

Taft Union High School Hall of Fame

Inducted April 30, 2011

Russell Letlow, Class of 1931

Russell Letlow, Class of '31, one of the great football players to come out of Taft Union High School, teamed with Monty Reedy, Carl Stone and Walter Tedrow in 1930 when the Wildcats defeated the Bakersfield Drillers for the first time. Two years later, Letlow enrolled at the University of San Francisco, one of the football powerhouses in the nation.

After his senior year at USF, Letlow was selected to play in the East-West Shrine Game, the first Taft High graduate to be so honored, and in 1936, he became the first person ever drafted by the Green Bay Packers and the No. 7 pick in the first round of the first NFL draft. He was an instant starter in Green Bay, played on two NFL Championship Teams (1936 and 1939) and earned All-Pro recognition four times (1937-40). He is a member of the Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame and a part of one of the big football news stories in the late 1930's, when New York's "Tarzan" White, bit Letlow on the leg during a bitterly fought game between the Packers and the Giants. The fight which followed made big news in the big city.

Letlow is cited in *The First Fifty Years*, a NFL compilation of the league's first half century, served in the Navy during WW II and played for the Great Lakes Naval Station, a team that defeated Notre Dame and broke Frank Leahy's winning streak. After the war, Letlow returned to the Green Bay Packers for the 1946 season, then retired from the NFL. His career was characterized by the highest level of skill, dedication and recognition.

Following the 1946 season, he returned to Delano. There he established a successful wholesale gasoline business, raised his family and lived quietly until his death in 1987.