



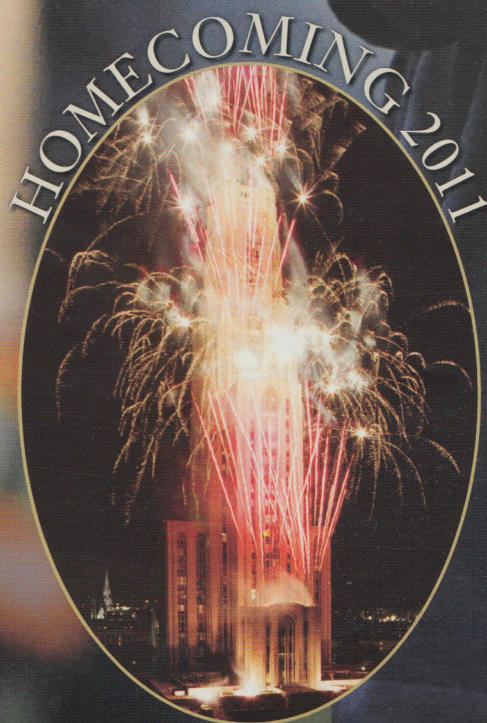
ALUMNI  
ASSOCIATION

*Pitt Alumni Association*

*Summer 2011 • Volume 18 • Number 2*

*Alumni Connections is a member benefit of the Pitt Alumni Association.*

# ALUMNI CONNECTIONS



**New Football Coach:  
Todd Graham**

**A Writer's Gift**

**Homecoming Schedule**

**New Life Members**



## On the Cover:

# New Coach Brings High-powered Offense and Lifelong Education Focus to Pitt



Coach Todd Graham at press conference

**W**hen Panthers football kicks off for the 2011 season, Pitt's new head football coach, Todd Graham, will bring his trademark high-powered offense to the field. His past Tulsa squads led the nation in offensive output in 2007 and 2008, running a "hurry-up" offense that left opposing defenses gasping for breath. Graham is quick to point out that his fast, high-scoring offense will fit just fine with Pitt's—and Pittsburgh's—run-heavy, "blue-collar" tradition.

"It's all about mentally and physically wearing the opponent out," says Graham. "We're going to be a physical football team, and we're going to play great defense. That represents Pitt in a big way."

Representing Pitt well is extremely important to Graham. He has made it a point to reach out to former Panther greats like Tony Dorsett, Russ Grimm, and his all-time favorite

player, Mike Ditka. "I consider it sacred that they wore that helmet," he says. But he also respects Pitt's longtime reputation as a football powerhouse, so it's not just about the legends. All of the players contribute to great teams, and he's a coach who pushes all players to excel.

He makes it just as clear that being at Pitt is an immense honor for him personally. "I've worked my whole career, my whole life, to get this opportunity," says Graham. "And that's to be at a place like Pitt that can compete for national championships as well as having academic excellence."

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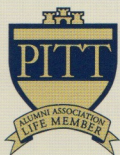
— Todd Graham

Education looms large in Graham's life. He's proud that his head coaching experience has been at institutions—Rice University and the University of Tulsa—known for their academic achievements, not just their trips to bowl games. "I consider myself a teacher," he says, stressing his start coaching high schoolers in his native Texas. "At the end of the day, I want to make a difference in young people's lives."

One of Graham's proudest accomplishments has nothing to do with his successes as a coach or his outstanding career as a defensive back at Oklahoma's East Central University. One of five children reared by a single mother with an eighth-grade education, Graham was the first in his family to go to college and only the second to graduate from high school. Now, with three children enrolled in college, Graham says a college degree is the minimum he and wife Penni expect of their six children.

His lifelong focus on education has shaped Graham's approach to coaching players. "I want them to compete in the classroom as they compete on the field," he says. "That would be a dangerous football team that had guys competing in the classroom as well as they competed in the field. Because I think one reflects the other."





## From the Executive Director



Inspired by one of football coach Todd Graham's comments when he spoke to our Board of Directors in May, the Pitt Alumni Association is "speaking victory." In the last year, we have:

- topped 9,100 life members,
- acquired more than 1,400 Student Alumni Association members,
- hosted six Alumni Lecture Series presentations,
- nearly completed a five-year strategic plan,
- sent e-mail updates to 128,000 alumni and friends, and
- hosted approximately 13,000 participants at 37 association events and 195 club events.

We have been able to accomplish all of these things and more through our partnership with other University divisions and, of course, our alumni.

Join us at the homecoming Welcome Back Reception and at other alumni events around the country and the world. We look forward to welcoming you.

Hail to Pitt!

Jeff Gleim  
Executive Director

He's taking a hands-on approach to his players' academic successes, receiving frequent reports on their progress. He emphasizes classroom performance in tandem with excellence on and off the field. "I take it upon myself to be involved in every aspect of their lives," Graham says. "My job is to inspire and to motivate and to help them see where they're going, where we're going."

If Graham has his way, that destination will involve winning seasons and future championships. "First thing I did when I got here," he says, "was to talk to Johnny Majors," the coach of Pitt's 1976 undefeated team, which won the University's ninth—and last—national title. "I want to be the guy who brings the 10th one here," says Graham.

**"I want them [players] to compete in the classroom as they compete on the field."**

To make that happen, Graham knows he needs avid support from Panthers fans. "The most important thing when it comes to college football games is home field advantage and having our fans passionately behind us," he says.

"I'm going to compete for their support," Graham adds. "I'm going to work hard to earn their trust. I want our alumni to know who I am and what we're trying to teach. And I believe the things we're trying to teach will represent them in a way that will make them extremely proud."



Coach Graham with defensive back Andrew Taglianetti, who was named to the 2010 Big East All-Academic Football Team