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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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"Gardner Webb University Head Coach Carroll McCray commits as guest speaker to 2018 Shrine Bowl Awards Banquet"



Jamie Smith, Game Chairman of the 82nd Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas announced today that Gardner Webb University Head Coach Carroll McCray has accepted the invitation to be the special guest speaker for the Shrine Bowl Coaches and Players Awards Banquet on Friday evening, December 14th, 2017 at 6PM, in the Spartanburg Marriott in downtown Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Ronnie Blount, Chairman of the Shrine Bowl Board of Governors said, "We are most delighted to have Gardner Webb Head Coach Carroll McCray to speak to our coaches, players, parents and fans of the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas. As one of the nation's fine collegiate coaches, his personal commitment to discipline and the importance he places on the standards of excellence on and off the field is extraordinary".

Coach McCray continues a rebuilding effort that he embarked upon in 2013, mixing an infusion of youthful talent with veteran experience in 2018. During his time at GWU, McCray has adjusted the culture quickly along with instilling pride into the program for which he once played.

McCray's teams have proven to be giant slayers during his time in Boiling Springs, knocking off five teams ranked in the top-15 since 2013, including last season's Big South Conference champion and eighth-ranked Charleston Southern on November 5. In its eight seasons at the Division I level before McCray's return to campus, Gardner-Webb had won just twice against top-25 opponents.

Success off the field has continued to materialize, as GWU's rise academically under McCray's watch has been significant. Lucas Beatty earned FCS ADA Academic All-Star honors in 2014 and Tyler Hough-Jenkins was named Academic All-District III. The team's cumulative GPA has been among the best in program history under McCray and the he has directed a staff that has been instrumental in drastically improving the team's APR score.



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McCray's initial season coaching his alma mater was a strong beginning. The Monroe, N.C., native directed GWU to a 7-5 record – its highest win total since 2003 – and a 3-1 record against nationally-ranked teams. GWU spent two weeks in the national top-25 and made strides in the classroom as well. Gardner-Webb had two men selected first-team Capital One Academic All-District III and Keon Williams was chosen to speak at spring commencement. Four others earned FCS All-America honors on the field. McCray came back to Boiling Springs in January, 2013, after spending the 2012 season as the head coach at North Greenville University. He has previous stops as associate head coach at Mercer and as head coach at Austin Peay. As an assistant, McCray has an outstanding track record with stops at Furman, Mississippi State, Samford, South Carolina and Appalachian State. McCray is the ninth head coach in Gardner-Webb's senior college history. He is the first alumnus to serve as head coach of the Runnin' Bulldogs since Woody Fish did so from 1984-1996.

Despite inheriting a team that returned just 11 starters at North Greenville, McCray molded the Crusaders into a competitive program by season's end in 2012. North Greenville won five of its final six games in 2012, including victories over South Atlantic Conference members Newberry, Brevard, Catawba and Wingate.

McCray got his start in coaching at Appalachian State in 1984, serving under Coach Sparky Woods as a graduate assistant coach working with tight ends and tackles. After earning his master's degree in 1985, McCray began a full-time stint under Woods, helping the Mountaineers to their first Southern Conference title in 32 years in 1986. In three seasons coaching the team's outside linebackers, McCray saw Appalachian State post a 38-19-2 record, two SoCon titles and two top-10 finishes in the I-AA national polls. The Mountaineers also made playoff appearances in 1986 and 1987 with a combined 20-5-1 record.

McCray followed Woods to the University of South Carolina, coaching the Gamecocks offensive line, tight ends and H-Backs from 1989-1993. While in Columbia, McCray tutored future first-round draft pick Earnest Dye, and was part of a staff that helped the program transition to the Southeastern Conference. Dye became the program's first All-SEC selection before being selected with the 18th overall pick in the 1993 draft by the Cardinals. McCray pupils Calvin Stephens (Patriots, 1991), Corey Louchiey (Bills, 1994) and James Dexter (Cardinals, 1996) also went on to be drafted.



