINGS!**

**NEWS FOR OUR CLASS COLUMN IN  
CORNELL ALUMNI MAGAZINE**

**YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS TO  
FACILITATE COMMUNICATION**

With our 45th Reunion, June 4-7 2009, just a little more than two years away, now would be a great time to start to reconnect.

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## Website Notes

Coming soon at our class website: our own Lenni Weitzman is interviewing classmates, and we'll post short bios and photos. Want to volunteer to chat with Lenni about your fascinating life? Contact her at [ljw36@cornell.edu](mailto:ljw36@cornell.edu).



## Cornell Web Sites

Cornell University Home Page  
[www.cornell.edu](http://www.cornell.edu)  
Alumni, Parents & Friends  
[www.alumni.cornell.edu](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu)  
CACO  
[www.alumni.cornell.edu/caco](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/caco)

Celebrate Cornell Faculty  
[celebrate.cornell.edu](http://celebrate.cornell.edu)  
Regional Events Calendar  
[www.alumni.cornell.edu/calendar.htm](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/calendar.htm)

News Service  
[www.news.cornell.edu](http://www.news.cornell.edu)  
Free Email Forwarding  
[www.cuconnect.cornell.edu](http://www.cuconnect.cornell.edu)

Giving Pages & Online Gifts  
[www.alumni.cornell.edu/giving.htm](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/giving.htm)  
Cornell Athletics  
[www.CornellBigRed.com](http://www.CornellBigRed.com)

Cornell Library  
[alumni.library.cornell.edu](http://alumni.library.cornell.edu)  
Cornell Life Sciences  
[www.lifesciences.cornell.edu](http://www.lifesciences.cornell.edu)

Campaign Opportunities  
[www.campaign.cornell.edu](http://www.campaign.cornell.edu)  
Class Dues, News and Websites  
[www.alumni.cornell.edu/classes.htm](http://www.alumni.cornell.edu/classes.htm)





## 2007 JFK Report

Beginning this year we will be able to increase the amount of our JFK Memorial Award to \$10,000. This increase will help future awardees to a good start after graduating from Cornell. Because careers in public service often involve a sacrifice in earning power, the JFK Award is a vote of confidence from the Class of '64 to our winners for making the altruistic choice of dedicating their lives to helping others.

The achievements of our JFK winners help to express and define the ideals and character of the Class of 1964. The JFK Awards we have bestowed for the past four decades constitute our class's legacy of service to the country and the world.

## Tradition Fellow's Letter Academic Year 2006.2007

Dear Class of 1964,

This is my third year receiving your scholarship and I can not begin to tell you how grateful I am. You have turned a school that seemed financially out of reach into a place that I am proud to call home. The past year has been very eventful for me. I have finally decided what I want to do for the rest of my life... and that is to make babies. Don't worry, they will not be mine. I have fallen in love with the field of infertility research and can see no better way to spend my life than to bring little bundles of joy into the lives of people who would otherwise be unable to experience this.

My classes this year have been very challenging. I made the (in hindsight poor) decision to take biology, neuro-biology, and organic chemistry in the same semester, which I am very proud to say that I survived and actually succeeded in. I can now say that I am ready for the rigors of medical school.

The sailing team had another very successful year. We sent boats as far west as Michigan, as far north as Canada, and as far south as Maryland. I attended several of these events and even finished 3rd out of 13 at one of them.

One exciting new addition to my Cornell experience was joining a sorority. I joined one of the smaller, newer sororities and love it. Along with the sorority I also got the beautiful house that AXiD lives in. The house is an old hotel from the prohibition era and has more secrets than any place I have ever lived in (including hollow banisters and a secret room for hiding distilling equipment).

Once again, I would like to thank you for your generous donation, I would not have been able to have all these amazing experiences without you.

Sincerely,

Jackie Lewis  
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Photographs by University Photography  
and Class of 1964 Classmates

## Cornell Class of 1964 Membership 2007



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Spring 2007

Dear Classmates:

As I look back at our class activities in 2006, two events take center stage. First, the Class Council determined at our annual meeting that we had enough money to provide the University with a non-reunion year gift. After reviewing the possibilities in our range, we decided on a support gift to the Carol Tatkon Center, a new facility for first-year students. Its purpose is to help freshmen and other first-year people connect to the resources that have the potential to enhance their entire Cornell experience, from their academic life to their interpersonal relationships. Students find a wide variety of services at the Center including course-review sessions, study-skills workshops, academic reviews, poetry readings, even art shows. The Center, housed in the lower level of Balch Hall, is a welcoming and important presence in new students' lives and one we are proud to be part of.

Then, too, this was the year that many of us 1964 graduates turned 64-along with Paul McCartney - reminding us of the Beatles' hit song that made 64 sound so ancient when we first heard it. Not so ancient, right?

As promised in last year's newsletter, we held a gathering in Ithaca to celebrate this memorable birthday. Our numbers were small, but the spirit was big, and in spite of a cool and rainy day, we all enjoyed the party. A heartfelt Happy Birthday to each of you.

Our final reminder note. Our class has long been known on campus for being particularly active and for having a large number of duespayers. Our class dues primarily cover the cost of the annual subscription to *Cornell Alumni Magazine*, and we use the balance to cover the newsletter production and mailing costs as well as the other occasional mailings throughout the year. And this year, thanks to dues paid over the years, we were able to make the class gift to the Tatkon Center. But for reasons unknown, in 2006 our number of duespayers dropped off. If you were one of those who forgot to pay your dues, please reach for your check book or credit card right away. Or if you prefer, you can easily pay dues at our web site, <http://classof64.alumni.cornell.edu>. You will find more information on class events there as well.

Best wishes for a happy, prosperous, and healthy 2007!

Janet Spencer King  
President, Class of 1964

## Three Cheers for Bev Johns Lamont

who has been faithfully writing our class column  
for *Cornell Alumni Magazine* FOREVER!!!

