



DOLAN FAMILY ESTABLISHES **GARRETT DOLAN** ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

The number “40” is significant for Brett and Cathy Dolan. Their eldest son, Jared, was number 40 as a standout football player for Barbers Hill High School. Then, as a linebacker for McNeese State University from 2003 to 2007, he wore the number again. Younger brother Garrett Dolan followed in his older brother’s footsteps by donning the number in the same high school as well, also becoming a talented player and graduating in 2013. When Garrett entered Houston Baptist University to help start the new football program as a linebacker that fall, he chose to be number 40 once again.

Tragically, Garrett passed away in May 2018, one week before graduating from HBU with a Business Administration degree. During his time as a Husky, Dolan was a major contributor on the inaugural football team.

He is one of the “Original 13” in the football program, serving as a three-time captain, being defensive player of the year for four seasons, and twice receiving the HBU Athletics Robbie Robertson Male Athlete of the Year designation. He was a two-time All-American, a four-time All-Southland Conference selection, and at 467 tackles, he ranks seventh in career tackles all-time in the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS).

Now, the Dolan family is honoring Garrett in a special way. They have established the Garrett Dolan Endowed Scholarship at HBU, which will benefit deserving recipients in the football program. They’ve founded The 40 Foundation, which is a nonprofit organization that will support the HBU scholarship and a planned future scholarship at Barbers Hill High School.

“We wanted to give back to the University that did so



much for Garrett," Cathy said. "We wanted to keep the '40' number going, so that's why the initial donation of \$40 thousand was made, and why the number was used in the naming of the Foundation. We wanted other young men to have the same opportunities that Garrett did, and the same experience. It was just an awesome time for Garrett there – from the classroom to the football field."

The family shared their reflections about Garrett's talents and the ways in which he was a remarkable young man. "Garrett loved football," Brett said. "He started out watching his older brother play football – going to the games as a young boy. As he got older and got involved in football, and with Jared's guidance, he realized it was something he loved to do. He loved the contact, the sport, the camaraderie. By the time he reached high school, he just really decided to commit and give it everything he had. He would have liked to play at the next level – the NFL – that was his ultimate goal."

Jared said HBU and the football program felt like home right away for Garrett. "HBU seemed very welcoming – from the recruiting visits, to practices, games and events on campus. He had some interest from other schools but he was excited to be able to build something from

the ground up," he said. "He started his first game at 18 years old against the number one team at that time – Sam Houston State. He always succeeded, and we got to see him play on a much bigger stage, and at an earlier age, than players typically do. It was fun to watch."

Although Garrett didn't vie for the spotlight, it seemed to find him naturally. Even as a young player, he was looked

to as a leader, and came through under pressure. Football staff members including Head Coach Vic Shealy, Drew O'Daniel, Shannon Kelley, Charlie Camp, Scott Smith, Burl Jordan, Kendrick Kitchens, Roger Hinshaw, Brent Veiselmeyer and several others who have left the program all contributed to Garrett's experience and success. Most became dear friends of the Dolan family.

Defensive teammate and roommate, Cody Moncure, along with his family, developed into one

of the best relationships for Garrett and the family at HBU. "Cody and Garrett were the best of friends from the summer of 2013, and they wouldn't have had it any other way," Cathy said.

Seeing Garrett play under the stadium lights in Houston was a win for the whole family. "We felt very fortunate from day one that Garrett got to play in Houston in a conference





that we were really familiar with," Brett said. "Being a Christian university with the coaches they have, and the background and history of HBU, we were blessed. He had high-caliber, high-character coaches. The more we got involved and met Dr. Sloan (HBU president) and Steve Moniaci (HBU athletics director) and some of the other administrators, it just kept getting better." Cathy added, "Coach Shealy, and his wife Holly, were like parental figures to him there. He respected them tremendously."

Jared's wife, Ashley, said going to the games was a family affair. "We had a toddler wearing his jersey and cheering for him: 'Go, Uncle G!' Our son would light up. '40' was our number," she said. "He was such a talented young man. We are so proud of him."

The admiration was reciprocal. "Little Luke was very special to Uncle G also," Cathy said. "When Garrett found out that Jared and Ashley were expecting, he was so happy and emotional. He loved hearing Luke call him 'Uncle G.' Theirs was a special bond."

While Garrett's success elevated the status of HBU's program, the benefit was mutual, Brett said. "We have discussed how fortunate it was that Garrett got to play in Houston and have the exposure," he said. "Without that opportunity, who's to say how much recognition he would have gotten or awards he would have received."

In addition to the benefits of athletics, the Dolans were pleased with Garrett's educational experience. "He enjoyed a lot of the professors and would talk about how

fun their classes were," Cathy said. Garrett was beloved by many across campus for his caring nature. "He was a beast on the field, but he had a soft and kind heart," she said.

After Garrett's death, the University leadership and coaches were supportive, coming together for a touching memorial service and honoring the family when Jared received his brother's diploma at graduation. "The relationships with the coaches and the others have been really special to me," Brett said. "Before this tragedy, I was trying to piece together in my mind something to write to the administration and coaches about how much the University has meant to the Dolan family. I wanted to convey the appreciation and admiration I felt."

When people hear the name Garrett Dolan, they should think of the person many admired. "No matter who got the award or made the play, he always celebrated them; he took the time to seek people out and speak to them," Brett said. "I would like for future players and scholarship recipients to model his commitment to the University, to teammates and to the football team. When they see his picture, I want them to think about attacking the field, as well as life, with the same intensity. Most importantly, we want them to make a difference."

You may contribute to the Garrett Dolan Endowed Scholarship at [HBU.edu/DolanScholarship](https://www.hbu.edu/DolanScholarship).

Learn more about The 40 Foundation and contribute at [The40Foundation.com](https://www.The40Foundation.com).