Following his time at South Carolina, McCray coached the offensive line at Samford from 1994-2000, helping the Bulldogs to winning records five times in his seven seasons with the program. In 2000, Samford rushed for a school-record 3,439 yards and 41 touchdowns. Offensive tackle Phillip Duplantis earned first-team Division I-AA All-Independents honors under McCray's guidance in 1999. Tight end Aaron Bryant went on to sign a free agent contract with the Tennessee Titans in 1999.

He worked under legendary head coach Jackie Sherrill for two seasons at Mississippi State (2001-2002), with center Tommy Watson signing a free agent contract with the NFL's Tennessee Titans in 2002 and tackle David Stewart drafted once his career in Starkville concluded in 2005.

McCray earned his first head coaching job in 2003, serving as head coach at Austin Peay from 2003-2006. McCray took over a non-scholarship program in Clarksville, Tenn., and was charged with directing the Governors from the Pioneer League back to the Ohio Valley Conference. During his tenure, 13 Governors earned All-Pioneer League honors and eight were named Academic All-America.

He coached the offensive line at Furman from 2007-2010, tutoring five All-SoCon selections for the Paladins – including 2008 Jacobs Blocking Trophy winner Joel Bell. Bell earned All-America honors that same season and signed a free agent contract with the Buffalo Bills. The Paladins posted winning records in three of McCray's seasons on staff. Guard Ryan Lee went on to sign a free agent contract with the Steelers in 2012.

McCray spent one season as Associate Head Coach at Mercer University, assisting head coach Bobby Lamb in starting a new Division I FCS non-scholarship program in Macon, Ga. He was named head coach at North Greenville on January 15, 2012.

He was a three-year letterwinner on the offensive line at Gardner-Webb under Coach Tom Moore, teaming with future Hall of Famers Cameron Brooks, Charlie Harbison, Chip Stuart and Ralph Warthen in the early 1980s. As a senior in 1982, McCray and the Runnin' Bulldogs stormed their way to a 7-3 record – tying the program record to that point for senior college wins and posting the team's first winning ledger since 1977.

McCray graduated in 1983 with a degree in social science. He and his wife Angel, also a graduate of Gardner-Webb, have two children: Trey and Meredith.



Special Notes

About the Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas:

The Shrine Bowl began in 1937 based on the model of the East-West Shrine Game that was played in San Francisco, but the game took on a new slant in the Carolinas. Instead of being a college all-star game, it would become the nation's first high school football all-star game. The inaugural game in 1937, under the leadership of former Charlotte Fire Chief Hendrix Palmer attracted 5,500 spectators, many of whom paid one dollar to attend and raised \$2,500 for the hospital. Since the first game, over \$83.5 million dollars have been raised for Shriners Hospitals. Visit www.shrine-bowl.com for more information.

About the Game

This year's game the **82nd** Annual will take place on December 15, 2018 at 1PM in beautiful Gibbs Stadium on the campus of Wofford College in Spartanburg, South Carolina. The rivalry between the top senior high school football players of North Carolina versus the best in class from South Carolina will renew for the 82nd time – the longest standing all-star game in America.

About the Shriners Hospital for Children:

The hospital network has been treating orthopedic conditions since the founding of the first hospital in 1922. With a large full-time staff of pediatric orthopedic surgeons in the United States, as well as a comprehensive team of physical, occupational, speech and other therapists, the Shriners Hospital for Children are able to provide customized care to each child.

Shrine Bowl Advance, and Game Day Tickets and Players Banquet Tickets

Shrine Bowl Advance tickets will be available at all *Academy Sports + Outdoors* locations in North and South Carolina for \$15.00 each! Academy Sports + Outdoors of the Carolina's is the official ticket outlet for the 82nd Shrine Bowl football game.

Game day, at the Gate Price is **\$20.00 each**.

The Shrine Bowl Coaches and Players Awards Banquet will be on Friday evening, December 14, 2018 at 6PM, in the Spartanburg Marriott in downtown Spartanburg, South Carolina. Tickets for the banquet will be available for **\$45 each**.

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