

Archie Griffin Statue Unveiled In Rotunda Of Ohio Stadium



Ohio State's Archie Griffin cemented his status as one of the program's all-time great players during his four-year career with the Buckeyes, rushing for a school-record 5,177 yards and 25 touchdowns while also earning two Heisman Trophy Awards in 1974 and 1975, a feat that still has yet to be matched in college football.

Griffin's historic accomplishments on the field were forever immortalized in his hometown Columbus Friday morning, where Ohio State unveiled a statue of the two-time Heisman Winner in Ohio Stadium's rotunda to honor the 50th anniversary of Griffin's first Heisman win.

Griffin, 75, watched as his bronze statue — which is a replica of the statue revealed at the Rose Bowl on Aug. 17 — was revealed in front of numerous family members, former teammates, Ohio State administrators and media members at Ohio Stadium, capping off a nearly one-hour ceremony that featured numerous high-profile guest speakers.

After Ohio State president Ted Carter delivered some opening remarks, athletic director Ross Bjork handed the mic over to head football coach Ryan Day, who provided some brief comments about the lasting legacy Griffin left at Ohio State both on and off the field before heading back to the Woody Hayes Athletic Center to continue preparing for the team's season opener on Saturday.

"I wanted to make sure I came over and said thank you to Archie, and thank you to the family," Day said. "There's only one two-time Heisman Trophy winner, he's sitting right here. But more importantly, it's the impact you've made off the field. I didn't have an opportunity to see you play...but I have seen the impact that you've made off the field, and your family's made off the field.

"It's tremendous, and it's an unbelievable example to our players about the impact you've made in the community, the charities. It's been unbelievable."

Next to speak was Bjork, who admitted that while he had a lot of things to learn about Ohio State and its traditions before taking over for Gene Smith on July 1, he did not have to learn about the legacy Griffin left on the university, describing the Buckeye legend as “one of one” when it comes to Ohio State athletes.

“As the new senior vice president and director of athletics, I had a lot to learn about the university, really those who came before us, to really understand the legacy and the power of this place,” Bjork said. “I’m still learning...What I didn’t have to learn was the greatness of Archie Griffin. His legacy on the field and all the great things he did to this game are well documented.

“Archie defines what being a Buckeye means,” Bjork said. “Archie was born here at Ohio State, Ohio born and bred. Archie is the people, he’s the culture, the excellence. The definition of a Buckeye.”

After some more remarks from Rose Bowl Legacy Foundation President Dedan Brozino, who said that Griffin has helped “tie two of the country’s most historic stadiums together,” Griffin took to the podium to a standing ovation from the crowd.

Griffin called this ceremony “truly one of the greatest privileges of my life,” and, after thanking his parents and former Buckeyes head coach Woody Hayes for molding him into the person he has become, said that this statue is not so much a testament to his own legacy at Ohio State, but rather a representation of what his team accomplished in those four years he was a Buckeye.

“As we dedicate this statue today, I want everyone here to know that you’re not only honoring me today, but instead recognizing the teams that I played on during my four years at The Ohio State University,” Griffin said. “You’re honoring my teammates during those four years, some of whom are in this crowd today. They opened the holes and carried out the play-fakes that allowed me to run for two Heisman Trophies.

“I hope when people see this statue, they think about the great teams we had the four years I played and not just the guy who wore No. 45 and got too much credit. I was just blessed to be at the right place at the right time with the right people to accomplish what I did.”

“This statue will stand outside Ohio State for as long as they play football here,” Griffin added. “I want you to love the idea that Buckeye fans might stop by to visit before a game or talk to future generations of Buckeyes about the great teams that I played on. I’m just really so honored when I think about how I can now stay connected to the fans of Ohio State forever.”

In addition to both the Rose Bowl and Ohio Stadium statues, Griffin will receive another honor on Saturday at Ohio Stadium when he becomes just the sixth non-band member to dot the “i” in Script Ohio when the marching band performs at halftime.